

Melbourne Tram
Memories
Book II

Ray Roberts

On 19th September 1961, I began work as a Tram Conductor at South Melbourne Depot (built in 1926). A picture from the *Trolley Wire* magazine, 1977, shows W class 375 in front on 29 Jan. Another picture shows 231 in William Street on 15 July, 1925. J class 77 was the first electric tram to cross Princes Bridge on 4 January 1926, nine days after the last cable tram.

We had three weeks holiday until 1964, when holiday leave was increased to four weeks. We had eight different routes to work, and the best was 12: South Melbourne and St Kilda Beach to City – Brunswick Street.

In 1968, a male passenger boarded the tram in Swanston Street, paid a fare, and the next stop called out to me: "You bloody Pommie bastard". He repeated himself at every stop, yet there had been no argument. With less than one stop to go to Brunswick Street and the Victoria Parade Terminus, I said, "You can get off here". He punched me on the nose. I pushed him away, and was surprised when he fell over, rose, got off the tram and walked away. The driver was Neville Evans who had once been a policeman in country NSW. His wife was Eve, a conductress. It was not until 6 July 2002, that I read in the *Herald-Sun* that she was reunited with her brother after 72 years. They had been searching for each other for a lifetime, as they had been orphaned as siblings. Their pictures were shown from the 30s.

I have an old scrapbook about Victoria in the 1960s. The title is "Six youths kicked and bashed a man aged 34 to death". He was on an all night pie stall at around 4.30 am when they hit him with a bottle, punched him without provocation and drove off in a car with a blonde girl near Flinders Street Station. That was the 60th murder for 1961. Yet London with a population of 8,171,982 people averaged 27 murders a year. England and Wales' population of 46 million averaged 14 murders yearly. Yet during the 1960s in Melbourne, it was safe to walk the streets all night. From 1961 to 1964, when I finished late shifts at 1 am and walked home to Albert Park, I only once saw anyone. A man and a woman were walking 50 yards in front, and while the man was crossing the road he was struck by a fast moving Volkswagen car. The car stopped and I took the number. Two young male migrants from Europe got out but then drove away! A taxi-driver stopped and called the police. I gave the car number to them. The man died about three weeks later. The police charged the car driver, and I had to go to court as a witness, but he only received a small fine.

In 1964, I moved to a three-roomed flat at the side of a house at 10 Canterbury Road, Toorak. Until 1969, I walked home after the late shift from 1 am at South Melbourne Depot in 52 minutes. It was very safe at night. During the early 1970s, I was working with driver Peter Bruce on route 12 to Brunswick Street. The tram was about to pass the South Melbourne Technical School in Albert Road when a truck came from the left and began a right-hand turn into the school. It struck the front of the tram, and damaged it. Peter Bruce was stunned and I had to run 400 yards to a track phone to call Radio Centre. An ambulance took Peter away for a check and no one was hurt. The truck driver talked to me and was laughing and joking, and at the depot I filled in an accident report. No passenger was injured on my tram in 33 years. Later Peter Bruce became a taxi driver.

During the early 1970s, I was on a No. 12 tram going to Brunswick Street. When we reached Collins Street, we were early so I went to the toilet. The driver was John Vryonis from Greece. I came out of the toilet, but my tram was not there but there was an inspector. He laughed and pointed towards the next stop at King Street. I walked there and asked the driver why he had not waited. He said the inspector had ordered him to drive forward, yet our tram was not delaying trams to West Preston nor Mont Albert. On the 12 route, trucks with a load that was too high used to often pull down the overhead wires at the intersection of Spencer and Flinders Streets.

During the 1970s, driver Dawson had a second job, but was always tired because of a lack of sleep. He lost his driving job and became a conductor. One night going to West Preston he was so tired he could not collect fares, but an inspector boarded the tram and found the fares had not been collected. He was suspended, but allowed to work as an assistant conductor. He was a good driver, but tried to do too much.

Driver Bill Doherty was a driver for over 30 years and used to say to me "The D. I. inspector needs a swift kick in the pants". For the "W" class tram the distance from the ground to the running board was 14 inches, and then 13 inches to the floor level, a total of 27 inches said the chairman Mr Risson in 1961. In 1962 the Tramways Board made a profit of 4,800 pounds. In 1963 there were 750 trams. In September 1964 a dispute about new rosters stopped the trams on five routes from Malvern Depot. In 1964, 100 men aged 19 – 40 years and single signed papers in London to work on Melbourne trams. Of 55 interviewed in Birmingham, only 27 were accepted.

During the 60s, I put in an application for driving twice, but was refused. No reason given. In 1971 my application was accepted, and I went to Hawthorn Depot for a driving test. It closed for tram services in 1965. I was told drive out of the depot and towards Camberwell Junction. When I reached the Junction, the instructor named Wright said to take the left track to the route 70 Wattle Park. The track on the right was to Burwood. I drove ahead and found I was on the right track to Burwood. I failed the test because I should have asked the drivers the correct way to stop and change the points before going to Hawthorn. Hawthorn was also used as a uniform depot.

On 6th April 1965, a number 15 route tram to Moreland, No. 282 collided with a bulk cement truck weighting 19 tons in St Kilda Road at Union Street. The truck turned over and six women tram passengers were hurt.

On 5th July 1966, there was a strike on East Preston 88 routes because a driver refused to work at another depot.

On 9th December 1967, an Italian barn driver Luigi Pratico was sentenced to two months gaol (jail) for kicking a car driver who drove slowly in front of his tram and called him a "Dago". There was an appeal against the sentence.

In 1967 a tram driver was reading a book on road safety and ran into the back of a car in Nicholson Street, Fitzroy. He was fined \$20.

In 1968 there were 134 miles of double track and 3.5 miles of single track.

During the week ending 9 August 1969, 204 employees resigned and 148 were recruited. In Nov 1968 reporter Andrew McKay was in a Kew tram departing at 5.59 pm and passengers were packed like bottles in a crate. There were two conductors, yet from Exhibition Street to Hoddle Street around 20 people got off without paying.

On 21st February 1969, a sniper fired shots into a tram at 6.10 pm in Glenhuntly Road, Elsternwick.

In 1964 shots were fired into a tram in Mount Alexander Road, Flemington and in St Georges Road, Northcote.

On 15th November 1965, a tram ran into the back of another tram in St Kilda Road at 8.16 am. Twelve people were hurt and seven taken to hospital.

In 1960, trams carried 209 million passengers. In 1970 they carried 133 million. In 1970 there was a shortage of 359 drivers and 158 conductors and one conductress was sacked because of her pig-tailed hairstyle.

In October 1971 there were 700 trams. On 17th July a tram ran into the back of another tram in Chapel Street, St Kilda. Four passengers were hurt and a driver broke his leg.

On 28th June 1972, sick leave was increased from five days to eight days. Conductors were wanted aged 20 to 50 years.

On 15th September 1965, a conductor missed his tram at the Toorak Terminus, and an inspector collected fares to the city.

The worst accident I heard about was in July 1974 when a bad driver from Essendon depot named Moanes Mahamed Eldebs aged 35 drove through a red light before the West Coburg Terminus, drove into the terminus too fast and his tram struck the time clock and knocked it over. The clock hit a 12-year-old girl on the head and killed her. A policeman tested the brakes and found they were effective.

On 29th September 1973, two trams collided at St Kilda Junction and both were derailed. Two passengers were taken to hospital with shock.

On 29th April 1974, a tram ran into the back of another tram outside the cemetery in Lygon Street at 7.50 am and three people were taken to hospital. On 14th October 1974, two trams collided in North Melbourne and one driver broke his legs.

On 14th April 1975, two men attacked the conductor from Essendon in Flemington Road and one fired three shots at driver Anthony Long, but missed him. On 14th May a man aged 72 was getting off a tram in Camberwell Road. A car stopped but a second car ran into the back of it and forced the first car against the running board. His foot was pinned against the running board and he was taken to hospital and lost his foot.

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On 7th July 1975, a tram struck the tram in front in St Georges Road, Northcote and the 38-year-old driver collapsed and died. Only one 10-year-old girl was taken to hospital.

In 1960 the road toll for Victoria was 660 dead and 15,571 injured. There were 27,697 accidents.

