

## PAUL GRECH - 1960-1998 - TRAMWAYS NUMBER 3533

My dad's name was Paul Grech. He immigrated to Australia from Malta in 1955. He started his life on the Tramways otherwise known as the M.M.T.B in 1960. His Tramways number was 3533. He was given a badge with that number on it which I think he had to wear on his uniform. I think Dad worked at a few depots. From memory and I hope I am right. I think he was at Preston and South Melbourne Depots before I was born. I always remember him being at Essendon Depot from the time I was born until his retirement in 1998. In his last year of work he worked a bit ~~of~~ out of Brunswick Depot covering shifts for drivers on leave or if there was a shortage maybe!

Dad loved being on the Tramways. He loved his job. He loved meeting people and helping them if help was needed. I remember he started off as a tram conductor and I think you had to be a conductor for a year before you could become a driver. Not my Dad though. He hated being a "connie" so much that he was in the office ~~so much~~ nagging the men in charge to let him become a driver all of the ~~time~~ <sup>time</sup>. In the end I think they just got sick of him being in there ~~at~~ ~~of the time~~ that I think he ended up being a driver before six months was up! He was persistent and I am not surprised that it happened. Ironically in later years after the conductors were phased out he had to sell ~~the~~ tickets on the West Footscray line. I am not sure if there were others though!

After many years he decided to go for his instructor's licence. I guess that's what it was called although I am not really sure. After passing he was able to train student drivers. Another aspect of his job that he really enjoyed. It made him proud when his students passed and became drivers also. He had a reputation of being an excellent instructor with some student drivers requesting him to be their instructor. There was rarely a student who didn't pass!

Unfortunately some time in the 90s a rule came down from higher above. Not sure if it was head office or that they were acting on a change from the Victorian Government at the

time but it was if you didn't have a Driver's Licence you could no longer train students. There were no exceptions and Dad was really shattered about this because he didn't have a car licence. We relied on public transport, taxis and walking when we were growing up. I honestly think that this was the time when Dad no longer loved the job anymore which was in a way quite sad. He really was disappointed about that decision. He did continue to work but one day in late November 1998 came home and told my mum that he was retiring next week! It was an extremely quick decision which left us all surprised!

My family and I were all proud of Dad being on the Tramways Board for as long as he was. We have some great memories. When we were young there was a Christmas Picnic in December for the employees and their families. It was always a fun day which we all enjoyed. I suppose the best part as a child was the present we received each year. They are happy memories! I always remember a hint of pride if I was on Dad's tram going to or coming home from school or going out with Mum. We lived on Mount Alexander Road Essendon for about four years and if he went past on the tram ~~you'd~~ you'd hear the "ding-ding" of the bell and knew it was him. Living on the Essendon tramline also had ~~its~~ its advantages especially when Dad forgot his lunch because we could always go out and meet him to pass it on! In 1991 we moved out to Glenroy and because Dad didn't drive, if he was first car out I would be the one more than likely who got up to take him in to the Depot and when he finished late I would go and pick him up so he wasn't travelling on trains late at night. I didn't mind doing this because he spent so much time with us when we were kids and was the best Dad.

I know it sounds like I am big-noting him and even myself I do have <sup>an immense amount of</sup> pride in the man that Dad was. I am sorry now that I don't have better recollections of some of his life on the Tramways because I feel like I have missed out on something. Having said that though the ~~Tramway~~ Tramways was a really big part of our world growing up and even when we were ~~adults~~ adults and Dad had a great deal of pride really of being a tram

driver. To us, he was just the best dad in the world. It makes us proud that you are giving his tram memorabilia a place in your Tram Museum. If he knew this it would make him the proudest man in the world. And somehow from Heaven I think he will know!

Thank-you.  
Joan Grech.

P.S. Please forgive all of the writing errors!