

TRAMWAYS BOSS IS NO SQUIB

By IAN McFARLING 1963

The chairman of Melbourne's Tramways Board, Mr Risson, is hardly the orthodox type of senior public servant.

He has addressed at least one union meeting at his own request and talked sternly to depot meetings of his men during disputes. And last week, he just climbed on top of a train in response to a union challenge. Mr Risson's old union friend, Charlie O'Shea, secretary of the Tramways Union, had suggested that Mr Risson should climb on top of the train. Mr O'Shea should have known better. Mr Risson, 62, doesn't sulk anything. Politics has always been a part of his life. Henry Risson's life. Leadership has long been second nature. And as a trained leader of men in the Army, where he is a Major-General, now on the retired list — he sets great store by example.

They fight
He is blunt. He has been called a little too militantly to run a body like the Tramways Board. But there is little doubt that he has the affection of a great many of his staff. Even Mr O'Shea would probably have to admit that he likes Mr Risson. Mr Risson, for his part, reckons Charlie O'Shea isn't a bad bloke.

"We fight a lot privately, and a little publicly," Mr Risson says. "Mr Risson knows he is a little blunt. It is something he has never been able to help. But he would never apologise for it." He pretends to be an "direct and unequivocal". His conversation tends to be hard with phrases like "I am being perky for the first time." He is not the type to hedge, yet behind his rather forbidding, clipped manner is a sense of humour that is fairly easily tickled.

War service
He says his fighting days probably began on a farm about 30 miles from Brisbane, his university training as a civil engineer and later as a construction engineer on permanent way projects for the Brisbane tramways. "I was never any good at poker. I have to be honest in my dealings," he says. "Nothing is impos-



This week's picture of Mr Risson.

sible and not many things are impossible," he adds. "But there is a question about their some things are worth while — whether the cost is worth it." He has known the cost. His education through high school and university was largely on scholarships. His life really started in the Middle East during the Second World War when an expedition German shell gave him 22 wounds. And when he took charge of the Tramways Board here in 1949 he was faced immediately with a 60-day strike, the longest in the world's history. He was deputy manager of the Brisbane tramways before he came here. Melbourne, then, was strange to him. Now, in his black homburg, he is one of the city's best-known figures. He is chairman of the Victorian branch of the National Fitness Council, and president of the Good Neighbor Council.

Earlier this year, he earned five years as the State's Chief Commissioner of Schools. He and his wife have no family. But he has taken an increasing interest in youth work in recent years. He likes to see youth. He remembers his own days as a Gaiety Road University Blue in football (clubs Epuni, an inter-Varsity runner and a college basketball. He was still playing football when he was 32. But his main exercise now is the five-minute walk to or from the Burwood tram terminus from his home, when he takes the tram and not his car. He writes broadly if you suggest that as chairman of the Tramways Board he nevertheless has every right to drive to work. "You're the supervisor," he says, "how many people think I shouldn't."

Made news this week

Water storages up this year
Melbourne's water supply reservoirs today hold 52,406 million gallons. Their capacity is 60,352 million. They held 42,406 million on October 25 last year.

RAIL HOLDUP IN FREEZE

Melbourne had its coldest morning for 34 years today. The temperature slid to 29.3 deg. — 2 deg. below freezing — at 8 a.m. Heavy frost covering the metropolitan area delays thousands of rail travellers because of iced-up overhead wires and balky motors in one of the worst holdups caused by cold. Cars skidded on ice-crusted roads, and many minor accidents were reported.

Hundreds of people in outer suburbs reported frozen water pipes, 24,000 frozen in bottles left out overnight.

Frost covered much of Victoria. Coldest spot in the State reported to the Weather Bureau was Wood Point (21 deg.).

And Weather Bureau forecasters expect another cold night tonight in Melbourne, with frost some place and temperatures under 40 deg.

7-hour freeze
In the city the temperature was below freezing from 2 a.m. to 9 a.m. except for a brief period of 3 a.m. when it rose to 32 deg.

The city's coldest day ever since records were taken was 27 deg. on July 21, 1903.

Many suburbs and country towns had even colder mornings than Melbourne.

Railway ice-up
A housewife at Moorabbin said the trainmen in her wardroom showed up at 7 a.m. The frost delayed many of Melbourne's 200,000 morning peak train travellers.

Trains on every suburb line were affected, directly or indirectly. The cold numbed many motorists and drivers.

overhead wires and power lines in a train motor. A service train on office said he had a snow. A frost to such a widespread effect.

There was a 40-min delay on the Broadmeadows line when the train from Melbourne meter trouble. At 3 a.m. when it rose to 32 deg.

The 5:10 train from St Albans was cancelled because the motors would not start.

Continued on Page 2

Footy at 32
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Kangaroos score

LONDON, Thurs. — Australia thrashed England 28-2 in the first Test at Wembley last night. England's only score came from a penalty goal. It was only the sixth time in 45 years of Ashes Test matches that Australia has thrashed England.

All night trams used to run from the city at hourly intervals to 18 destinations and down St. Kilda Road until January 1957. Sir Arthur Warner, Minister of Transport, announced that from February 16th 1957 the trams would cease to run because some of them were 40 years old.

In 1943 they made a profit of £25,000 per year and by 1957 they were losing £40,000 per year. They were replaced with all night buses. I used to catch one of them in Orrong Road at 4.22 am for the first early shift which started at 5.7 am from 964 to 1968 when they ceased to run. Driver Jim Moulton from South Melbourne used to sometimes drive those buses.

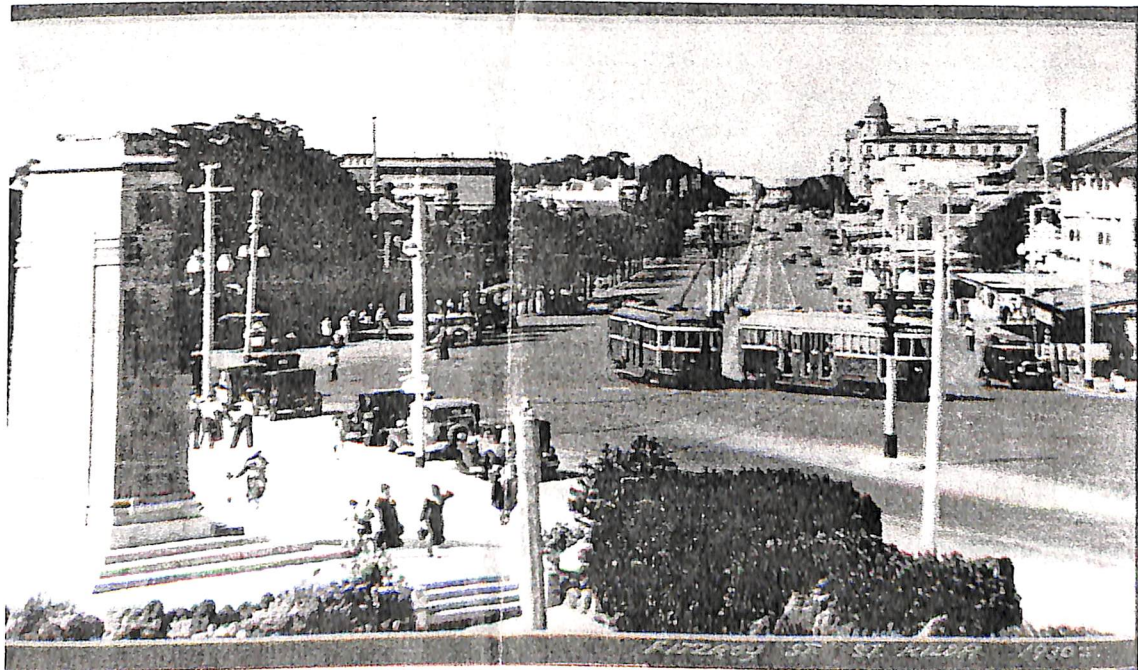
A former Union Secretary, Jack Abfalter, died in 1967 and was buried in Brighton Cemetery. Born in South Australia, he went to Auckland became a conductor and motorman and played rugby with the Ponsonby Club. In 1909 he came to Melbourne and joined the cable tramways at the Fitzroy sheds and became a conductor and motorman in 1910. The Tramways Union was formed in 1910 at a meeting in Malvern. Abfalter played Rules Football. Harry Duke was the first Union Secretary and Abfalter had a position on the Executive and later became President before becoming the Secretary in 1936. In 1928 he visited New Zealand and attended member meetings in eight cities and in each a social was held in his honour and in Auckland was presented with a gold watch. He set a record in Union history with 43 years in the industry. His son died as a P.O.W. in World War II. Abfalter was Union secretary for 31 years.

