

From a letter by J.D. McLean, dated 18.3.84 to Ross ?

I will assume that you have been in touch with Keith Kings. He and I went to a fair bit of trouble perhaps 10, 15 years ago making out a list of tramway/railway crossings and I have a copy of it somewhere. Therefore, I will restrict by information to the signal boxes involved.

Market St. Melbourne, No signal box involved. I have never seen any instructions either.

City Road, South Melbourne. There was signal box at York St. from 17/8/1888. It had 6 levers working in a 14 lever frame, and at least at first no gates were connected. There was a "gate box" that is not interlocked at City Road. On Sunday 11 Sept. 1898 the following alterations were made at South Melbourne in connection with regrading etc. at City Rd. and York St.

A. The signal box at York St. and the gate box at City Road also interlocking apparatus and gates at both crossings were taken out of use and abolished. Temporary gates at City Road crossing are provided and are worked by hand.

B. All signals at the above places with the exception of the "Up Home" signal post No. 5 were also abolished but a new down Home Signal was erected 160 yards from the Melbourne end of the platform for use during the temporary deviation of the lines of way. Two quadrants are provided on the down platform at South Melbourne to work these Up and Down home signals. This is to be done by station staff.

C. On and from the above date, South Melbourne is disestablished as a Block Post. The permanent block sections are now Flinders St. "A" Box - Albert Park and Albert Park - St. Kilda on Up and Down journeys.

D. Block instruments will be placed at South Melbourne and Middle Park for use as required on special occasions, when signalman will be supplied by the Traffic Inspector to work them. On such occasions special arrangements must be made for hand signalling.

That lot is extracted from Weekly Notice 11/1898

On Friday 28 Oct. 1898 the following alterations were brought into use at South Melbourne viz:-

(a) A new arm is provided on the existing down home signal post to be used as an up home signal for the protection of gates at City Road level crossing to be worked from Quadrant by Gatemen as per Weekly Notice No. 15 (1898) Clause C.

(B) The existing home signal for the station has been abolished and in lieu thereof a new signal (with two arms working conjointly to be seen above and below bridge) brought into use on the opposite side of the line about 30 yards nearer St. Kilda from the present site.

This signal is to be worked from Quadrant on the up platform except when block working is in force at South Melbourne when it will be necessary to work all signals from Down Platform. A chain and padlock are provided to secure Quadrant on Down Platform when the block section is not divided.

Weekly Notice 18 of 1898.

Weekly Notice 32/99. The up and down lines were diverted to their permanent position on the embankment on Saturday night 4th instant after the passing of the last train. Consequent on the above alteration a new down home signal for the station situated 150 yards from the end of the platform was brought into use for first train Sunday morning 5th instant. The existing down home for the station and the up home for the City Road level crossing (both on the same post) were abolished same date. This instruction cancels Clause A in WN 18/98. On the down journey there is a rising grade of 1 in 75 for 15 chains to the bridge then ????? 1 in 66 to platform.

St George's Road North Fitzroy - Fitzroy

When the railway was opened from North Fitzroy to Fitzroy, it was single and on or about 4/11/88 it became double line and the junction between Northcote, Clifton Hill and Fitzroy lines was controlled from Parkside Street signal box. It had 22 working levers in a 44 lever frame, and controlled the gates at Parkside Street (street). It apparently never had any control on the St Georges Rd level crossings on the Fitzroy and Clifton Hill lines. There were alterations on 8/2/1889, 20/8/1889, 29/10/1891, none of which refer to the tram crossing. On 7/9/1896 there was an alteration something to do with gates, but I think on the Rae St. side and there was an alteration on 22/11/1898 but what for I know not.

On 1/7/1899 the list showed two lots of gates and two gate stops, but where the second lot were I can't tell. There were almost certainly not on the Fitzroy line where it crosses St. Georges Road.

During 1903 there were renewals of the tramway crossing on the three tracks (two to Northcote and one to Clifton Hill. For a short time each of the three tracks was taken out and traffic work on the other two. The dates were 4/1/1903, 8/ something /03, 15/3/1903 and the original arrangement reverted to on 19/4/1903. Somewhere I have the interlocking sketches for these.