On 4th August 1976, 15 trams were put out of action at Glenhuntly Depot. There were 65 trams in the depot at Caulfield. Very late at night wires were snipped in the drivers' cabins and the line breakers damaged by vandals. The damaged trams blocked 13 others from running out.

On 25th October 1976, two trams collided in Flinders Street in the city and two women were taken to hospital. On 26th October a tram collided with a bus in Footscray; the driver was John Amos. On 25th November a policeman was directing traffic at Flinders and Spencer Streets and was struck by a tram and taken to hospital. On 6th December two trams collided at Bourke and Swanston Streets at 8.40 am and eleven passengers were taken to hospital.

On 11th December 1977, a tram struck a car in St Kilda Road and two people in the car were killed. The road toll was 893 killed.

In February 1978 trams 401 and 484 were shipped to Seattle USA and sold for \$5,000 each, but delivery cost was \$40,000.

In 1967 the unemployment rate was 1.6 percent.

On 26 September 1978, a tram driver aged 35, who had been a driver for four years, was sacked after he drove into the back of another tram on 7th May in Collins Street. On 15th November a tram ran into the back of another tram in Elizabeth Street and eight people were taken to hospital. On 27th December Naci Kambur, a conductor from South Melbourne Depot, aged twenty and a migrant from Turkey was leaning out of an open door, and listening to a defective motor as the tram travelled along Fitzroy Street in St Kilda. His head struck a fibreglass "Keep Left" sign and he was killed.

On 10th January 1979, two trams collided in Maribyrnong at 4.45 pm. One caught fire and one driver was hurt. On 9th January 1979, two trams collided side on at St Kilda Junction, route 5 and route 15 to Moreland at 7.26 am and one driver was taken to hospital. On 26th February a car was jammed between two trams on St Kilda Road and its driver was taken to hospital.

In 1979 a tram driver from Kew Depot struck a car three times in Burwood Road and was fined \$100. Also in 1979 route 77 Prahran – City route was eliminated and replaced partly by route 70.

In July 1945 the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Japan. A 16-year-old girl driving a tram was not hurt.

In the early hours of 23rd October 1975, a fire destroyed two bays of Woodland Depot in Philadelphia, USA causing damaged estimated at \$30 million. 60 PCC trams and six work cars were lost representing 25 percent of the fleet. The building was 114 years old. 60 more PCC cars survived.

On 14th September 1979, there was a snap strike by revenue clerks from 5 am, but trams ran.

On 26th June 1979, Hoa Pham Tan, a 20 year old conductor from Kew Depot went to the East Richmond post office, was abusive and threatened the post master with a meat cleaver because he did not like the prices of food parcels to Vietnam. The police sent him to court and on 28th August magistrate W. J. Molony put him on a 12-month good behaviour bond for \$100. On 18th October there was held the 12th transport in two years. Bill Heeney joined the tramways as a cable gripman. He had to do 80 hours with no pay, then 40 hours of conductor training with no pay before becoming a grippie conductor marmalade. He retired in 1980 as the last gripman.

In 1979 a man who walked in front of tram in Prahran was killed. The driver was Robert Quah.

In 1955 tram 682 overturned in Maribyrnong.

I read in the 1979 "Union Record" that Camberwell Depot, built in 1927 had from then an unsealed yard, no shelter from the weather at pickup points. The mess room had no door and was cold; there was no gas ring for heating food, too many three legged shifts and broken on Saturdays.

On 15th August 2000, graffiti vandal Michael Glenda aged 22 with 34 charges on trains, trams and buses walked free from court with no conviction and a bond for two years. The magistrate was Angela Bolger. The cleaning cost millions and he had to pay only \$10,395 in compensation.

In February 1980, a passenger on route 88 said the driver in Smith and Fitzroy Streets kept stopping to collect discarded aluminium cans. In April the "Union Record" reported that tram services from VFL Rules Football grounds may be banned until Rules louts are stopped from attacking tram crews. A conductress was molested outside the Carlton grounds and a conductor had his nose broken.

On 27th August 1891, a woman fell from the platform at Albert Park station and was killed by a train.

On 3rd April 1980, a woman aged 79 was getting of an orange Z tram in Riversdale Road Hawthorn when the doors closed on her arm and the tram started off. She was dragged along, and died from head injuries. On 23rd April a male pensioner aged 49 refused to get off the tram tracks and hit a driver and inspector with his umbrella. He was fined \$300. On 18th August South Melbourne Depot stopped work for three hours in protest against hooligan assaults on crews in St Kilda. Windows were broken and money bags stolen. In July 1980 we received a show allowance of \$20.

In September 1892 in St Kilda Road a Chinese man left his horse and cart unprotected. The horse ran away and hit a woman from Malvern on a cable tram and killed her.

In 1964 unemployment was around 1.6 percent, a house cost \$8,000, a Holden car \$1690, and a television \$410.

In 1980 my tram ran out of South Melbourne Depot into Kings Way and stopped for a right turn into Sturt Street. On the left I saw the East Coburg tram starting to cross with a green light and a driver from Brunswick Depot. He was looking left. My driver began to turn right to the city, but too late for the "T" light. I don't know why he did, but our tram struck the East Coburg tram in the middle. Both trams were badly damaged and had to be driven back to the depot and I had to put in an accident report.

In 1967 there were almost 800 trams and 5,600 employees: 1,100 tram drivers, 900 conductors, 500 conductresses and we had three weeks holiday.

In 1982 two men walked towards a tram to board it at 6.29 am in Moreland Road, Brunswick. A youth driving a car failed to stop for them and killed them both.

On 23rd February 1992, vandals damaged trams, stole 12 point bars and two control levers at Brunswick, Malvern and South Melbourne tram depots.

On 12th June 1990, two trams collided in Victoria Parade, East Melbourne at 7.50 am and a driver and conductor were taken to hospital.

On 20th December 1981, two trams collided in Swanston Street, city and one woman was injured.

On 12th November 1981, two trams collided in Caulfield and three people were injured. I read that in Moscow 9,000 conductors were eliminated in 1972.

On 23rd December 1987, two trams collided near the South Melbourne light rail station and the driver of the second tram had both legs broken; he was aged 42. Several passengers were injured and it was the first accident on the new 96 route. The trams were 264 and 285.

On 17th November 1987, two trams collided in St Georges Road, Northcote: one driver was taken to hospital and 14 people received minor injuries. Both trams were taken to Preston Workshops.

On 13th August 1981, two trams collided in Malvern Road at 5 pm and 17 people were taken to hospital. On 22nd September two trams collided in East Melbourne and six people were taken to hospital. One tram had around 60 passengers.

In 1978 a tram and tanker truck collided in Danks Street, Middle Park. The tanker turned over at 6.45 am.

On 17th June 1981, a passenger punched a conductor and knocked him through a window near the Royal Melbourne Hospital. The passenger received three months jail.

On 29th May 1981, at the corner of High and Chapel Streets a tram hit two cars at 7.30 am. The tram was a No 6 to Glen Iris. Two men were taken to hospital, but no passengers were hurt.

In June 1988 50 passengers were forced off a tram after Casey O'Brien, 19 years cut the cord with a pair of pliers after a tram driver failed to open the doors for a disabled passenger. O'Brien from East Keilor was fined \$400 without conviction by magistrate John Tobin, and ordered to pay \$100 to fix the cord.

On 21st April 1981, a tram and petrol tanker collided at 7.30 am at Elizabeth and Queensbury Streets. One passenger and the conductor received minor injuries and the tanker driver taken to hospital. The W class tram was badly damaged.

On 3rd November 1981, a tram and car collided and one passenger died at Balaclava and York Streets, Caulfield at 11.40 pm.

On 20th July 1982, a fire caused \$90,000 damage to an orange Z class tram in High Street, Northcote after leaving Preston Depot. The tram cost \$300,000 to build.

On 3rd June 1982, a truck was sandwiched between a tram and pole in Northcote at 7.25 in St Georges Road. Five people were taken to hospital.

On 11th February 1982, a tram and tanker collided in East Melbourne at 8.55 am at Hoddle Street and Victoria Parade. Two women were taken to hospital.

On 21st July 1985, a tram struck a car in Hawthorn Road, Caulfield at 11.50 pm. The male driver aged 26 was in critical condition and two passengers were killed. The road toll to 21st July 1985 was 375 dead.