In 1967 a conductor was injured playing cricket and put in a claim for compensation which failed and a bus driver at Doncaster was suspended for starting an automatic bus in second gear.

In September 1967, the Union 'Tramway Record' reported on a Union meeting held on August 28th. Secretary Charles O'Shea reported that the attitude of Discipline Officer East when making presentations to Union representatives on behalf of members had become so bad that officers were forced to discuss the matter with the Chairman. Apart from the treatment of Essendon driver Singleton, two members with 11 and 12 years service had been dismissed but on representation to the Chairman, Mr Risson, both were reinstated. Mr O'Shea said that if his attitude did not change the Union would have to take stronger action.

In September 1967 driver Bailey from Glenhuntly Depot said that because he was 5ft 7 inches it was hard to reach the light switches on the 'Mobile Museum Pieces L-Class trams 101-106'.

During the 1960's I never saw a notice on the notice board and was never told that I was allowed two days compassionate leave when my father died in 1966.



1930s

In September 1967 a revenue clerk at Kew was working night shift alone in the Revenue Office. He had a heart attack, no one had a key to open his door and an inspector had to break a window to help him, however he died soon afterwards aged only 53 years.

In September 1967 there was an address in the T.H.C. Chamber by an Australian born man who had gone to the USA when young. He was Harry Bridges, President of the International Longshoreman and Warehouseman's Union of the USA. He was famous during the 1940's and 50's and in 1995 a film about his life was shown on TV.

In 1967 a T-light was installed at St. Kilda Road and High Street intersection for tram drivers. In November 1967 a driver from Brunswick was suspended for the day because an Inspector noticed that he was not wearing a cap, he had left it at the Depot.

In November 1967 during a meeting at Preston Depot, Industrial Union Officer Syd Edwards, told members that 17 of them had some form of serious heart trouble that year.

In the same month two buses were proceeding along Power Street, Hawthorn, when an off duty Policeman driving his own car behind them, sounded his horn for the bus to move to the right so he could pass on the left. The bus could not move right because it would have been over the centre line. The Policeman followed the buses approximately 8 miles to the Doncaster Depot and told both drivers that he was going to charge them with overtaking in a dangerous manner'. The Union made representation to the Police Department and no prosecution was issued.

Late in 1967 driver Pratico from Essendon Depot was given a two month gaol sentence for kicking a car driver who blocked his tram and went to the driver's cabin and called him a 'Dago Bastard'. Pratico was of Italian origin, and appealed against the sentence that was subsequently changed to a bond. He had resigned but was reinstated.

In Essendon in March 1968 the Board put a notice in all conductor's outfits informing them that revenue was being lost through overrides and uncollected fares and that they should be more vigilant. Later that day a conductress approached a passenger who had gone far beyond where he should have alighted. He punched her and the driver who went to her assistance was pushed through a window and sustained a badly gashed arm.

In March 1968 Inspector Ernie Owens retired after 43 years service. He started in 1925 on Cable Cars at South and Port Melbourne. In the 'Tramway Record' it says that for 1967-68 during the 'Questions in Parliament' there were 131,876,418 tram passengers carried.

At Preston Depot, driver Miller and conductress Fraser had a dispute with Inspector Martin. This was referred to the Disciplinary Officer and Traffic Manager and they were both dismissed. On representation to the Chairman Mr Risson, conductress Fraser was reinstated.

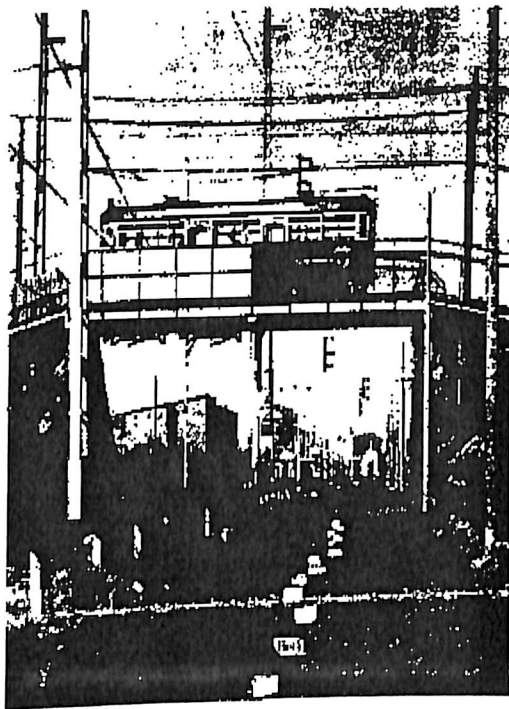
JARGON

Every organisation develops and uses its own special or jargon words. Here is a list of some jargon words used within MMTB.

If you know of other jargon words which will help us to build up a jargon dictionary, please write to Wilbur, C/- Hawthorn Training Depot.

More next issue.

Almax	Ticket machine on "Z" tram
Automatic points	Points operated by driver with controls
Bang road	"Down" tram using "up" track or vice versa
Barriers	Guard rails in place of doors
Break down	Emergency vehicle
Braid	Officer in green uniform
Book up	Write in ticket numbers
Block car	Tram positioned at terminus to adjust late tram
Ballast track	Track raised above ground — tram use only
Bell	Used for giving signals to driver
Buzzer	Used for giving signals to driver
Bundy clock	Time clock recorded by driver
Bundy key	For recording bundy clocks
Blade	Section of rail which moves when changing points



Pictured above is the Hump, a well-known section of the track at Thornbury.

