

TRAM LINES

NEWSLETTER OF THE WELLINGTON TRAMWAY MUSEUM INC.

No. 2019 /2

MARCH - APRIL 2019



On 20th March our ex-Wellington combination-type tram was moved from the tram barn into the workshop for the next stage in its restoration. It sits on temporary bogies (Sammy trucks) and six man-power made light work of this move!

Photo: Keith McGavin

PICTURES FROM THE PAST



Two photographs of “our” trams in service in Wellington, by Graham Stewart

Above: Double-saloon No.207 standing (probably parked while the crew had a break) at the north end of Featherston Street where it meets Thorndon Quay, on the western side of the Railway Station. Early 1950’s. Tram 207 is next in our list for restoration to running order.

Below: It’s a wet day in Willis Street as Fiducia class No.239 heads towards Courtenay Place. Willis Street was always the busiest street in Wellington for trams and it is a bottleneck today for buses. Early 1960’s. Tram 239 is in the process of re-entering service at the Museum, after a yearlong refurbishment.



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Assembled by the WTM production team:

Henry Brittain & Keith McGavin

Published bi-monthly

Contributions welcome

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From Steve Porter's Workbench

A VISIT TO A & G PRICE LTD., THAMES, WHERE THE 22E TRUCKS FOR TRAM NO.17 ARE BEING RE-CONSTRUCTED.

On Monday 25th March while on holiday in Taupo the family and I set off for a day trip to Coromandel. In theory the purpose of the trip was to ride the Driving Creek Railway and indeed we did that and very enjoyable it was too!

The opportunity was also taken to visit A & G Price to see how the construction of our 22e trucks for tram 17 was progressing.

We were met at reception by Peter Yates, the General Manager, who introduced us to Dave Sharpe. Dave kitted us out with the obligatory Hi Viz, hard hat and goggles and then showed us through the foundry. We spotted the patterns for many of the 22e parts including the side frames. A pour of iron was included in our tour.

The two driving axles have been turned and the new bull gears installed on them. The tyres of one of the pony sets have been cut off and the new tyres installed. Both pony sets have had their tyres profiled. We

were shown a box that contains the old bull gears, the cut off pony tyres and various other detritus.

We also saw new springs, brake blocks, spring retainers and lots of other parts that were ready for final assembly. The last location visited was the machine shop where a trial assembly of the frames was in progress.

Fair to say A & G Price continue to give me confidence that when we sometime next



Above: Steve, on right, being shown progress on the reconstruction of two 22E trucks for our Wellington combination tram No.17. 25th March 2019

year(?) select notches in Tram 17 that the trucks will function as they should and without problem.

A very interesting visit and my thanks to Peter, and Dave for the hospitality.

**STEVE PORTER, President
5th April 2019**

COMING EVENT

Mid-Year Dinner

This year we have chosen

THE WAIKANAË CLUB On Saturday 18th May

The club is situated in Elizabeth Street, Waikanae, and is just three minutes' walk from the railway station for those who may wish to travel there by train.

Further details will be advised as they come to hand.

Please advise Henry Brittain if you wish to attend (contact details page 3) or add your name to the list in the "Palace".

NEWS OF OUR MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

A warm welcome as new members to –
Jonah Kemp, Ngaio
Michael Hepburn, Paekakariki, and
Jenny Jenkins (Russell's wife) of
Pukerua Bay

We hope you have an enjoyable and fulfilling membership of the Wellington Tramway Museum.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

To fill the vacancy arising from the AGM in November Mike Flinn, who is an experienced member and a past President, has been co-opted to the Board as a Member.

IAN LAWRENCE

Ian Lawrence, a past Mayor of Wellington, died recently. Ian was active with the Queen Elizabeth Park Board and in 1985 he officially opened the major extension to our tramway which took it "over the hill" and in sight of Kapiti Island for the first time. The temporary terminus was sited at the present siding in that location.

OBITUARY – John Shanks

By Alan Smith

CORRECTED AND REPRINTED FROM LAST ISSUE

(This is largely a reprint of the obituary in the Jan/Feb issue which contained a couple of significant omissions and errors. Because of the late John Shanks' importance to the Tramway Museum movement in NZ we have decided to correct and reprint the entire article.)