On 15th December 1980, two trams collided in Flemington Road, Royal Park: both to the city. Eleven people were injured, and the W class damaged.

On 4th June 1982 at 8.55 am, driver Boulos Leichec drove into the back of an unmarked police car in High Street, Northcote. He was fined \$250 plus \$150 for dangerous driving plus \$1,035 damages.

On 27th June 1986, a tram and truck hit head on in Balwyn but no one was injured.

On 7th July 1984, a tram driver aged 39 years drove into the back of a tram in St Georges Road, Northcote. He collapsed and died.

On 22nd September 1981, two trams collided at 10.15 am in Victoria Parade, and five people were taken to hospital.

In December 1986 a tram and car collided in St Georges Road, Fitzroy and the car driver aged 22 died.

On 19th May 1988, a tram and cement truck collided in High Street, Thornbury and the truck driver taken to hospital in a critical condition.

In 1986 a school bus and a tramway bus collided at Nicholson and Johnson Streets, Carlton. Twelve children were injured.

In November 1987 a tram driver aged 25 was off duty and found drunk in Chapel Street. He was fined \$250.

In 2000, an Asian youth stabbed a tram driver in Collins Street, and ran away.

On 1st February 1988, two trams collided at 9 am at St Kilda Road and High Street. The tram driver was hurt and three passengers injured.

On 7th January 1988, a bus driver from North Fitzroy was robbed of his wallet and cash tin at Port Melbourne at night by three men.

On 11th March 1988, one Met bus ran into the back of another bus in Doncaster and three people were injured.

In November 1988, two men posed as met inspectors on trains at least five times. They were 35 to 50 years old, and collected \$130 from passengers for smoking, feet on seats and other things on three train lines. One woman paid \$30.

On 27th August 1988, driver Neville Evans was taken to hospital and died. I went to his funeral in St Kilda with many others from my tram depot.

On 13th September 1988 at 10.20 am a tramways bus and tram collided on the Spencer Street Bridge. Four people were injured on the tram, and the bus was an empty Garden City. The tram was derailed.

On 29th January 1985, a trainee police constable on point duty at Flinders and Queen Streets suffered broken ribs when he was hit by a tram in the city at 5.35 pm. He was taken to hospital.

From 6th December 1981, free Sunday travel began for nine weeks. The premier was Mr Thompson. 940,000 people used public transport on weekdays but only 138,000 on Sundays. Free Sundays ended on 7th February, but there was a 300 percent increase in patronage. A 74-year-old woman passenger was taken to the Alfred Hospital suffering shock after two trams collided at St Kilda Junction. A Glenhuntly tram rolled backwards into a stationary South Melbourne tram at 10.45 am.

On 7th September 1985 at 1.45 am, two men walked past Essendon Depot and saw a Z class tram worth \$500,000. They went joy riding in it for 1.5 km along Mount Alexander Road and through the intersection that feeds Racecourse and Flemington Roads. The tram was abandoned near the Royal Melbourne Hospital. The last scheduled tram had returned to the depot about 12.30 am.

The seven-year-old daughter of a man killed when he fell under the back wheels of a bus while hanging on the outside was awarded \$32,862 in damages in the Supreme Court on the 31st October 1984. James Belleville, 25 of Garden City died when he jumped on the outside step after the driver refused to open the back door at 12.10 am on 25th March 1979. \$32,862 would be paid to seven-year-old Lisa on her 18th birthday. The rear wheels of the bus passed over his chest and he died in hospital.

On 18th October 1985, a woman died when she was struck by a tram in Burwood at 6.50 pm. Also a 55-year-old woman was hit the same day when a overhead tram cable exploded in the city at Swanston and Latrobe Streets at about 12.20 pm and fell on her. She was taken to hospital. On 6th December passengers staged a mini-revolution on a packed St Kilda tram when the driver ordered them to disembark in teeming rain to catch the next tram. The passengers refused to leave the tram and forced the driver to continue to the terminus. Public Transport Users Association spokesman Patrick O'Connor was on the tram and told the driver the MTA would be breaching its contract if the passengers were off-loading short of their destination, Fitzroy Street, St Kilda.

The Sun newspaper reported on 11th September 1990 that trams and buses were involved in almost 5,000 accidents in 1989. Some drivers had as many as 13 accidents in a year. A first day tram driver involved in an accident a few days before in which 22 people were hurt may face no action because trams were not "motor vehicles" under the law. Late yesterday on 10th September, a Met bus jack-knifed on the Eastern Freeway injuring five people after swerving to miss a motorcyclist. A tram driver failed a breath test in September 1990 and will serve as a conductor for two years. State opposition spokesman Robin Cooper said a report showed lives of passengers were at great risk on certain routes. The chances of a collision between a tram and pedestrian were highest on the North Richmond route 78. The corporation investigation found that route 15, Moreland – St Kilda Beach was the most accident prone tram line followed by 78 North Richmond and No. 8. On 12th September 1990, the newspaper said some tram drivers were wearing headphones: a man was injured when he fell from a tram but the driver was oblivious because he was tuned into a radio.

Some drivers did not have car licences. Bill McHenry was a driver at South Melbourne for 30 years and did not drive a car from Carlton to the depot. He never drove a car but was one of the best drivers I ever saw. He retired in 1979. Also John Asmonas was a driver for over 20 years but never drove a car. Commuters told *The Sun* of drivers making unscheduled stops for chicken dinners and sweets. A passenger told of her driver stopping at the Alfred Hospital to buy a bag of sweets. Mr O'Connor said drivers received only two weeks training. A passenger from Elwood said he was waiting for a city bound tram in September 1990 at Hotham and Dandenong Roads. When the tram hove into view he noticed that the driver was reading a newspaper and entered the tram to see the conductor wearing headphones.

In 1968 the St Kilda Junction was a bad bottleneck and the underpass project was built. 156 houses, 52 businesses, 42 shops, three service stations and three hotels were demolished.

Two trams collided during peak hour on 23rd December 1987. One St Kilda bound tram stopped at 5.10 pm and the second tram crashed into it. One driver was trapped in the crushed cabin just beyond South Melbourne Station. The driver of the second tram, aged 42, had his legs broken. Five passengers were discharged after hospital treatment. This was the first accident on the light rail route 96. Seven people were injured.

During the 1960s I was waiting for a tram to go home about 7 pm. The private Brighton bus went past and stopped. A Volkswagen also went past and crashed into the back of the back of the bus in St Kilda Road, before Domain Road. The bus caught fire and burnt out. There were only two or three passengers on the bus and no one hurt.

On 1st March 1986, a conductor went to the toilet from a West Coburg tram. The driver did not know and drove several stops. That was in Flemington Road.

In January 1985 an Asian bus driver Ngoc Ngupen was put on a 12 month \$250 bond for careless driving. Sergeant Marke said he was riding his bicycle along Rathdown Street, Carlton on 14th July 1984 when a Tramways bus jammed him between two cars, kept going then stopped. The policeman said he was unfit to drive a rickshaw.

In February 1982 tram 223 left South Melbourne Depot to Essendon and back. It was built in Fitzroy in 1924. In St Georges Road, Northcote the tramline was rebuilt because of the 1920s water mains. In 1981 there were five accidents involving trams and in 1982 six accidents with trams.

In March 1981 a youth assaulted a Wattle Park driver and was sentenced to six months gaol in 1982.

In November 1989 a 15-year-old girl was hit by a tram in Gorton Street, Maidstone and trapped under the tram for 18 minutes. She received head injuries.

On 16th July 1991, a youth punched a woman driver and refused to pay a fare. He was fined \$500. The Justice System has been very weak since 1986.

On 26th January 1989, a youth was killed by a bus that went through a red light in Flinders Street at 7 pm. The bus was travelling to Port Melbourne.