Change over	Replacement tram
Checker	Ticket examiner
Canopy	Door over destination box
Claims	Head Office Department which handles accidents
Caps	For S.R.U.
Clip	For trolley rope
Connie	Conductor
Conductor/Driver	New driver waiting for vacancy on drivers sheet
Commencing numbers	Numbers on top tickets on blocks
Cross over	Intermediate shunt
Cut in car	Tram cut into service to fill gap
Cut in	Drivers cuts on power to start tram
Carbon block	Block at end of pole
Carlton Control	Power control centre
C.B.M.	Work changed by management
Closing numbers	Numbers on top ticket at end of shift
Charter	On hire
Compo	Workers' compensation
D.M.	Depot Manager
Derailement	Tram off track
Dragging the road	Deliberately driving slowly
D.O.C.	Day off cancelled
D.O.R.	Day off relief table
D.I.	District Traffic Inspector (mobile)
Down	From the city
Doing an early	Working an early shift
Doing a late	Working a late shift
Doing a spread	Working a shift with a meal break exceeding 2 hours
Emergency rope	Spare rope on roof of tram
Engine house	Tramway building at corner of Nicholson and Gertrude Streets
Flats	Flat sections on wheels caused by skidding
Frog	Equipment on overhead at junction and cross overs
Grab rails	Rails near entrances for assisting passengers
Grosion	Ticket issuing machine used on buses
Gong	Driver's warning bell
Guide	Clip for pole rope
Get taken	Be relieved by other crew
H.O.	Head Office
Hump	Section of track at Thornbury
Half trip	Terminus to terminus

Essendon Depot held a past and present reunion each year and in July 1968 the 'Tramway Record' said the wire in caps was not popular and some of the members bent the wire. In the 'Essendon Episodes' Driver Large said "the wire should never have been put in the cap in the first place, presumably a Board member at one time had shares in a wire factory". The Post Officer and Police had a softer cap.

One of the greatest members South Melbourne ever had was Driver Bill Carvel who had been a Union delegate before 1952. He worked in the canteen and I worked with him on his last day when he retired in 1969, he was good to work with. In 1968 he made an advert for TV showing him accepting a piece of chocolate while conductor and Union delegate Jack Cregan share a snack with passengers.

In 1968 Harry Coleman passed away while talking to the Depot Master in Camberwell Depot. He had just resumed work after being off work for 18 months caused by a brutal attack while going home from work. The Depot Master was ex-driver Tom Kirkup who was later Depot Master at South Melbourne, he was good to deal with.

On 26th June 1968 a tram going from Camberwell to the City had crossed over Lonsdale Street when the destination block at the rear of the drivers cabin fell to the floor. The tram ran into South Melbourne Depot for repairs.

At a meeting in Unity Hall on June 4th 1968 it was decided to form the Retired Tramway Employees Association. The Union donated \$1,000 and decided to hold social functions.

In November 1969 at a Union Branch Meeting Essendon Depot said "we condemn the Board of their spotting staff and demand that it be removed, furthermore, we condemn Disciplinary Officer East for the action he took in this case, action that make him low in rating as a man, also that numerals be abolished". Mr East was once a Union delegate.

November 1969 marked the 50th Anniversary of the formation of the Tramways Board and the old wooden tables and wooden school type long seats were removed and new good quality ones provided.

In January 1970 Bill MacCormack, popular Depot Master at Kew, died after a short illness, more than 12,000 mourners attended the requiem mass and evening service. He was widely respected, starting as a conductor at Kew and Camberwell in 1924.

At Garden City Terminus a bus driver or conductor from North Fitzroy was seen stealing toilet paper and putting it in his bag and the young daughter of the Caretaker looking after the building saw one of the bus crew remove the lock, pull the key off the chain, pocket both and left on the bus departing the terminus.

As stated in January 1970 'Tramway Union Record' the Board had been short of over 300 drivers and conductors since 1950.

On 26th January Cyril Tucker of Kew, retired after 47 years service.

In February 1970 the Board refused to employ a young woman because she had a child but was not married. The 'Union Record' said this was a scandalous misuse of the Board's powers. A short time later she married and moved to Sydney.

In February 1970 there was a side on collision between two trams at Gisbourne Street near Victoria Parade, East Melbourne. The Inspector suspended one driver Abela from Kew, but the Union said it was the wrong man. The Disciplinary Officer, Mr East, also suspended the South Melbourne driver and refused to alter the suspension of Abela for one day (six hours) although he was not charged with a breach of any rule. The Union Vice-President Jim Harper from Preston, was acting Industrial Officer while Syd Edwards was on leave, was astounded at the arrogant attitude of Disciplinary Officer East.

In early 1970 Richard Brain aged 44, tram driver from Camberwell depot was found, shot dead and left in a tip in Toorak Road. He had been put there by another driver, Duncan McDonald aged 24. McDonald was having an affair with Brains' wife, a conductress, and went to see Brains with a pistol he stole from the Revenue Office. The pistol went off accidentally during an argument. A Jury found McDonald guilty of manslaughter and was sentenced to twelve years gaol.

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During the years to 1964 driver John Hogan from Bendigo was involved in three fatal crashes in which 6 people were killed. In the last one in August 1964 four people were killed in a car collision aged from 21 to 28. Two months previously a motorist was killed another five years prior to that.

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On 3rd June 1969 a conductor and passenger broke a window on a crowded city bound tram. There were fighting after the tram missed a stop and the man jumped on the moving tram at St. Georges Road Thornbury.

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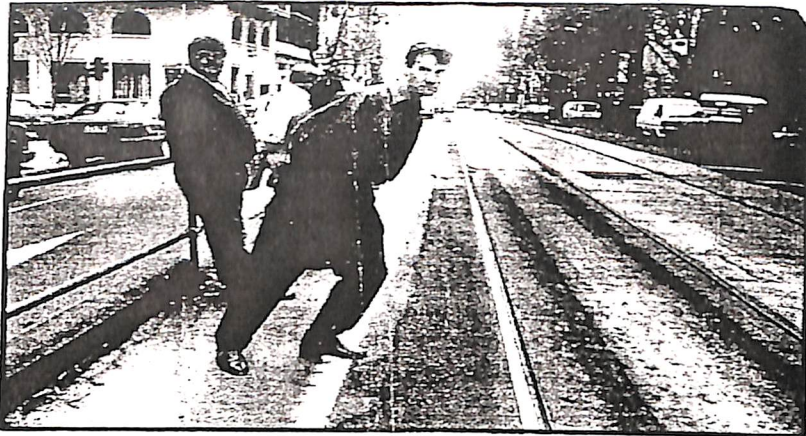
Michael Palin

1990s



DOUG ALTON
CONVERSATIONS

Michael Palin has always been aware of the potential for humor and his inspiration has come from unusual sources. I met him in London in 1967...



Palin on the tram tracks in London in 1967.

FUNNY FEATURES

In March 1967 English actor Robert Morley rode on tram no. 1021 in Bourke Street, he said he had not been on one in 20 years and said they were dangerous and a menace.

THE AGE, Tuesday, March 7, 1967

Mr. Morley gets off his bike about trams

By JOHN TIDEY
Actor Robert Morley broke one of his long-standing rules last night and took a ride on a tram. "Jolly nice to meet you" he assured Mr. John McDermott, of Thornbury, as he wedged his 17-stone bulk into the next seat. "I haven't been on one of those things in 20 years," he continued. "They're really dangerous you know, a perfect menace. Last time I was here they were dirty too." Soon after he swept — perhaps steamed would be more correct — into a Melbourne hotel press conference yesterday, Mr. Morley was in trouble over our trams. Someone recalled that in his biography "Responsible Gentleman" he had been none too kind to Melbourne. Of our trams he wrote that they were "20 years old, dangerous, noisy and dirty." Had his views mellowed with the passing of time? Unfortunately a recent ride from William Street to the top of Bourke Street merely confirmed his worst fears, he said. Mr. Morley had not been mistaken. "I'm afraid they'll have to go," he repeated. And for the handful of startled fellow-passengers the jolly Englishman ended an unpropitious ride with as he abandoned the tram in favor of a taxi. The great souls were thrust through the window in some parting advice. "I don't expect Melbourne to do away with its trams overnight," he advised. "But they must not be left when I return to Australia." — Page 4.



In 1965 the Tramways Board opened its eight annual anti-influenza campaign among employees using a bus to all Depots.