John Shanks (above) died in Christchurch on 1 February this year, just 3 days short of his 79th birthday. John was the "founding father figure" of tram preservation in Christchurch - where the last "classic system" trams ran in September 1954. John may have been only a teenager at the time, but he knew (it seemed to me later) every rail-joint, curve, stop, traction pole, sub-station and car that had ever existed there since the 19th century days of horse and steam trams. What's more, he cared about those things; he recorded them, he told people about them, and he did practical things and took initiatives to ensure that a public memory of them became established.

A firm Calvinist, John was an unlikely associate of the rather hedonistic Bill Horne in Wellington - "Bodgie Bill" - who separately and at around the same time was collecting bits and pieces of Wellington tramway history and thinking in hazy ways about how some public memory could become established by the time the "classic" tram system here had finally groaned its last.

By 1960 John had gathered about him a small group of (mostly young) Christchurch men who did the hard graft of helping protect the few relics which had survived from 1954. I suspect that he would have first met Bill (those were pre e-mail and web days, remember) on one of those numerous trips up to Wellington by the overnight ferry to experience what was left of the Wellington tram system. The "Tramway Preservation Association" (TPA) was formed, comprising two "centres", one in Christchurch led by John Shanks and one in Wellington led by Bill Horne; the famous "151 and 159" charter tour of the Wellington system in June 1961 was a landmark consolidating point for the TPA.



John, on the far right, is seen posing with Tram No.1's night crew at a special evening event at Ferrymead.

Photo D.L.A Turner

In February 1962 I first met John, on the TPA's "257 tour" and this I'm happy to say was the start of a firm and valued friendship between us. Later that year John gave firm instructions to fellow Christchurch Centre TPA member Gary Riggs who was transferring up to Wellington: gee up Bill and get some life into TPA Wellington. Well, he did; things happened, with many a bump along the way, but the TPA evolved so that by the 2 May 1964 run of the

last Wellington trams the old "Wellington Centre" had morphed into an incorporated Society which became today's Wellington Tramway Museum Inc. (WTM) and the Christchurch centre had evolved into today's Tramway Historical Society Inc. (THS). The rest, as they say, is history; but a consistent positive theme of both is the guiding mana and wise counsel of John Shanks.

John was, it has to be said, a bit of a purist - and thank heavens for that. He was always a bit guarded about WTM's rough and ready ways - I recall him once observing a late-afternoon derailment of a Fiducia along the line about opposite where Ramaroa now is. He wrote this up in *Tramway Topics* as an "unspoken lesson on track laying", which was actually the epitome of extreme modesty given that, at the time, our line was mostly just spiked on to sleepers sitting on the sand where the grass had been scraped off.

But John continued to take a supportive interest in our doings and, even before one of his daughters moved here, he always liked visiting Wellington, riding the trolleybuses and the EMUs (there is a story about him pulling up the floor hatches of an English Electric DM motor coach better to hear the music of its traction motors as it whined up the continuous grade of the Johnsonville railway) and coming out to WTM at "the Park".

There was of course much more to John Shanks than the tram person. He was a true gentleman, a fine fellow, a devoted family man, a great friend, a Christchurch civic patriot, a loyal parishioner, an explorer (round the world more than once by container ships, and to the sub-Antarctic islands), a trumper, a singer, a raconteur, a grandfather. These notes just record the death of a dear friend of mine, and of someone seminal to our Wellington Tramway Museum; there will I am sure be fuller obituaries of him in the THS and COTMA bulletins.

Alan Smith

**IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT
GRAHAM STEWART's LAST BOOK**

Graham Stewart, New Zealand's leading tramway historian and author of many authoritative books on New Zealand's tramway systems is planning what he says will be his last book.

And what a book.....

It will be large (A4) landscape format, high quality, and with no fewer than 296 pages. It will comprise photographs of trams and tramways throughout New Zealand. An estimated 60 to 70 pages will be devoted to Wellington alone.

It will be available only through the three NZ tramway museums and in an extremely generous gesture Graham has advised that the Museum's will retain the sale proceeds from each book sold!

The book will be available ONLY BY ADVANCE ORDER. A ONCE ONLY CHANCE!

Price per copy is expected to be about \$90.00 but this will be confirmed once the number of orders is known.