During the 1960s the most worrying time I ever had was when my tram was travelling from East Coburg to South Melbourne Beach. Around Bourke Street or Collins Street two girls about seven or eight years old boarded the tram. I was not interested in collecting a fare from them because they were too young. I asked them where they were going, but they did not speak one word. I thought that primary school children lived in Albert Park or went to school in Victoria Avenue, South Melbourne, and never travelled to the city. It was a weekday around 4 pm. I thought they must be going somewhere else so I told them to get off at Batman Avenue and catch another tram. They did not speak one word. But later I thought where else could they be going except South Melbourne. I had made a terrible mistake and should have let them stay on because they could have lived near Park or Montague Street. Also someone must have told them to catch a South Melbourne tram. I should have asked passengers to

ask them where they lived. I should have said: "If you live in South Melbourne, hold up your hand". I had to collect fares so did not have much time. One good thing was that there were a few passengers at the Batman Avenue stop for them to ask and the next South Melbourne No. 1 tram would be along in twelve minutes. I should never have asked children seven or eight years old to catch another tram. Their parents should have given them a paper to show with their address on it so the conductor would be sure they would be on the right tram. I hope they caught the next South Melbourne tram in twelve minutes.

On 6th February 1989, two trams collided in Mount Alexander Road, Essendon. Both trams were damaged and 15 people taken to hospital. Both were "Airport West" trams.

On 11th August 1989, a tram and car collided in Sydney Road, Brunswick and one young male died.

Tram drivers from Asian countries had many accidents. One from Indonesia drove into the back of another tram outside Melbourne Cemetery during the 1980s.

We were coming from Port Melbourne and we were the last tram to South Melbourne Depot at night, around midnight. The driver from the Philippines drove too fast around the bend left into Clarendon Street and the overhead wires were torn down. He called on the radio, and buses from North Fitzroy Depot had to be brought up to run the last 96 for St Kilda passengers leaving the city about midnight. The 96 could not pass the damaged overhead. We returned to the depot by car.

Another Asian driver on my tram damaged the overhead wires in William Street. Our tram was going to South Melbourne Beach in the afternoon peak and when we reached the terminus there was a tram in front and a works tram. There was not enough room for our tram to shunt but the driver drove ahead and the front wheels were right, but the back wheels were before the shunt. Someone radioed for help and a woman inspector arrived by car. She told the works tram driver to go forward past the shunt along the ground a few yards. This gave our tram enough room to move forward and be able to shunt. We then returned to the depot.

An Asian driver had to do a Racing Special to Moonie Ponds on a Saturday for the horse races. He did that well and on his timetable it stated to return to South Melbourne Depot. He should have turned left at Victoria Street, past the signal box and along Swanston Street. Instead he drove ahead along Elizabeth Street to finish at Flinders and Elizabeth Streets. An inspector looked at him open-mouthed.

About 1992 I was working with an Asian driver going down Collins Street towards South Melbourne. He did not stop at Swanston Street, Elizabeth Street, Queen Street or William Street. When we stopped at Spencer Street I knocked on his cabin door and asked him why he missed the stops. He did not say anything, but after the meal break he did not work the second half of the shift. He must have gone home.

We were going down St Kilda Road at night to St Kilda Beach and the Asian driver forgot to change the points at High Street. Our tram suddenly went left at High Street.

It was lucky there were no cars there going ahead. We had to shunt the tram in High Street and come back to St Kilda Road. No harm was done.

There were mistakes but no one was injured during my 33 years. Around 1993 our tram was going from Moreland to South Melbourne Depot on a Friday night and was the last trip for the evening. The driver was from Vietnam. As we went along Lygon Street we were near a stop and I saw a family running to catch the tram and it was raining. They were only fifteen yards from the tram stop and I was sure my driver would stop for them. I was amazed when he increased speed and left them behind. He was a bad driver.

Around 1980 I made my second and final mistake. The tram was No. 12 leaving Brunswick Street to go to St Kilda. At the corner of Victoria Parade a school teacher and around fifteen girls of about twelve-years-old boarded the tram and it started off towards Collins Street. The teacher said they wanted to go to the Old Melbourne Gaol in Russell Street and I thought they would get off at Exhibition and walk across from there. I told them to get off at Exhibition Street. After they got off, I realised I had made a bad mistake. I looked in the street directory that night and saw they would have to cross Bourke Street, Lonsdale Street to Latrobe Street and turn left into Russell Street: more than four blocks walk. As soon as the tram started off I should have said: "You are on the wrong tram. Get off at the next stop and walk back one stop. Then look for a tram showing "Latrobe Street" that goes along Victoria Parade and Latrobe Street. Get off at Russell Street." As far as I know there was a twelve-minute service along Latrobe Street. The time was about 9 am on a weekday. I wished I had thought faster and better and saved them a long walk.

On 15th September 1990, a tram went past the terminus at Nicholson Street, East Coburg and into Bell Street at 5.20 pm. The traffic light was snapped off by W class 986. The 42 year old drive was suspended.

On 26th November 1990, the oldest tram from South Melbourne on route 12 was 646.

On 16th March 1986, a car driver was killed when he hit the tram head-on in St Georges Road, Thornbury at 8.50 pm.

In November 1980, the West Preston tramline was extended by twelve metres in Thornbury in Gilbert Road. The cost was \$14,000.

In December 1985, youths bashed bus driver Wow Kowshi in Rathdown Street, Carlton and he was off for a month.

In September 1983 youths bashed bus driver Noel Pooke in Barkly Street, St Kilda.

On 25th June 1985, a tram and bus collided at the corner of Russell and Bourke Streets. The tram was derailed and five people hurt.

In 1984, a spokesman for the PTC said there were 42 cases of cars hitting safety zones but only one person was injured.

In 1985 a sniper fired shots at trams in Mount Alexander Road.

On 7th February 1986, a semi-trailer brought down tram wires in Elizabeth and it took five hours to clean up.

In 1992 tram driver Victor Eshak drove into the back of a car in Clarendon Street, South Melbourne and was fined \$300.

On 25th December 1996, two trams collided in Flemington Road, North Melbourne and one man was taken to hospital.

In mid January 1994, three armed men posing as Fire Brigade officers robbed the South Melbourne Tram Depot on a Sunday night. At 11.40 pm they told the revenue clerk there was a gas leak and forced him at gunpoint to open the safe and steal money. They drove away in a stolen blue Ford car.

From September 1990, two pedestrians were killed in four days by trams, one at Bourke and Queen Streets, and the other in Sydney Road.

In 1994 Lajas Czuczar, aged 74 from Hungary played his violin on my St Kilda tram and on trams since 1988 and was popular.

On 21st September 1997, a 57 tram ram collided with a 58 tram outside the Royal Melbourne Showgrounds at 3 pm and six people were taken to hospital.

On 5th July 1990, a youth assaulted a former union secretary and driver Jim Harper on a Preston tram. He was arrested but failed to appear in court.

On 26th March 1994, a tram driver aged 50 was attacked at Park and Cecil Streets and taken to hospital.

On 22nd February 1997, a tram conductor was taken to hospital after a youth threw a bottle at him in Clarendon Street, South Melbourne.

On 24th May 1991, a MET inspector, Maarten Speckman, aged 38 head-butted a school boy who had no concession card and forced him off a bus but was fined later.

On 5th March 1998, a man was killed trying to board a moving tram in Arden Street, North Melbourne.

On 7th October 1997, a car driver was killed when he collided with a tram in East Brighton. On 7th November, a woman aged 101 was killed by a tram when walking along the tram tracks at 11.25 am on the Burwood Highway.

In 1966 there were 703 trams, 223 buses, nine major tram accident repairs, and 11 depot masters; Mr Wilkonson at South Melbourne.

On 21st April 1997, tram driver Brian D'Souza kicked a car in front doing a right-hand turn and caused \$290 damage. D'Souza from Glenhuntly was fined \$600 without conviction. This was in Brighton Road, St Kilda.

It was with a great shock when on 19th August 1994, former tram driver and union secretary during the 1980s from Preston Depot Jim Harper died.

On 28th May 1997, a woman car driver died in a collision with a tram at Elgin and Johnson Streets, Fitzroy.

On 29th October 1994 at 6 pm, a tram and two cars collided at St Kilda and Brighton Roads and five people were injured, one badly.

On 3rd May 1991 at 4.45 pm, a car was stopped in front of a tram in Fitzroy. The tram driver left the tram to speak to him. The car driver punched the tram driver, knocking him out and he was taken to hospital. The car driver in his 40s drove off, at the corner of Nicholson Streets and Victoria Parade.

On 6th August 1995, a woman pedestrian aged 34 was killed by a car which then hit a Z class tram in the door at 3.45 pm in Royal Parade.