In October 1972 the Tramways Board placed a large advert in the paper for conductors aged between 20 to 50 years to apply to 616 Little Collins Street.

In June 1972 sick leave was increased from 5 days to 8 days.

Melbourne closed its last cable tramline, Bourke Street to High Street, Northcote on 26th October 1940.

In 1968 the green signal box at St. Kilda Junction was demolished after nearly 60 years. In 1972 I was conductor on a 'Special Tram' taking 20 American tourists to East Brighton Terminus.

At Kew Depot in February 1970, driver Bruce Lilburn retired after 47 years service and in March 1970 driver Wally Saunders retired after 45 years service at Malvern Depot.

During the 1960's the Board employed University students as conductors for a few weeks each year. Two of them lent their free travel passes to friends but were caught by Inspectors.

In February 1970 only 35 minutes were allowed from Franklin Street City, depart 5.7 pm to Toorak Terminus in peak period then depart 5.42 pm. In the same month a new tram shunt was laid at Collins and Russell Streets.

In 1956 when the all night trams were running, drivers were allowed 49 minutes from the City to Camberwell. In February 1970 they were allowed 52½ minutes during the day, with double the traffic and 46 sets of traffic lights.

In April 1970 the Traffic Manager, Bob Drummond, was being driven home by D/ Inspector Hayes, and stopped at Essendon Depot. He suspended a driver for refusing to work as a conductor. Fortunately the suspension was lifted after only 5 minutes.

Mr Risson was Chairman of the Tramways Board at 69 years of age and used to wear a black Homburg hat.

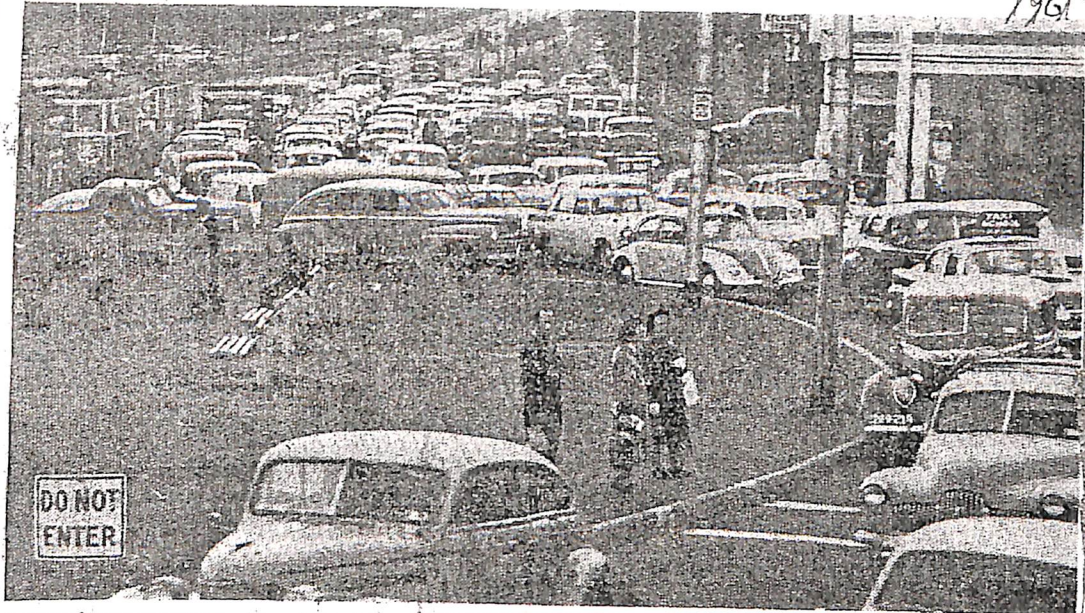
Tram 923 was painted grey and blue to advertise citizen Air Force Recruiting during the 1950's. W4 class trams were the first of the W series to have transverse seating in the saloons. S Class 166 at Coburg Depot was the first tram manufactured by the Tramways Board.

On 25th September 1964 I was in the mess room at South Melbourne Depot when I saw 30 year old Jeny Potapova visit. She was a tram driver from Moscow visiting with twelve Russian tourists. She said that half of Moscow's tram drivers were women, there were no conductors and passengers put their fares in a box. Mr Risson said "I don't think it would work here".

In April 1970 a Glenhuntly conductor was sacked after being charged with selling used tickets that had been left on seats by passengers. Sometimes the Board used Police as spotters to check if used tickets were sold.

During the 1930's there were 30-minute meal breaks, employees worked a 48 hour week and there was no long service leave. In 1969 there was 19½ weeks leave after 15 years service.

CHAOS FROM KINGS WAY



HOMEWARD-BOUND traffic streaming out of the city along the new Kings Way is causing chaos at the bottleneck at St. Kilda Junction.

Police say the freeway brings traffic faster to the junction which cannot cope with the flow of cars. There are several other traffic snarls too. Building work is continuing on the bridge and vehicles are often

parked there. Entering South Melbourne, traffic runs into the busy Grant-st. intersection - which has no stop signs or traffic lights. Farther on is Sturt-st. which is also busy and has no stop signs.

We'll see Rugby's happy tourists

By BOB ROSS

RUGBY UNION'S happiest and most spectacular players, the Fijians, will thrill the code's supporters in Melbourne this season.

Big Prize Money for Test Players

Australian all-rounder, Alan Davidson, earned more than £120 plus his "pay" from the board of control in each of the four Tests he played against the West Indies.

Davidson won £485 from the £2670 provided by W.D. and H.O. Wills for team achievement and individual performances during the Test series.

Davidson won three bowling awards each worth £130, plus his share of his team's winnings.

Each match carried team awards of £2500—£2300 for winning and £200 for the side which scored its runs fastest.

There were nine individual awards, each of £130. In winning the fifth Test, Australia won £500, scoring 18 runs at 43.3 runs an hour compared with the West Indians 42.4 runs per hour.

The Australian side during this series won £1150, and the West Indies £1050. Each Australian who played

under (West Indies), £247 10/; W. Grout (Aust), £225 16/; R. Simpson (Aust.), £225 16/; R. Kanhai (West Indies), £217 10/.

Individual awards were won by:— Best batting Average: G. Alexander, West Indies, 69.5.

Best bowling Average: A. Davidson, Australia, 18.5. Highest score: N. O'Neill, Australia, 191.

Most wickets: A. Davidson, Australia, 33. Fastest scoring rate (minimum aggregate 200 runs): R. Kanhai, West Indies, 32.2 runs an hour.

Most catches (excluding wicketkeeper): R. Simpson, Australia, 19. To wicketkeeper, sharing in more than 15 dismissals:

entry

They will play two matches at Olympic Park — against Victoria on June 28 and against Australia on July 1.

The Fijians, in their 1952 and 1954 tours, proved the biggest box office attractions Australian Rugby has ever seen.

In 1954 they beat Victoria 42-12 at South Melbourne Cricket Ground and drew Rugby's record crowd in Melbourne — 17,000.

Australian Rugby administrators hope that this season the Fijians will put the same adventure back into the game that the West Indians brought to cricket.

On their previous tours, the Fijians took scant notice of the intensive cover-defence and sideline plugging tactics developed mainly by New Zealand and South African teams in their fierce Test battles.

Instead, they were unorthodox and unpredictable, firing enormous passes, running like demons and turning themselves yards in impossible tackles.

manners, ready grins and singing.

Fijian Rugby's greatest player was undoubtedly 14-stone Joe Levula, a winger with a tremendous stride and great speed, once described by the New Zealand Rugby Union Almanack as "the first choice of any team in the world."