To place an indicative order please contact Henry Brittain, WTM's Secretary either by

email: secretary@wellingtontrams.org.nz

Or by phone 04 293 8929

Or advise Henry in person

Please make sure you let Henry know ASAP and not later than the 12th May!

Graham Stewart's

1950s & 1960s images of

Trams on the Streets of New Zealand

Large Format: 240 (depth) x 280 (width – landscape. Hardback bound.

Extent: 296 pages printed on quality art paper

– Majority of the pages will only have one plate to a page.

Content: A selection of photographs taken in the 1950s and early 1960s throughout New Zealand. Cities covered are Auckland, New Plymouth, Wanganui, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Invercargill.

A Limited Numbered Edition. This book will NOT be available in Bookshops.

Only available on Pre-Publication subscription to either:
The Tramway Division of Motat / Wellington Tramway Museum / Tramway Historical Society.

\$90.00 per copy (estimated)

– Proceeds of all Sales to each Museum who will handle the distribution to members.

FROM THE MARKETING AND OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT
Russell Jenkins, Vice-President

Operations Roster, please give some thought to coming up to the Museum, and giving the crew a hand.

Now we have turned the clocks back, summer has officially ended and with the cooler weather over the next few months, it is anticipated that our two Fiducias (239 and 260) will be doing the majority of the work.

With the moving of Tram 17 into the workshop for the addition of things such as destination boxes and a trolley pole plus the electrical work in preparation for the arrival of the trucks from A&G Price, there has been a change in the display area in the Tram Barn.

During the upcoming school holidays the Museum will be open with trams operating on Wednesday 17 and Wednesday 24. However with Easter and Anzac Day occurring during the school holidays, we will also be open every day over the Easter Weekend and on the afternoon of Anzac Day.

Even if you are not on the

REPAIRED, REPAINTED AND READY FOR SERVICE



Above: Fiducia 239 takes a pause outside the workshop during testing after partial refurbishment and painting that has been carried out over the past 12 months.

Photo: Keith McGavin, 3rd April 2019



The Cable Car and Trailer are now more prominent and the latest addition to the fleet (the mock-up cab known as No. 214 shown above) has been moved into the public area. While there is still some minor finishing work to be completed, I am sure that it will prove to be popular with the younger visitors and may even encourage some older visitors to have a go.

Photo: Keith McGavin, 3rd April 2019

From the Marketing & Operations Department, continued

Jewels in the Crown Day

The Regional Council held a “**Jewels in the Crown**” Park Open Day on 10th March as part of a promotion of all of the Regional Parks under their control. During the day almost 300 passengers took a tram ride to and from the beach.

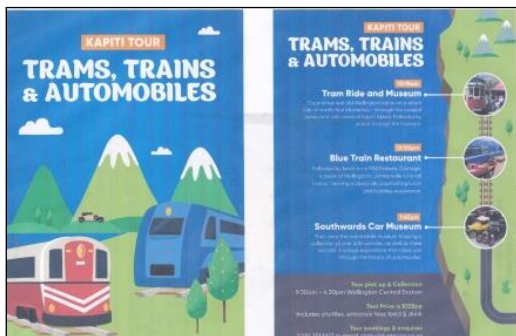
Weekday Charters

So far this year we have had two groups visiting the Tramway during the week and making use of our facilities. If you know of any group who would like to visit the Tramway, please let one of the M&O Committee know and we can give them a quote for a special opening.

Talks to Groups

If you know of any Service Groups such as Rotary, Lions or Probus who would like to learn about the Wellington Tramway Museum, please get them to contact one of the M&O Committee. Telling people our story is one way to spread the word and get more visitors and possibly new members.

Trams, Trains & Automobiles Tour



Over the past couple of months I have been working on a potential local tour operation with a local business owner.

While it is early days and no final decisions have been made, the idea is to offer a special interest tour to the Kapiti Coast for hotel guests in Wellington. The plan is to bring them to the Tramway for a “cuppa” and a tram ride, after which they will go to The Blue Train in Paraparaumu for lunch and a visit to Southwards in the afternoon.

If the tours become a reality, it is intended to run them at Weekends and possibly Wednesdays.

If you would like to see a promotional video, click onto the following link and have a look on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ba8TfOjGyl>

Grand Pacific Tours

Well, our first tour party is due on 11th September with a further five groups due in the first month.