On 21st July 1992, former chairman of the Tramways Board, Robert Risson died aged 91. He was chairman from 1949 – 1970. During the War he was wounded in North Africa. During the 60s he spoke to me three times: first when going up the stairs at South Melbourne, second in my Collins Street tram to say there were fares to collect as he got off at Elizabeth Street, and third when going to work on my Toorak tram from South Yarra.

On 22nd February 1999, Jan Laczynski, conductor at Essendon Depot died. He was in the Polish army during World War II. He was wounded, won three medals and was at the Monte Casino battle. He began as a conductor on London's double-decker buses, and was 20 years at Essendon Depot.

The Sydney newspaper said in 2000, 25 per cent of commuters travel to work by public transport compared with 38.8 per cent on average of eleven European cities.

Seventy-seven-year-old violinist, Hungarian born Lolly played on trams and trains. On 10th March 1998, he was beaten and robbed of \$65. A 40-year-old man was arrested and charged. Injured three times in World War II, he has suffered five attacks in Melbourne.

In 1994 my tram was leaving East Coburg about 6 pm and the only passenger was a little girl about seven or eight years old. I had seen her one morning going to East Coburg Primary School around 8.30 am. She must have walked two stops from her school to have a seat at the terminus and waited there. She was very intelligent. I was going to ask her why she was going home late, but she never stopped talking to me for a second until she reached her stop; one stop past Moreland Road, Brunswick. She asked questions and was great at talking. Her parents should not have told her to come home late. It was too long a day for a child her age. Her parents should have given her a key to come home early. I hope it never happened again to a wonderful child.

In 1948 the road toll for Victoria was 362. In 1970, 1,071 died. In 1989, 777 died.

From Sunday 19th December 1993, the Port Melbourne – City route 111 and Mont Albert route 42 service were linked, and new number 109 operated by Kew Depot.

In 1993 I finished work on the St Kilda Road tram and walking past the sheds saw two youths running out of the sheds. They had been vandalising trams.

In 1993 I was on a St Kilda Road tram and two youths were sitting at the back. Because it was a late shift, my ticket tin was in the back cabin. I heard a shout from the driver who told the youths to get off because they had taken my ticket tin from the cabin to steal tickets, but failed.

In 1992 two males in their 20's were leaping around in St Kilda Road and broke a window. I told them to get off, and they left the tram.

In 1993 I was on the St Kilda to East Brunswick tram and there were many passengers in Bourke Street. I did not know the driver failed to lock the back door and two youths entered the cabin. I saw them coming out at East Brunswick and run away. At the terminus the driver could not start the tram because they had put something where the key was. He had to phone North Fitzroy depot and they sent a van down and repaired it. The youths were vandals.

A semi-trailer tore down overhead tram wires at 6.30 am at Park Street and Domain Road on 6th June 1995. Thousands of passengers were stranded and waited 90 minutes for buses. The truck driver did not stop. The wires are about five metres high. The maximum height for a truck is 4.3 metres without a permit.

In 1939 only eight percent of Victorians owned a car and there were too many tram passengers during World War II. There were 2000 conductresses but only 960 remained at the end.

In May 1995 a car collided with a tram in Mills Street, Albert Park and a car passenger died.

On 26th July 1995, Harold Willmott boarded a tram in Victoria Parade before midnight, brandished a knife at driver Don Storey, forced him to drive down to the end of Collins Street, made him sit on the footpath and slashed at him with the knife. Willmott had 14 previous convictions. Police arrested him and he was jailed for three and a half years. Don Storey was from South Melbourne Depot.

On 20th June 1997, an enraged bicycle courier, Adrian Rentz 31, punched and kicked a tram driver after a traffic dispute in Collins Street. The tram driver Dryn Peterson was ringing the bell and driving too close behind him. Rentz was fined \$600.

On 15th July 1999 a woman in her 70s was struck by a tram in Spencer Street, city at around 4.40 pm. She was dragged 225 metres and died. Trams were stopped for two hours. On 23rd July the *Herald Sun* reported that A class trams seated 40 passengers, B class 74 passengers, B class trams had a maximum capacity of 100 and the W class 76.

More Asian adventures: on 29th February 2000, driver Thanh Mai, 32, used the point bar to smash a window at Victoria and Peel Streets, and told police he had been attacked. He had pretended to be unconscious. Hospital staff found he had no injuries. He pleaded guilty to making a false report, was put on a twelve-month good behaviour bond and ordered to pay \$200 for the window and \$317 to the police.

On 13 July 2001, a 63-year-old man was killed by a tram outside Crown Casino after running across Clarendon Street.

On 11th December 2001, there was a collision between a tram and a car at Patterson and Frazer Streets, 112 to West Preston. The car was dragged 20 metres and a car passenger was fighting for his life in hospital. It was in Albert Park.

On 26th March 2002 around 2.30 pm, four people were taken to hospital after a French built new tram hit the back of a Z class tram near Parliament house.

In June 2001, a tram driver, Gary Munro was stabbed by youth Clooney Cresy, 20. A vandal who stole more than \$180,000 from transport ticket machines was jailed for two years. He broke open 112 ticket machines from 2001.

On 29th November 2003 at about 8.00 am, a delivery truck caused chaos when it crashed into an overhead gantry and brought down tramlines on the Wallen Street Bridge, Hawthorn. Yarra Trams brought in buses. On 23rd December a tram driver was taken to hospital after a truck collision at Victoria Parade and Clarendon Street. It was a route 109 tram at about 5.15 pm. The truck driver was also taken to hospital.

Six people were taken to hospital after a tram and car collided on Ingles Street, Port Melbourne. No one in the car was hurt.

In March 2004 51 M-Tram drivers and 11 Yarra Trams drivers were told they wouldn't have a job after this week.

On 13th Jan 2004, Swanston Street was plunged into chaos for three hours when a mini-skip truck brought down support wires at about 4 pm. The truck driver had his crane halfway extended across Flinders Lane and was questioned by police. Trams were turned back at Flinders Street.

On 25th January 2005, two trams collided in Victoria Parade, East Melbourne when a 112 St Kilda tram ran into the back of a stationary 109 Port Melbourne tram before 2.30 pm. Eight passengers were hurt. There were about 40 passengers on the trams.

A forum was told 20 percent of trips to work were made on public transport in 1981. In 2005 this was 11 per cent. I read that trams finished in Paris in 1937, but in 2006 the French have started building a new line in Paris.

On a Saturday in 1968 my tram was leaving St Kilda Beach on a route 15 to Moreland at Luna Park. Three young girls got on and said they did not have any money. Their parents had given them money for a trip to Luna Park but not enough to go home to North Carlton. I was happy to let them travel free. I was getting off at Dorcas Street and another conductor who did not know was going to take over. Also inspectors used

to check trams every day. I did not want the children bothered by anyone. We had a new card system and anyone who lost their money could write their address on a card and pay one week later. So I gave a card to each child, and asked them to write their address on the card and for their parents to pay over one week later. They also wrote their age: only eight years old. They kept half the card and I put the other half in the revenue. Had I been going to North Carlton I would have let them travel free and not given them cards. Later I wished I had helped them. They were wonderful children. I should have given them five dollars from my wallet and said: "After you leave the tram, call in at a shop and buy an ice-cream each".

Clarence O'Shea, leader of the Tramways Employees Union in the 1950s and 1960s died on 15th August 1988. He was born in 1905 in Tasmania, and began as a gripman at the North Melbourne Depot in the 1920s. I listed to him speak at South Melbourne Depot in the 1960s, and he was a great Union Leader. In 1950 public transport workers were on strike for nine weeks.

On 6th September 1986, 87 bus conductors lost their jobs on the Bulleen – Garden City route after a stop work meeting. In 1972 9,000 conductors were eliminated in Moscow.

In November 1985, a pregnant woman with two handicapped children went by bus from Ringwood to Croydon. She took the pram off at Croydon, but before her five-year-old daughter could get off, the driver started off. Three men from a building site stopped the bus. Five-year-old Kimberley was hysterical and had to be sedated. The incident was investigated by the Met.

Nine weeks of free Sunday travel began on 6th December 1981. On 17th June 1981, David Taylor, 40 was sentenced to three months jail for punching a tram conductor. He knocked him through a window on the tram from royal Melbourne Hospital to Flinders Street.