Reports from Fiji indicate that Levula, now 30, is again in the running for tour selection.

Here is the representative fixture list for the Victorian Rugby season, which starts with first grade and reserve grade matches tomorrow:—

April 22 (Anzac Day): State v. Victoria. Albert Ground. May 11: Victoria v. Queensland. Sydney. May 14: Vic. v. NSW. Sydney. June 29: Vic. v. Fiji. Olympic Park. July 1: Australia v. Fiji. Olympic Park. September 16: Vic. v. NSW 15.

Sprints

In the 1968 South Melbourne Depot Union Election, delegate Jack Cregan was again elected. He won 94 votes and driver Syd Spearpoint won 17 and 3 were informal. Jack was delegate for 23 years.

In 1969 a stop work meeting was held but Glenhuntly driver Pesteranovich refused to run in. Conductors refused to work with him except for one named Brooker. This caused a dispute and trams stopped. This was resolved when the Board allowed both to work as ticket checking Inspectors.

I worked for a week at Preston Depot and my tram was crowded after the City, Brooker boarded my tram but did not check tickets going to East Preston. He asked me if I was new on the job and left the tram at Clifton Hill. I never saw him after that.

Early in 1969 the Board posted a notice in each Depot stating that conductors were not to change points, many did and were called in to see the Depot Master. That year the only standby at Preston Depot was a conductor for one day. The Inspector forgot the rules and ordered him to work on point changing duty for the pm run in.

In December 1968 a young conductor from South Melbourne, Les Ansonbe died suddenly leaving a wife and two young children.

South Melbourne conductress Mona Phillips was the best conductress I saw during the 60's and I was lucky she was my trainer. In April 1969 she was struck by a pram and suffered a leg injury. She had a long spell in hospital and had to leave the job.

In April 1969 at Essendon the painter marked out new parking spaces for officials and revenue clerks.

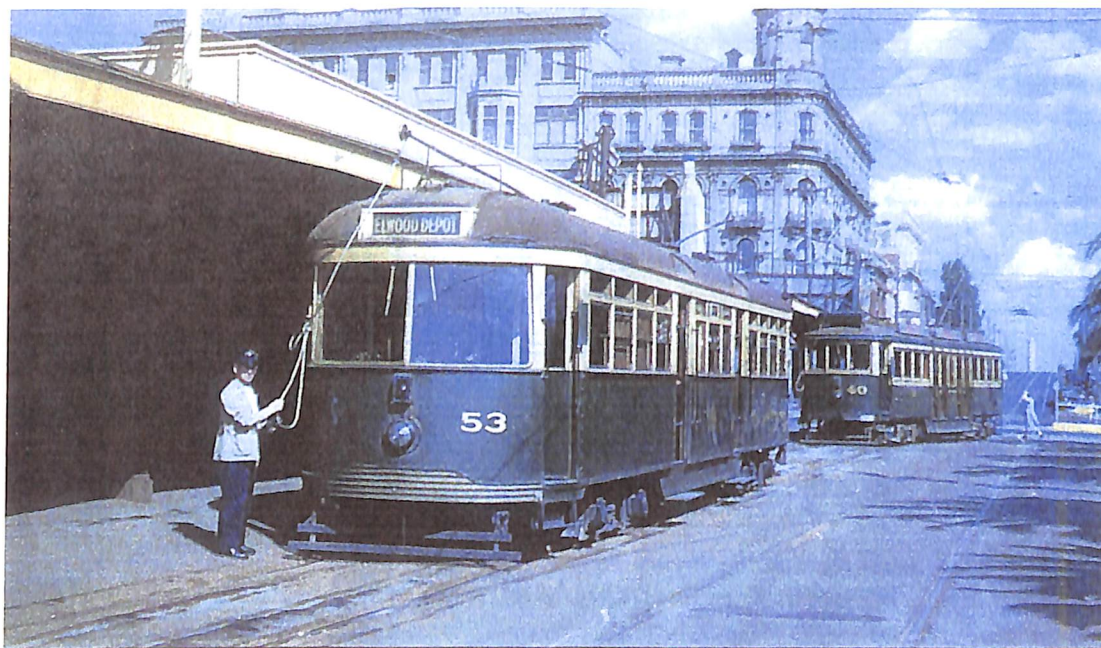
On 16th May 1969 over 100,000 Victorian workers went on strike demanding the release from prison of Trade Union Secretary Clarrie O'Shea and against the penal clauses used against the Trade Unions through the court. He was released.

In 1969 Victoria was the only state in Australia not subsidising public transport. Alf Cullen died in April 1969, he had been the delegate at Preston Workshops until his retirement in 1963. He founded the Retired Tramway Employees Association of Victoria and was President.

In June 1969 the cleaners at North Fitzroy and Clifton Hill received a pay rise of \$1.00. The Board then stopped them working on Sundays and reduced their holiday entitlement from four weeks to three.

A Glenhuntly Conductor used to leave his bag inside the tram while pulling the pole down until June 1970, while at Batman Avenue, a man stole his bag and ran off, he started to give chase but an Inspector stopped him because he thought the thief was armed. The Board ordered him to make restitution of \$77.00 but Union delegate Alex Thwaites organised a collection that amounted to \$65.00.

In June 1970 autumn leaves in Victoria Parade caused one tram to run into the back of another. Driver Adams had to see the Disciplinary Officer and was suspended for one week and demoted to conductor.



St. Kilda Railway Station Tram Terminus, Victorian Railways, St Kilda to Brighton tram, 1954. *Photo by: N. Reed.*

At Kew Depot, Inspector Chubb fell into the service pit and badly fractured his arm.

In 1949 the Board carried 338 million passengers on trams and buses but in 1970 only 138 million were carried.

In 1949 there was a waiting list of applicants for employment but in the 60's there was a large shortage of staff. In 1969 the Board employed 1092 new staff but 1292 people left the service. In 1969 the starting rate for a conductor was \$42.30c, for a postman it was \$52.11c and a waterside worker received \$63.60c per week.

In 1970 Union Secretary Clarrie O'Shea retired. He had suffered from a prolonged attack of crippling arthritis.

In 1970 the wearing of caps was made voluntary for bus drivers.

In 1956 the Board decided to train a number of conductresses as drivers. In the November 1970 issue of 'Tramway Record' Charles O'Shea said "The Union had no opposition to this. However, some members felt unhappy at training women and requested to be removed from the list of trainer drivers. The Board refused their request and suspended a number of men because of it. This led to a mass meeting in March 1956 when a resolution was carried calling on all women to withdraw their applications for driving. Women, as well as men, were adamant that they would not be stood over by the Board and be the cause of men, some with long years of service, being suspended. It is apparent that had there been a sensible approach by Risson, the story would be different today, but the Union has a resolution on its books that can only be removed by a mass meeting resolution rescinding it. If there is sufficient people in favour of women drivers it will be determined by a rank and file decision".

In October 1970 the Depot Starter at Malvern, George Maishman died suddenly. He started on trams in 1939 and served with the AIF in World War II. I remember him as Depot Starter in South Melbourne in the 60's. He was a good inspector and good at telling a joke.

In December 1970 a Malvern conductress was reported by the woman Inspector, Mrs Frost, and ordered to go into Head Office in her own time to see the Disciplinary Officer. He said that her skirt was a little bit too short! - the Depot master could have told her that in one minute, and later she received a letter and photographs from two women passengers from Singapore saying how impressed they and their friends were with her uniform.

Early in 1971 women were driving single and double decker buses in Sydney but women in Melbourne had to wait until 1975.