On 13/4/1906, Parkside Junction signal box was abolished. The new signal box was North Fitzroy "B" (St Georges Rd.) which had one gate lever and one gate stop lever. In 1919, the cable tram lines were fitted with bolts which stopped the grip from going too far because it was in the way. On 28/10/1930 cable trams were abolished and catch points provided for electric trams, and the signal box was abolished on 2/5/1965. Until this signal box was in use, it looks as if there were no gates nor signals to stop trams. Fitzroy line was double from NF to Scotchmer St. from late 88 to 03? These two crossings were I think the only places where the trams go there first. In every other case the railway was running before the tram line was built.

Epson Road Showgrounds

Epson Road or Tower H was constructed 3/9/1906. It had spaces for 8 levers. Tramway signals and derails were brought into use 10/10/06. On 31/10/1914, catches were put into to replace the derails. Now thats interesting what sort of derails would you use on a tram line in a public road if they were not catches? On 5/6/1925, a new apparatus wwas provided account the provision of bridge over roadway. My records do not show just when the changeover took place as the signal box is still there.

Glenferrie Road Hawthorn

On 30/5/1913 derails were provided in the tramway with disc signals attached. The signal box had been there since 1883. I think these was VR's earlist interlocked crossing station. There were alterations on 21/5/1915 and and 28/4/1918, which seem to be those on the new down line and then new up line. There was a new box on the top line (for use as a block post only) on 28/4/1918.

Glenferrie Road Malvern

The interlocking at Malvern was constructed 10/10/1887. It had spaces for 22 levers. On 26/1/1912, two levers were added to those working for tramway purposes. It was replaced by a 10 lever fram on 28/2/1915 which was part of the four track scheme and the regrading was completed on 26/9/1915. The signal boxk appears to have remained (that if it was same one) until automatic signalling 21/12/1921.

Burke Road Camberwell

The dates in the register which appear to concern the level crossing with the trams are 28/4/1918 and 16/1/1919. For soem of this time, the tram line was single across the crossing with the railway while it was double on both sides. The signal box would appear to have been the one with 44 levers which was installed on 20/3/1898 and was not the first.

Glenferrie Road Kooyong

We don't seem to have the date the Kooyong signal box was installed. It may have been only put into use on 30/5/1913, when the tram line was opened. There are instructions for working in the 1919 General Appendix among others. It was a 16 lever frame. On 15/12/1922 there were the usual alterations to the place because of the electrification of the railway. On 15/2/1957 the line was duplicated between Heyington and Kooyong inclusive of Kooyong.

Burke Road Gardiner

The signal box was installed on 5/12/1917. It had 16 working levers and included two tram signals and catch points (or derails) On 15/12/1922, the railway was electrified. On 10/11/1957, the railway was duplicated through the station and inclusive of the crossing.

Glenhuntly Road, Glenhuntly

The signal box was installed on 10/2/1911, and had spaces for 21 levers. On 12/11/1913 there were provided tram catches and signals. On 23/1/1934, the tramway was duplicated. The railway was electrified on 27/1/1922 I think...

Glenhuntly Road Elsternwick.

Signal box constructed 26/8/1888 with 35 spaces
12/11/1913 tram catches and discs provided.
29/4/1959 Goods sidings removed to make way for temporary crossing.
30/8/1959 10 lever apparatus provided working temporary crossing.
8/5/1960 some sort of temporary arrangement at crossing.
2/10/1960 apparatus abolished account provision of overpass.
I have no note of tramway duplication.

Whitehorse Road Camberwell (Deepdene)

No signal box and no signals. Accident one Saturday night when Dasher clobbered a four wheeled tram. 1928 General Appendix gives instructions, which tram blokes didn't heed. Outer Circle this end closed about 1943 but I can't say when rails were pulled up. Deepdene passenger service ceased 1927 (or 1928) see Book.