On 2nd July 1982, fire caused \$90,000 damage to a Z class tram in High Street Northcote after it left Preston Depot. The tram cost \$300,000.

From 4th October 1981, the new three-zone ticket system began.

On 16th March 1983, a route 72 tram stopped at Glenferrie and Malvern Road. A changeover crew was waiting. The drivers exchanged words and were slogging it out on the roadway. Suddenly a police car appeared and the drivers were driven off.

A man died when a car hit a tram head on in St Georges Road at about 12.30 am on 21st December 1986.

On 26th September 1986, an Asian youth stabbed a conductor in Flemington three times. He appeared in court before Judge O'Shea, but walked out free. O'Shea was one of the weakest and worst judges in Melbourne and helped many bad young men escape jail. From then on the justice system became worse.

On 27th August 1986, two buses collided at Nicholson and Johnson Streets in Carlton, and 12 children and three adults were injured. The school bus carried 38 children and the tramways bus was empty.

On 11th March 1988, two Met buses collided in Doncaster and three people were injured.

On 27th August 1988, Neville Evans from South Melbourne Depot died. I attended the funeral service in St Kilda. He had been a policeman in Wagga Wagga and began as a driver in the 1960s. The youth who stabbed the conductor was Mohamid Dib, 20, and Judge O'Shea released him on a \$500, three-year good behaviour bond.

On 29th May 1982, three W class Melbourne trams began running on a 1.6 km of track in Seattle, Washington. A fourth tram will be stripped for parts.

In 1990 driver John Stewart from South Melbourne Depot arranged a days outing on Y1 class 613 for children from Queenscliff Cottage By The Sea. Children in need of a break from difficulties at home were often referred to the Cottage by schools. There were 22 children and their picture was in the newspaper. I thought they looked to be neglected by their parents and badly treated.

In February 1982 there were 706 trams; 50 at South Melbourne Depot.

On 19th September 1990, Werner Hubsch died: he was manager of the Met Shop. During the 1960s, 70s and 80s he was a popular revenue clerk at South Melbourne.

Seattle had trams until 1941.

In February 1984, there were 2,900 conductors and drivers in Melbourne. A conductor earned \$310 before tax.

On 11th July 1986, a 19-year-old woman was struck by a tram in St Kilda Road and trapped under it for 30 minutes. She ended up in a stable condition in hospital.

An elderly male pedestrian died when he fell under a tram at Bourke and Queen Streets at 2pm on 22nd September 1990.

A letter on 24th May 1982 from Robert Murphy, secretary of Tram and Bus Travellers said: "The orange Z class trams have three times the breakdown rate of the green trams. They have 10 seats fewer even though they are about four tons heavier and seven feet longer than the green trams. They are slow loading. The conductor cannot help with prams and jeeps."

When in New Zealand in 1996, I bought a book at the Christchurch Tram Museum. A poem from 1948 says:

*Hurry Tram, your noisy coming
Fills my heart with sweet delight.
Happily I climb aboard you
Rumble Tramcar through the night.*

*Rumble down the dim-lit highways
Singing your metallic theme.
Though you're crowded to the footboard
There is room I find to dream.*

In November 1989 a 15-year-old girl was trapped under a tram for 18 minutes and seriously injured in Gordon Street, Maidstone. Her friend said the driver failed to ring a warning bell at about 12.30 pm.

On a Friday in December 1985 bus driver Wally Wawkowski was bashed as he drove along Rathdown Street Carlton at about 11.40 pm by a gang of youths. He was taken to hospital.

On 21st December 2004, a former tram inspector Frank Reardon died aged 88. He started work in 1932 at 15 years as an oiler boy at South Melbourne Engine House and retired in 1981. In April 1955 he became the depot starter of South Melbourne Depot. He had 49 years service.

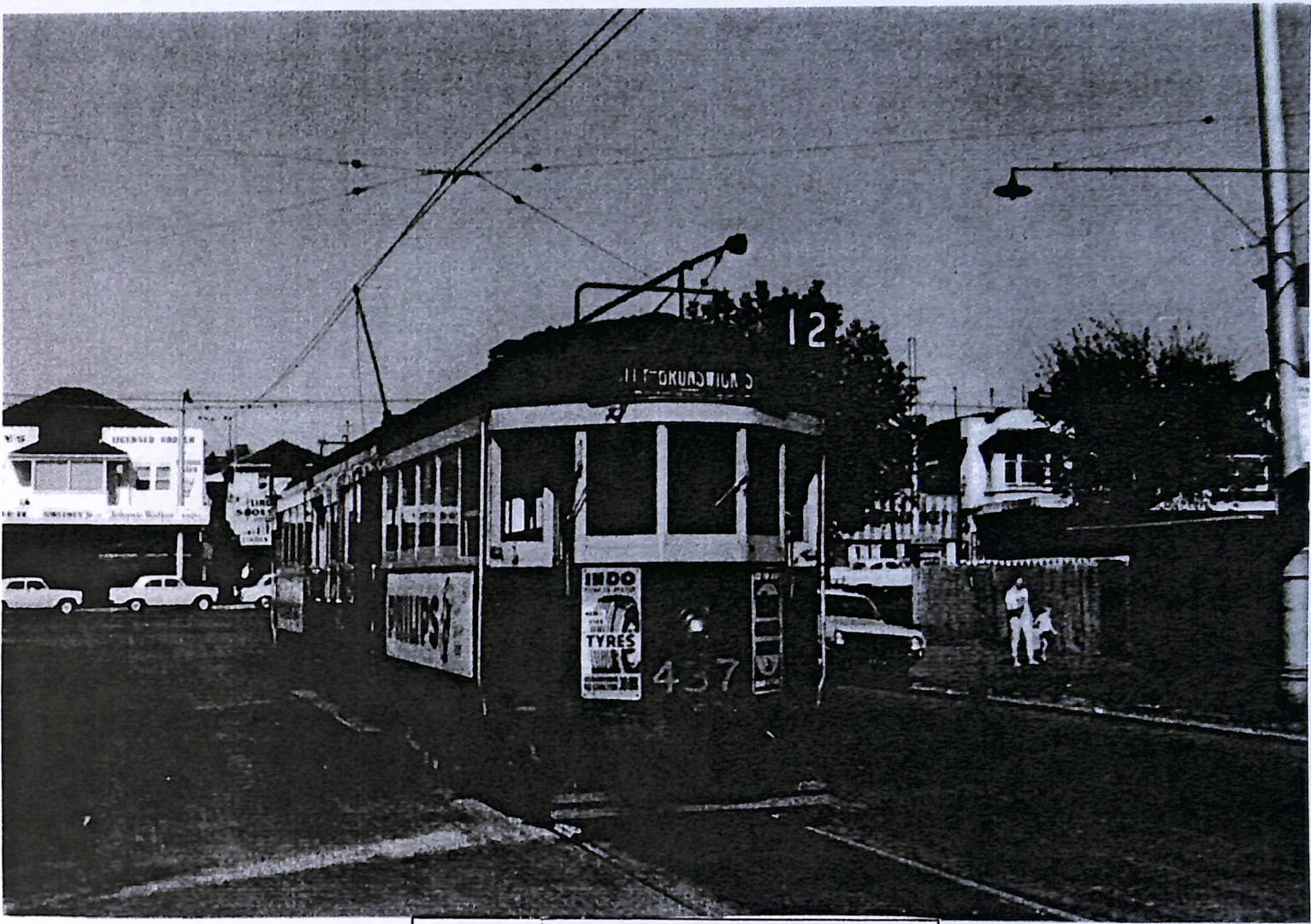
It is amazing that New Zealand has three tram museums and Melbourne has none.

Jack Cregan was born in 1914 and died on 17th April 2006. In 1946 he began work as a conductor at South Melbourne. He was a great worker: during meal breaks he served people in the canteen and as a union delegate collected money for union dues every three months until it was deducted from pay. He also trained student new conductors, and retired in 1980. Then he organised the retiree's social club. He died aged 91.

Driver Bill Duncan was a driver of South Melbourne and told me he was at Dunkirk in 1940 when the Germans bombed them. I saw him at Southbank Depot in 1999 and at Frankston, but don't know what happened to him after that.