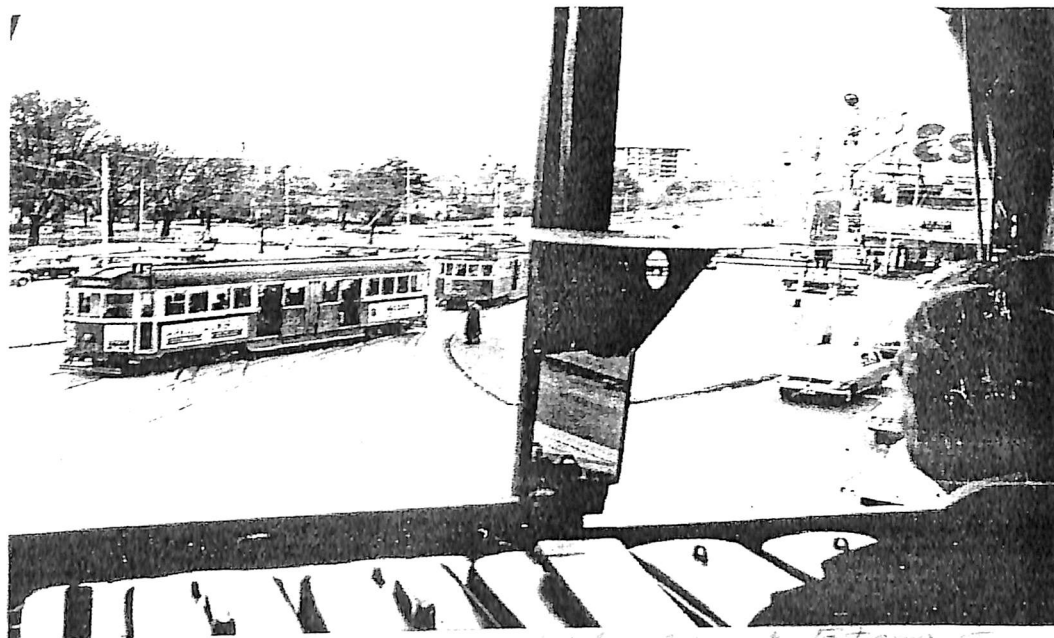
The Tramways Benefit Society closed the old Hospital in October 1971 and opened a new Hospital in Kew in 1974.

In April 1972 the Editor of the 'Tramway Record' said he had information that conductors and bus drivers from 10 Depots were in line for dismissal because they had been detected reissuing their own tickets and they must cease now.

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July / August, 1966

NEWS



Tram moving towards St. Kilda Rd. into 17th Ave. from the depot at Box Hill. J. Killa Junction.

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
MELBOURNE AND METROPOLITAN
TRAMWAYS BOARD

In May 1972 bus driver Brooks from North Fitzroy started work not wearing a tie and coat, an Inspector said he would have to wear them the next day. He refused, was suspended and the following day was dismissed by Disciplinary Officer East as being unsuitable. The Union won an appeal but Mr Brooks resigned anyway.

In September 1970 a Kew conductress bought a drink at a milkbar from the Collins Street Terminus and a District Inspector buying cigarettes told her that she should not be there. A few days later while working an early shift she went to the same milk bar, the same District Inspector told her that it would be her last warning.

In September 1972 the Board decided to allow conductors and drivers to work without caps, ties and tunics from the summer onwards. In January 1973 drivers from Brunswick were allowed 28 minutes running time from Flinders Street to Coburg along Sydney Road with 29 sets of traffic lights.

In January 1973 tram driver Baxter, from Malvern, had an altercation with a motorist in Glenferrie Road, Malvern. The car driver climbed into the tram cabin, grabbed the driver by the leg, pulled off his shoe and threw it on the road. Police later charged a Polish born manager of South Melbourne with assault.

In 1974 a fifty page book was printed named 'Melbourne Tramways of 1974' by David Keenan. There were over 650 trams on 133 miles of track. Gauge was 4 feet 8½ inches. South Melbourne had 53 trams from L Class 104, W2 class 234 to 647, there were W5 class 727 to 838 and SW6 No. 894 to 957. A sliding door tram was a luxury, Malvern had 94 trams and East Preston Depot opened in 1955.

In June 1973 South Melbourne conductress Mary Coady, had an argument with an Inspector and was dismissed for 'failing to carry out the instructions of an officer'. In July 1973 North Fitzroy asked the Board to fit a box into trams and buses with a track key lock so conductors could keep their ticket outfits as too many were stolen. Twenty years later nothing has been done.

The Ballarat Tramways closed in 1971 and in Bendigo in 1973 there were 22 trams running, none of which had had a decent overhaul since 1965 as printed in the 'Tramways Record'.

There was never a notice at the Franklin Street Shunt or anywhere else advising passengers that No. 3 tram did not run on Sundays.

At the Carnegie Terminus there were 400 yards of single track on a curve and out of sight of Glenhuntly Road. In December 1973 South Melbourne Depot Master, Tom Kirkup moved to Glenhuntly Depot along with Inspector Jack Hetherington. He was a good inspector and I talked to him at the funeral service for ex Union Secretary, Syd Edwards in 1992.

In 1974 a young conductor at Brunswick Depot was often in trouble with passengers, he was told that in his job the customer was always right so he resigned and joined the Police Force. He then told the 'Tramway Record' that now the customer is always wrong.

In 1974 bus driver J. Eder from Footscray went on holiday to Europe and said he did not like the Police because they fined him for running out of petrol on the Autobahn.

In August 1974 at North Richmond Terminus, a group of skinhead youths kicked a Policeman senseless, punched the conductress in the mouth, kicked her and ran off.

By 1974 it was no longer necessary to wear caps and conductors and drivers did not have to see the Disciplinary Officer in their own time.

In 1974 South Melbourne driver, Ken Francis, resigned from the Union and became an Inspector.

A Brunswick tram stopped at Victoria Market, a passenger with two chooks was about to board but the conductor told him he could not carry them onto the tram, Rule 93. An Inspector was nearby and said the passenger could carry them onto the tram so he did.

In 1975 Joyce Barry and Cath Stone were the first two women to be trained as tram drivers.

In 1976 a Glenhuntly conductor was driving to work and as he was about to turn to enter the Depot his car was rammed from behind by a car or a truck. He suffered painful neck injuries and concussion and was off work for weeks. His name was Bob Brewster.

From November 1976 a free travel pass for retired employees over sixty or those with 15 years service and returned servicemen, was issued for one month per year.

In October 1976 a presentation dinner dance was held at the Graham Hotel and presentations were made to Eileen Lehane, Maureen Duncan, Kathy Kremmer, Jack Brain and Ernie Huxtable from South Melbourne Depot. Noel Orricks was a very good Depot Master started at South Melbourne then went on to Kew Depot.

In May 1977 a Footscray bus driver was attacked by three louts but were caught by the Police and charged. Also, shots were fired at a bus and bricks thrown through the windows of another bus. In April 1977 a conductress and a driver from Glenhuntly Depot were killed in a tragic shooting at Wilsons Promontory. The driver was from Chile and the conductress, a local girl.

In August 1977, Glenhuntly Depot Master, Tom Kirkup retired because of ill health. At Glenhuntly the cleaners only had straw brooms to clean trams.

In April 1978 a Glenhuntly conductor was sacked after being late for work 15 times and 16 days absent over 10 months.

In April 1978 conductor, Ron Cassells from South Melbourne died suddenly at the young age of 44.