The substantial income from these tours will be a great boost to funds and will enable us to progress with works that otherwise would be delayed or deferred. This is an opportunity for all members to contribute and so PLEASE give serious thoughts as to how you are able to help. For each visit it is estimated that three or four members will be required to assist with proceedings between around 2.30pm, and 4pm. A number of the scheduled visits are on days when we will open for normal running or on Wednesdays when members are on site.

Yes it is a big commitment, but think of the benefits to the Museum and to you its members.

M&O Committee

If any members have ideas for events or other suggestions about the operational side of the Tramway, please get in touch with one of the committee members below.

Russell Jenkins (Vice President M&O)
Henry Brittain (Secretary)
Denys Peck (Shop Operations)
Robert Vale (Roster Organiser)
Robert Hatten (Committee Member)

If you would like to join us, please give one of us a call.

Remember to keep up to date with the Tramway on either our webpage

www.wellingtontrams.org.nz

Or

The Tramway Facebook page



AROUND THE SITE AND DOWN THE LINE

Compiled with information from Allan Neilson, Henry Brittain and Keith McGavin

Work Priorities

A Maintenance & Engineering Meeting is being held on Wednesday 17th April when it is planned that work priorities and programme for 2019 will be finalised. Any major policy items of course will require ratification by the Board.

Trackwork

Good progress is being made on loose bolt remedial work – current efforts being focussed on the steep grade to the top of the hill.



Above: Track maintenance at the loop, 2nd March 2019 – replacing fishplate bolts.

Photo: Mike Flinn

Site Work

Clearing and tidying of the rear compound has continued.

Below: Part of the rear compound area now cleared and tidied.

Photo: Mike Flinn, 6th March 2019



In addition a Wednesday team has been preparing and sorting our stock of points for transfer from their present storage site down past the Loop to our main depot site.

Trams

The partial repainting of Fiducia 239 after the major work on its “B” end cab in particular (removing and rebuilding rotten areas) has been completed. Mechanical and electrical checks are being done and the tram is being readied for service.

With tram 239 no longer occupying a space in road 6 of the barn the plan to move tram 17 into the workshop was implemented on 20th March. Tram 17 now occupies the north end of road 6 and tram 207 (the next to be restored) has been moved from the north to the south end.



Above: Moving tram 17 from Barn Road 3 to Workshop Road 6 involved a trip to the main tram departure platform. Here intending first tram 17 passenger Colin Dash is thwarted in his attempt to board the tram by a closed door!

Photo: Keith McGavin, 20th March 2019

Routine maintenance has continued on the running trams Nos.151, 159 and 260.

Around the Site and Down the Line, continued

The move of tram 17 into the workshop also freed up space in road 3 of the Barn and this coincided well with the nearing completion of the mock-up tram cab "tram 214" which has now been moved to the front (south end) of road 3. A photograph appears in the Marketing and Operations notes.

A new storage bin for tram sand has been constructed and brought into use right at the front of road 3.



Above: The new tram sand storage bin. This has now been moved to the front of barn road 3, in front of the mock-up tram cab, and has been brought into use.

Photo: Keith McGavin, 13th March 2019

Tram 17 Progress (report from Trevor Burling)

Tram 17's move from the Barn to the Workshop referred to above was by means of "six or more bloke power" (see cover photo).



Above: A view under tram 17 of the modified Sammy truck mounting arrangement that allowed the tram to traverse curves.

Photo: Keith McGavin, 13th March 2019

Steve Porter and Colin Dash modified a couple of sleepers and a steel cross member between the Sammy truck uprights and fitted a king bolt in the middle so the tram could be manoeuvred around bends. This worked a treat and 17 moved quietly into its new position where all of the remaining body work, wiring and truck installation will be done.



Above: Tram 17 in position in the workshop. 20th March 2019.

Photo: Keith McGavin

Controller for Tram 17:



Above: the first of the BTH B510 controllers - restored for tram 17 by Trevor Weaver.

Photo: Trevor Burling

Around the Site and Down the Line, continued

The first controller is nearly complete and Trevor Weaver is putting the finishing touches to the inner workings, before adjustments are made to the refurbished fingers and contact tips and rings.