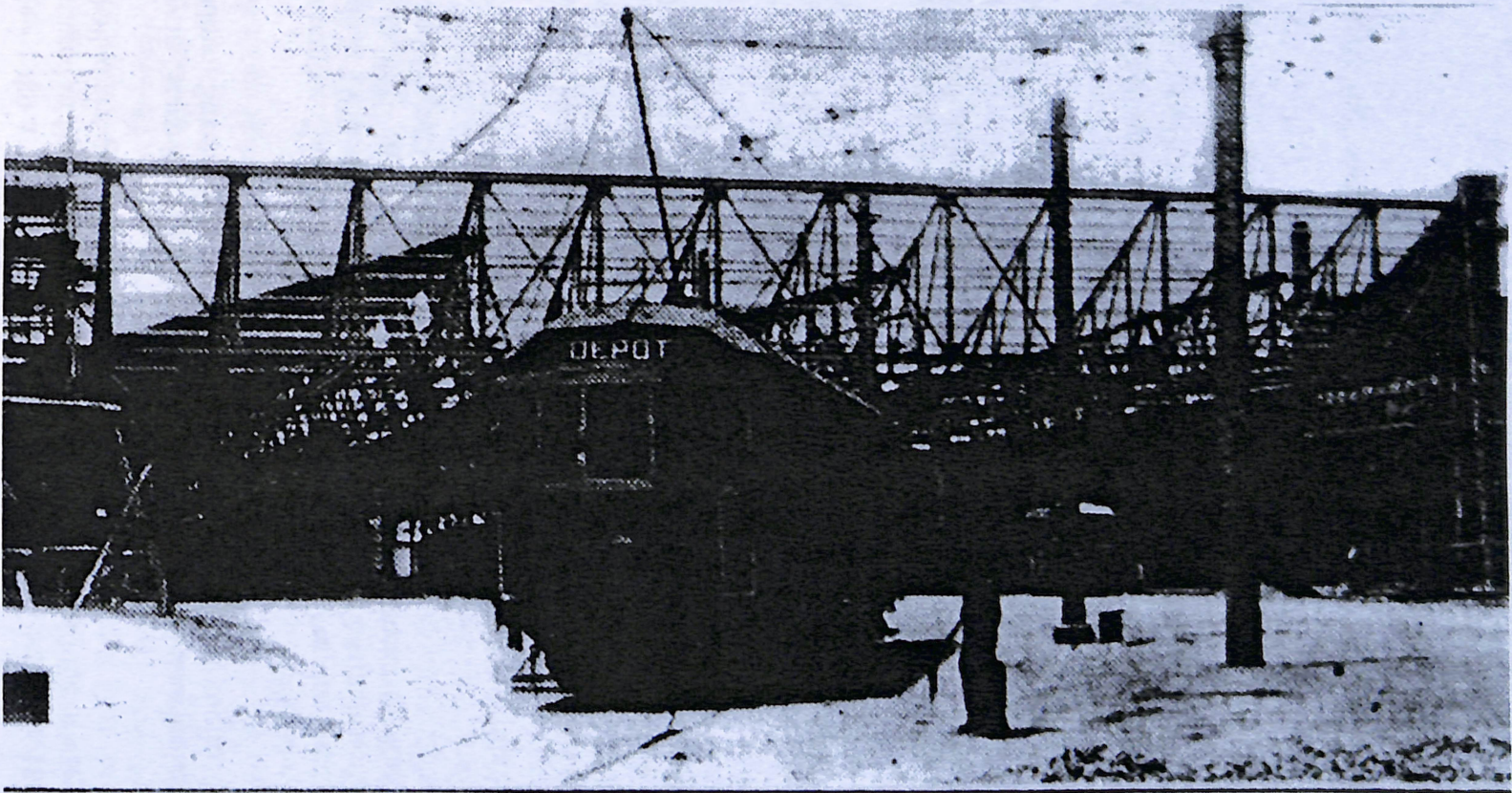
Driver Jim Hyland told me he was with the Australian Army at Crete in 1941 when the Germans landed by parachute and attacked them. 671 New Zealanders were killed. I wished I had asked him more about what happened to him at Crete. One New Zealander shot 33 Germans.

I retired in 1994, and in 1997 moved from Toorak to Frankston. I travel by the Stony Point diesel train one stop to go shopping.



TERMINUS OF THE 12 LINE PARK ST
AT FITZROY STREET, 12TH APRIL 1966

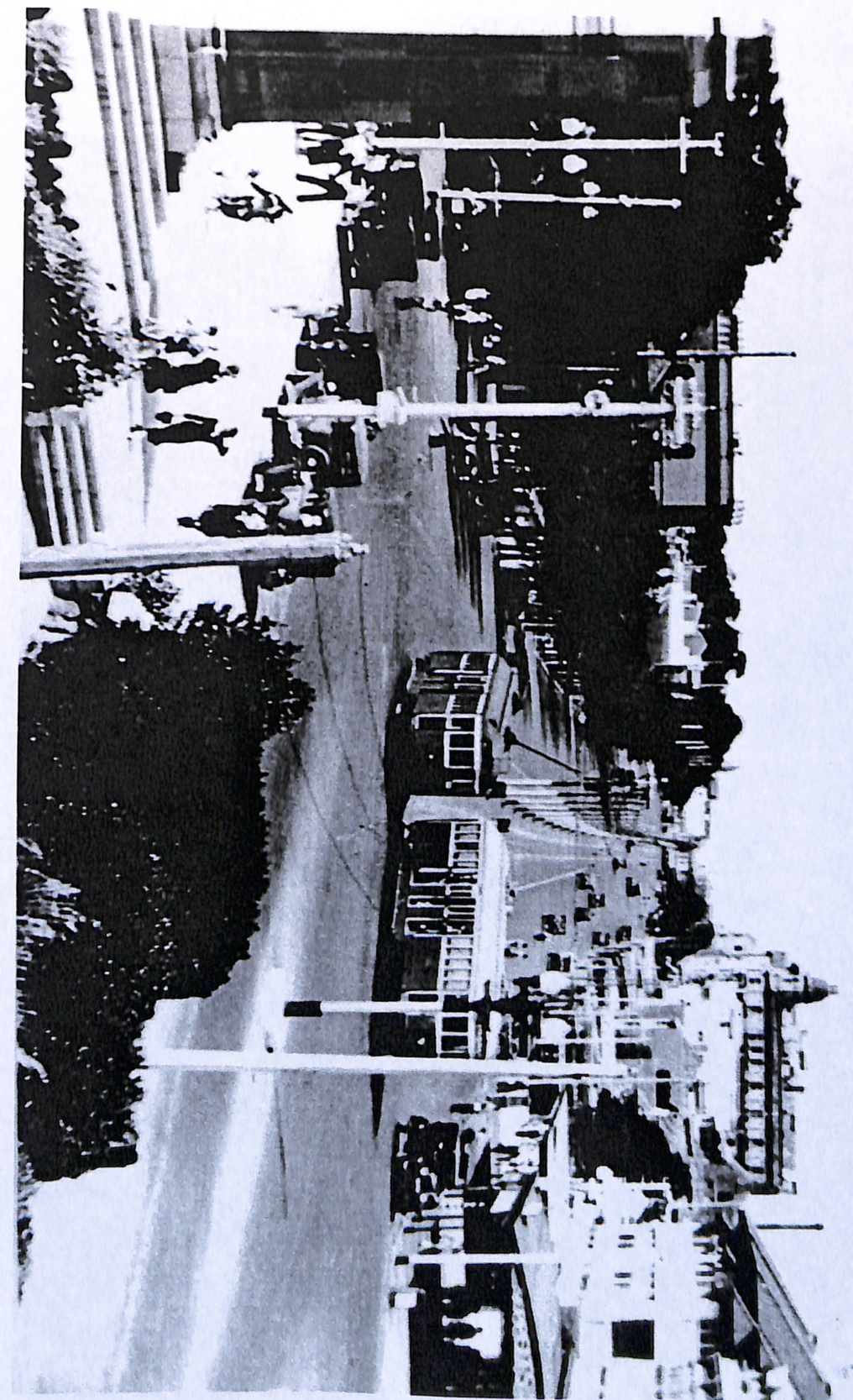
HANNA STREET DEPOT UNDER CONSTRUCTION



WHERE TRAFFIC LEVIATHANS REST - Sheds that are being built in Hanna Street, South Melbourne, to accommodate the new electric trams on the St. Kilda - East Preston run.
(From *The News Pictorial*, Friday, January 29th, 1926.)