Drivers Ian Smith, Ian Quinn and Keith Howells left South Melbourne and went to Doncaster buses and Keith to Malvern.

As boring as a Sydney tram

IF ever there has been a fizzer in this town, it has been the return of the Sydney tram.

I am not surprised that the Sydney Light Rail Company is failing to attract its anticipated quota of passengers.

Firstly, the system of automatic ticketing is a dud. The day on which I caught the tram, the ticket queue was so slow, we finally jumped on without paying.

Which is what many customers are doing. Which is one of the reasons the company believes that patronage is a little better than receipts would indicate.

At this stage, ticket sales suggest that the number of passengers catching our trams is 40 per cent lower than originally anticipated.

The problem with our trams is that they are so deadly dull.

Proud Sydneysider that I am, I have to admit that our trams are the most boring on which I have travelled anywhere in the world.

So state-of-the-art silent are they, so second millennium smooth is the ride, that these are trams without character. Or characters.

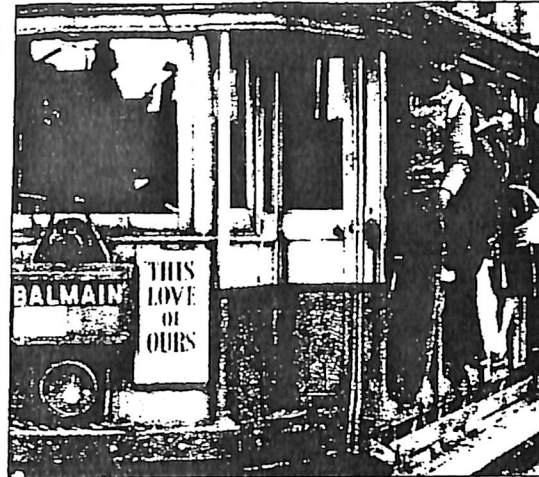
No clanging bell. No authentic old rattler. No one to greet you on board, and say, "Hey, welcome to Sydney, hope you enjoy your ride on our trams."

Nothing like San Francisco's legendary cable cars, so synonymous with the buzz and flavour of our sister city.

No scenery to write home about. Much of the ride, nothing to look at. Nothing at all.

Much as I hate to say it, even Melbourne's trams are better than ours. At least there is a bit of life about them.

At least you can see some-



Good old days ... a crowded Balmain tram back in 1946

thing out of the window, even if it is only Bleak City and those poor wretches who choose to remain incarcerated there.

I grew up in an era when Sydney was famous for its trams.

They were even part and parcel of the lingo, back in the days when a bloke shot through "like a Bondi tram".

The toast racks were my favourites.

Rain, hail or shine, through tempest, hurricane or storm, the conductors would grimly cling to those railings, as they negotiated the running board, collecting the pennies, the treys, the deeners and the zacs.

They weren't just conductors, these blokes. As the trams

rattled along the lines at break-neck speeds, as they took your money, pulled off your ticket and gave you your change, they were daredevils. The Spidermen of the day.

You wouldn't get anyone to do their job nowadays. Not for quids.

Not only did your tram have its destination on the front. It even carried a colour-coded supplement of various dots and stripes, so that everyone knew just where they were going.

The conductors were characters.

They knew how to handle the drunks who were disgorged when the pubs shut at six, along with those difficult dills who occasionally became a headache for the rest of the passengers.

And the trams rattled.

Boy, did they rattle. Especially when the pole became dislodged from the overhead wire, and there was this crackle and hiss as the sparks flew, and the driver had to get out and connect the wheel back up again.

We had a conductor on the way home from school who used to sing Al Jolson songs. Mammy, on bended knee. The full production.

On Saturday night, couples used to take the tram to the pictures, where they'd have a permanent booking in the dress circle, eat Winning Post chocolates and watch Humphrey Bogart, Bette Davis and Edward G. But all that has gone.

While I realise they are actually light rail, while I realise they are not the genuine article, today we have homogenised trams.

Trams that are about as exciting as a National Party convention. Or a Michael Bolton concert. Or a Wallaby international against England.

Trams that are sterile. Trams that are so eerily silent, you could be excused for thinking that instead of sitting in a carriage, you could be riding in a coffin.

Sydney is a city of style and charm, of life and bustle, of character, cheekiness and zest.

Sadly, our trams reflect none of this. They are forgettably dull.

Oh, for a bit of colour, an occasional rattle, some familiar noise. Oh, for a bloke who might ring a bell.

Oh, for a conductor who might get down on bended knee and sing Swanee. Or Waiting Matilda. Or the Aeroplane Jelly song.

In December 1978 free travel passes were available to retired members for two months each year.

In November 1978 South Melbourne conductress Audrey Taylor died not long after her husband Eric, Canteen Manager, who collapsed at the end of his trip on No. 12 route, he had many years service.

Also in November 1978 Camberwell conductress Trudy Technov was struck by a car while pulling down the pole at the Burke Road No. 72 Terminus. South Melbourne drive Bill Doherty transferred to Camberwell where he retired in November 1978 after 37 years service.

The last minutes of the Union meeting attended by South Melbourne delegate Jack Gegan, was in October 1978. The new delegate at South Melbourne was Alf De Bakker from Holland and the new Secretary was bus driver Des shooter.

Syd Edwards was Secretary 1971-78, he was in the army in World War II and joined the tramways in 1946. He was delegate at South Melbourne 1952-56, President 1957-66, Industrial Officer 1967-70 and then Secretary until 1978. I worked with him when he was a driver in 1962, he died in 1992.

... assaulted conductors and drivers on the

October 23 1976
Eileen's long ride ends.



EILEEN LEEHANE has spent 33 years riding the boards on Melbourne trams and doesn't regret it.

"If I could live over again I'd do the same thing," Eileen, 65, said yesterday.

Eileen (above centre) was presented with a bunch of flowers from her workmates in the South Melbourne depot cafeteria.

November 9
Free ride for Xmas shoppers?

A free tram service may run in the city for the three shopping weeks before Christmas.

November 27
Man dies tram accident

A 38-year-old man died when hit by a tram in Collingwood last night.

He was Kenneth Hadden Dickson of Johnston St., Fitzroy.

Police said he was

In 1980 South Melbourne held a stop work meeting over assaults on St. Kilda routes. Other Depots that had members assaulted were Brunswick, Doncaster, Kew, Essendon and Glenhuntly.

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Early in 1979 louts under 30 years often assaulted conductors and drivers on the Essendon route on Friday and Saturday nights.



In August 1979 a Glenhantly driver was suspended for a week for refusing to work over 4 hours 45 minutes.

In August 1979 new members of the Retired Tramways Association were Jack Cregan and Ernie Huxtable from South Melbourne. September 1979 was the first 'Union' magazine with tram 676 on the front and pictures of Des Shooter and Sam Branciforte, scribe for 'Brunswick Briefs' and also scribe 'Sherlock' for Malvern.

The fare in September 1979 from City to St. Kilda Beach was 45c, a monthly permit was \$14.00 plus 10c for each journey. It was estimated that 23% of people did not use a car.

Since 1925 only six, one-man bus drivers had retired medically fit at 65 years of age.

In 1980 South Melbourne held a stop work meeting over assaults on St. Kilda routes. Other Depots that had members assaulted were Brunswick, Doncaster, Kew, Essendon and Glenhantly.

In 1979 South Melbourne driver, Bill McHenry retired after 31 years service. He started at the Coburg Depot, suffered from asthma and died in 1987. He told me he received \$30,000 in Super in 1979.