Riversdale Road, Riversdale

See Outer circle book
Signal box was installed on 19/12/1916 with 21 levers, including tram crossing catches and discs.
2/11/1924, or 31/10/1924 or 1/11/1924 whichever date you prefer, electric trains. 22/3/1926 separate levers for signals and tram catches. 10/10/1963 booms worked from signal box.
As far as the railway goes it seems that the tracks were double across the lever crossing at least as far back as 9/2/1914
Signal box still there. Quite often worked by signalwoman.
Maybe your record show railway duplication as 31/7/1955, but that was the date of the duplication beyond the facing points at the down end which were on the down side of the level crossing.

Lygon St. North Carlton

Signal box was installed on 30/10/1916 specifically for the tramway crossing. Previous signal box had been for block purposes in signal bay on platform. It had spaces for 21 levers. It was abolished on 2/5/1965, when the line was singled and reduced to a sort of branch.

Nicholson St. Footscray

This signal box was called Footscray D and installed 2/9/1921 which was odd because it was between Footscray "A", the junction and Footscray "C" at Albert St. Nicholson St had had hand worked gates I think for years. The interlocked signal box was installed specifically for the tramway crossing. The box had space for 10 levers. On 11/9/1927 the down line went below, and then on 15/10/1927 the up line went below and the box was closed.

Nicholson St. North Fitzroy

Nicholson St. had had an interlocked signal box there in 8/5/1888 with 14 levers for the interlocked gates. It was closed on 13/4/1906 when it became an open crossing. A new interlocking was installed on 4/5/1923 for interlocked gates and on 14/3/1956, the tram lines crossed there and there were catches and discs. It was closed 2/5/1965 when the line became a single line branch.

That will have to do for a while. The GA's of 1919, 1928 1936 and 1953 give instructions. The 1979 GA shows that there are still 4 left. I have somewhere the interlocking sketches for some of these places including St Georges Road for some of the 1903 replacements. There are quite a lot of pictures around too. Some in the History of Northcote and some in History of Camberwell etc.

The line between Royal Park and Collingwood (now Victoria Park) and Heidelberg was opened on 18/5/1888 and you show the tramway date at 10/8/1887. If this is the date of the tramway, then this is a another occasion when the trams got there first. Incidentally, I have somewhere a rough diagram of the tracks at the connection point between the two tramway companies. Come to think of it, did'nt one company operate only on the northside and the other company on the southside of the line line. Perhaps if this was so, the connection between the two occurred after the railway.

Anyway, there was a signal box there called Clifton Hill "C" Box and it has 12 spaces in the frame. From 1888 to 1904 it was a single line worked by large electric staff and the section was Clifton Hill - St Georges Road Junction (which may have been wath they called Parkside St. Junction at that time). "C" box installed 29/7/1890.

Then on 4/12/1904 they made what they called tempoary alterations account the Northcote loop line, so that the single line became double, another date being 5/12/1904. What was temporary I don't know, but it came permanent on 16/4/1905. St that from the latter date at lease the trams were being crossed by two lines of railway. Perhaps the double line towards Northcotes actually started from the north west side of the level crossing for 5 months.

On 8/3/1914, there were temporary alterations in connection with the tramway, on 12/4/1914, the tramway alterations were complete, whatever they were. On 1/3/1925, the signal box was shifted to the opposite side of the line and I believe the opposite side of Plenty Road too, the new down line was over the bridge on 26/7/1925 and the job was compled on 23/8/1925. There is a picture of the old box with cable trams going past in the History of Northcote.

There are pictures of tramways going through level crossings in the History of Hawthorn (Somethng about Peppercorns) and in the History of Camberwell, there is one of Burke Road. I have some signal diagrams where show the tram crossings at Camberwell but not of Glenferrie, or do they?

There are instructions in 1913 GA regarding Glenferrie and Kooyong and Malvern . In 1919 GA there are instructions about Lygon St, Glenferrie Road, Burke Rad Riversdale Road, two on Glenhuntly Road and Epson Road, all the writing being together and there is also the bit about the Dasher at Deepdene.

If you are talking about signal boxes, call them after the stations as I have. I found you minicipal descriptions confusing.

That will have to do.

Queens Road indeed. I suppose that if you are talking about a crossing that was there in 1900, you will have to use the name of the road as it was in 1900. Therefore Plenty Road.

See you in May.
Cheers,

Jack McLean