*Melbourne's Trams
"St. Kilda 1995"*

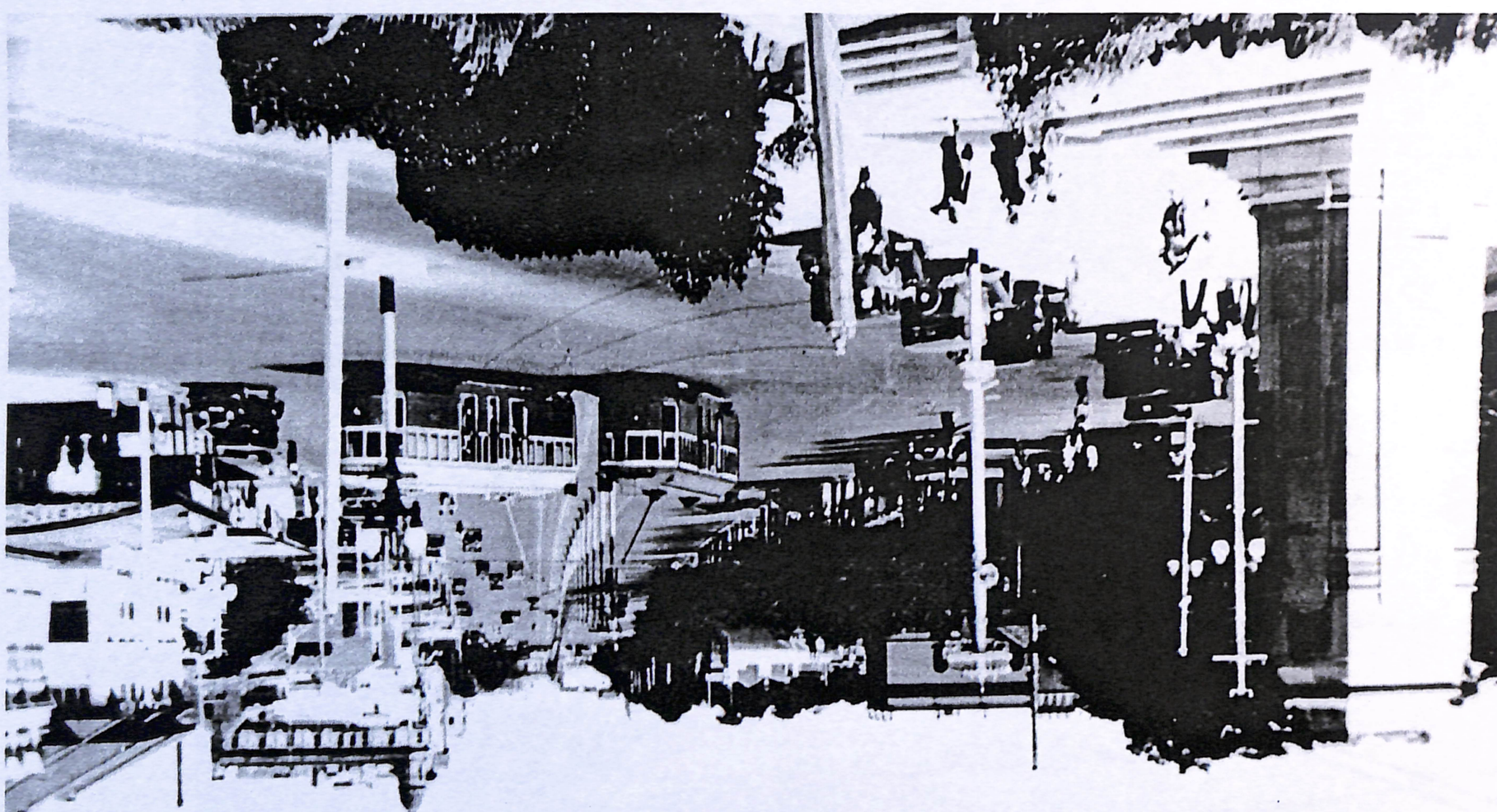




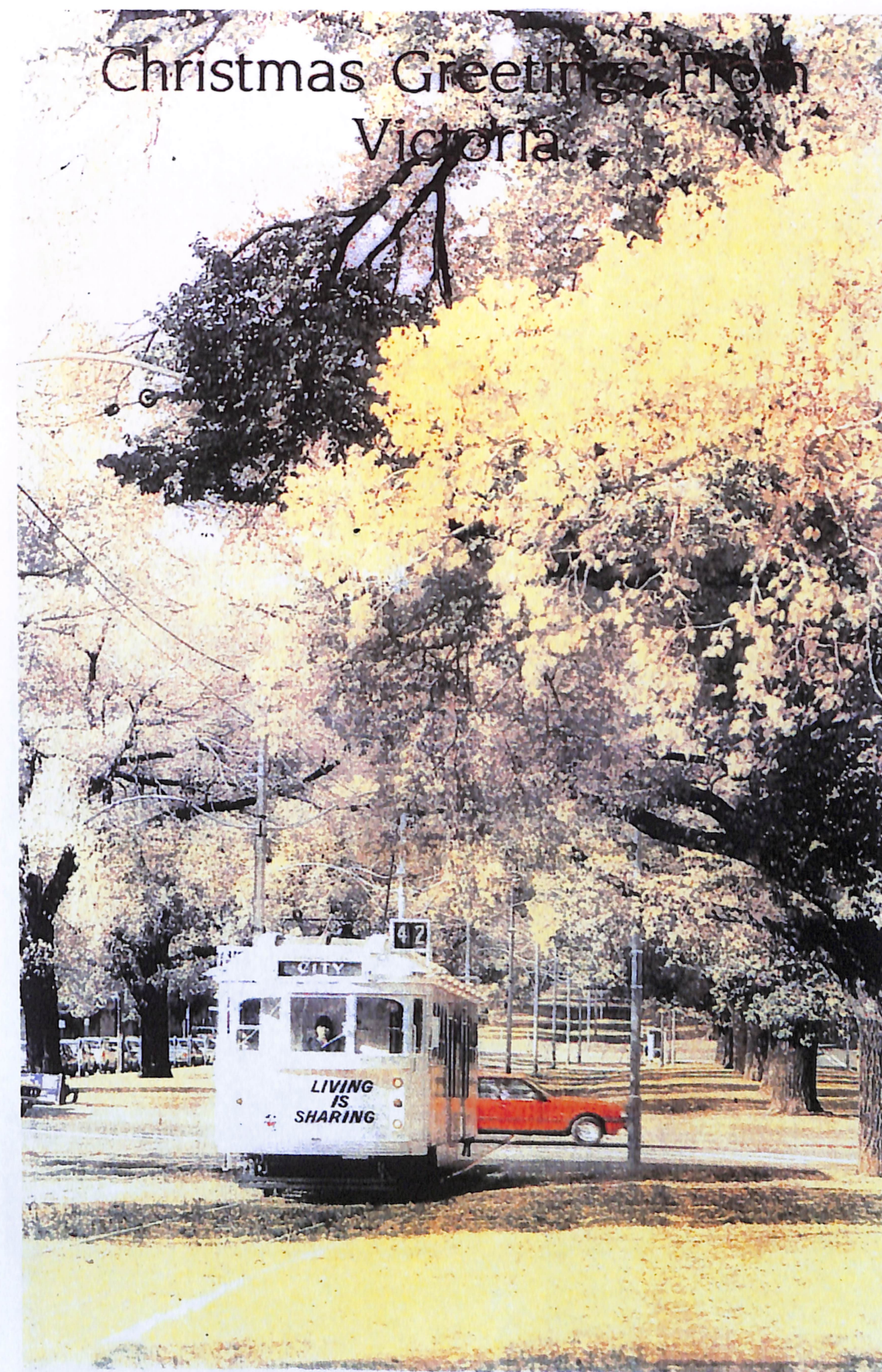


about 1970 chapel st

about 1990 from photo in shop chapel st











Lucy Tuhava. Depot STARTER. 2005 Southbank depot.