Writing in the 'Union Record' in 1980, Allan Fields said, "that of all the running sheds in the tramways, South Melbourne had the worst conditions. No fresh air in the mess room, a leaking gas meter, leaking roofs and only an old belt driven wheel grinder to remove tram wheel 'flats'. The Board refused to put in a new water urn or supply milk. The pits, under six of the nine roads were too low and cramped and put a strain on the back.

In 1979 Bill Heeney at the old Coburg Depot, which was without trams, was the last Grippe in service and retired in 1980 after 40 years service. He joined in 1939 and was broken in as a cable gripman after 80 hours training without pay. He also had to do 40 hours Conductor Training without pay before becoming a Grippe Conductor.

Writing in the November 1979 Union Record, Footscray bus driver Bob Murphy says he was demoted from driver to conductor, allegedly for wearing a maroon jumper with his uniform. One day he went to work wearing a shirt and tie and was sent home, without pay, to bring in his tunic coat.

In May 1980 the "MMTB' Band went to New Zealand for the New Zealand Brass Band Championships in 'B' grade and finished with two first placings and a third. Four buses were put at their service by the Christchurch Transport Board and the Band won the Woolworths Cup in the street march.

In June 1980, South Melbourne Driver, Eddie Merrick suffered a heart attack while driving a tram along St. Kilda Road, and after a week in hospital he recovered at home. He had been at South Melbourne for 28 years.

In 1980 youth louts abused and assaulted drivers and conductors from Camberwell on the East Burwood route. Driver G. Jak identified several to Police and two were arrested.

Approximately 119 million passengers were carried on buses and trams in 1980. At the end of 1980 there were 742 trams, including 44 in storage and 278 buses. On July 1st South Melbourne had 61 trams including 34 W2's. Malvern had 104 trams. 342,000 people in Australia were unemployed in May 1980.

Footscray Depot said farewell to its trams on March 10th 1962 and the last tram at the Depot was No. 469. From another Depot tram 681 was wrecked in a collision near Highpoint West on 20th May 1977 and after repairs was expected to return to traffic in February 1981. Tram 936 was damaged in a collision in 1979 and returned to traffic in April 1980 after being repaired. After two days in traffic it was wrecked again and repaired. In 1978-79 trams 272, 482, 512 and 518 were sent to operate in Seattle, USA.

From March 1981 the Union 'Tramway Record' magazine was improved with better quality paper and Paul Thomas was the South Melbourne Scribe. The total cost for printing was \$5000 per year.

South Melbourne drive Ann Kuta retired in 1980 after over 30 years service. When she and her husband took their Volkswagen on holiday around Europe she sent me a postcard from Belgrade where she was born. I forgot to ask her about life in World War II, it must have been hard when the Allies bombed Belgrade they killed locals as well as Germans.

1966

Depot Masters Meet

Against a background of a map of the Melbourne tram and bus routes which they and their staffs operate, the Traffic Manager (Mr. R. C. Drummond) and his Depot Masters were photographed during a Christmas "get-together" at head office.



From left to right: R. Phillips (Glenhuntly), T. Kirkup (Collingwood), R. Maxwell (Preston), W. McCormack (Kew), A. G. Whitehead (North Fitzroy), Mr. Drummond, F. Tullberg (Duncaster), F. World (Brunswick), F. A. Murdoch (Essendon), C. H. Jamieson (Footscray), D. E. Lamb (Port Melbourne), M. R. Wilkinson (South Melbourne).

ENGINEERING

TRAMCARS: The tramcar passenger fleet in regular use totalled 703. It was maintained in good operating condition, an average of 92% being available for use in peak periods throughout the year. Maintenance at Preston Workshops included 62 major overhauls and nine major accident repairs. Average mileage per changeover for defects was 10,400 miles, following 11,700 in 1961-62, 11,900 in 1962-63 and 12,300 in 1963-64.

BUSES: The bus passenger fleet in regular use totalled 22. It was maintained in good operating condition, an average of 89.6% being available for use in peak periods throughout the year. Maintenance at North Fitzroy Bus Garage included 33 major overhauls and 4 major accident repairs. Average mileage per changeover for defects was 4,300 miles, following 3,800 in 1961-62, 3,800 in 1962-63 and 4,400 in 1963-64.

ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTION:

The installed capacity of the Board's sub-stations remained unchanged at 377 megawatts automatically controlled.

Installation of new supervisory equipment in the Carlton Control Room was completed and all 26 sub-stations were brought under its control. This required the erection of 31 miles of Pilot Cable and major alterations to the control wiring in the 14 sub-stations.

The new equipment will provide indication and control of the operation of all devices in the sub-stations.

In association with the State Electrolysis Committee, the Board continued with the installation of drainage feeders to protect underground structures from stray current electrolysis, and 11 miles of aerial drainage feeders have been erected.

Six miles of trolley wire were renewed; 75 condemned and 23 damaged poles were replaced and 114 poles relocated. The remaining 51 poles on the abandoned Footscray routes were removed.

TRAM TRACKS: The Board's 134 miles of double tram track, and four miles of single track were maintained in safe operating condition. The road surfaces on 14.65 miles of single track were top-dressed. Rail corrugations were removed by a regular programme of rail grinding and "scrubbing".

(Annual Report '64-65)

Early in 1981 drivers Allan Lane and Dave Richards from South Melbourne passed the exam to become Inspectors, and Jim Harper from Preston became Union Secretary.

During 1978 trams were involved in six fatal accidents and 93 accidents causing injuries.

In August 1981 South Melbourne Depot Starter Frank Reardon, retired after 49½ years service.

In February 1982 the new 'Travel Card', previously known as the 'Day Tripper', was popular and cost \$2.00.

Writing in the March 1982 'Union Record' Bob Murphy says of a Footscray bus driver Bob Gill, was another victim of the unbelievable prejudice often displayed by Victorian Magistrates towards tramway drivers. Bill hit a car whose driver decided to turn right at an intersection from the left curb after he had indicated a left turn. Bill went to Court but lost the case and was fined \$100 with \$50 Court costs. He was advised that if he appealed he would have to provide his own Solicitor. When I was a conductor during the 1970's, three tram drivers with whom I worked, were involved in three separate collisions with cars. In each case the tram drivers were not at fault. Two of the car drivers went through red lights and one drove too close to the left side of the tram. The Tramway Board had to pay all the damage in two cases and 50% of the other. Word went round among car drivers that they only had to sue the Board when collisions were their fault. I was told by drivers that during the 1950's if a car driver wanted a new car he could drive into a tram and the Magistrate would order the Board to pay the cost of a new car.

In June 1982 three drivers from North Fitzroy were off work following serious assaults and in May and August two drivers from Footscray Depot were assaulted. One man was sentenced to one week in Gaol for assault and fined \$200 and two other youths were convicted.

In February 1983 drivers John and Marlene Hamilton from South Melbourne built a new house at Cockatoo and they were very lucky their house was spared during the terrible bush fires. They told me they were going to sell the house and as John was from Ireland, they were going to Northern Ireland to make a living renovating houses.

In May 1983 nylon raincoats and short sleeve shirts became available to wear as part of the uniform and full length lockers were installed at Glenhuntly.

On 1st July 1983 the Tramways Board and M. and M.T.B. changed its name to the Metropolitan Transit Authority.

Clive Dunn from New Zealand was Union delegate at South Melbourne in November 1983. South Melbourne driver Don Vallianatos retired after 25 years service. He came from Greece and finished in Head Office because of ill health. Inspector Bill Jones from South Melbourne also retired after 36 year service. He was for many years in charge of Assistant Conductor in Collins and Swanston Streets.