The carcass of the controller was lifted into the A end cabin to determine the best position for it. The BTH controllers are slightly deeper and higher than the original General Electric ones, so we needed to ensure there was sufficient room between the bulkhead and the door and enough space for the driver to stand. It fitted quite well, but is a bit more cramped.

Given the tight space and height of the controller, the controller handle will need to be shortened by about 50mm so the handle can be moved through the notches without the driver cracking knuckles on the window frame.

The B end will be a bit roomier as it is lower and deeper than the A end. It is the original box car cabin whereas the A end was created when the car was extended to a combination car, and then along came the 1913 Tramways Amendment Act requiring internal access following Frank Breeden's fall from 17 losing his life. The amendment required a door to be placed in the bulkhead even further cramping the space. When 17 is in service, there will be no need for passengers to enter and exit from the A end driver's cabin doors given the full length step along the open section.

We will soon raise 17 up so we can get underneath to install the resistor banks and traction wiring.

This will require some thought as to the best path for the wiring so it does not foul under car components.

Destination and Route No. Boxes and Coloured Light Signals:

Now that Neville Webley has finished on tram 239 he has joined Trevor Burling in working on these.

Trolley Tower

Steve Porter has reduced the height of the trolley tower for 17 to suit our requirements.



Above: The trolley tower height has been reduced by removing the raised sides.

Photo: Keith McGavin, 3rd April 2019



Above: 7th April, and the trolley tower is mounted on the tram.

Photo: Steve Porter

Tram 17 Trucks:



The contract to re-construct two Brill 22E trucks for Tram 17 is now well underway with a multitude of parts being made ready for fitting, and assembly of the two trucks commenced.

Photo: courtesy Steve Porter, 25th March 2019



Above and right: Various parts and fittings at A&G Price Ltd.

Photos above Steve Porter, and right courtesy A & G Price Ltd.

GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS, AND GOOD NEWS – from Steve Porter

On Saturday 23th February a group of six Driver Trainees from Wanganui Tramways Trust, and their trainer (Jim Ennis), came to the site. They were briefed and then they assisted with the preparation of Tram 151 for service. At the same time, we welcomed Jayden Charteris back on to the Operations Team where, after being “Refreshed”, he operated 260 and the Kiosk for the day.

The Wanganui trainees in turn drove 151 to the Beach and back. From what I saw, and have heard, each benefited from the experience.



Above: 23rd February 2019. Jim Ennis, the Whanganui Driver/Trainer (second from right), brought down a batch of Whanganui driver trainees for some experience on WTM as a part of their training.

And now for the bad news which came in two parts. One of the trainees was called back to Wanganui before he was able to have his drive. We expect he will come back on another occasion if Jim deems it desirable. The second bit of bad news was that a grid portion of the resistor grids on

151 that is only used for Notch One failed during the last “drive” of the day. We were able to verify the fault, and then completed activities for the day. It was decided after consultation that 151 would be repaired the following Monday.

The Sunday crew obligingly swapped 151 and 159 so that 159 was now in the barn and 151 in the workshop over the pit ready for repairs to begin.

Monday 25th saw Trevor Burling, Trevor Weaver, Allan Neilson, and Steve Porter arrive on site to deal with 151. After the obligatory hot drink and briefing (chat) the overhead in the workshop was locked out and Resistor Bank “C” disconnected and removed. While the resistor bank was being

disassembled the eggs and ferrules were cleaned, and the resistor mounting brackets under the tram were cleaned and painted. In addition, each mica washer was cleaned of dirt by scraping or brushing. A replacement grid was located, and all grid elements and frame

parts were pressure cleaned. The outer frame parts were then dried and painted on the inner surfaces. The team repaired to the Palace for lunch while paint dried.

After lunch assembly proceeded with Trevor W (our current resistor man) in charge and

Good News, Bad News and Good News, continued

before very long all was being tightened up.

Electrical checks of insulation and continuity verified correct assembly. The bank was then refitted to the tram using new bolts and washers and the now very clean eggs. After a minor glitch where one ferrule had to be swapped out for one with a smaller outside diameter the leads were reattached, and further electrical tests carried out by Allan.

The workshop lockout was removed, and the traction power turned on. 151 was

pumped up and Trevor B moved her outside (of course using notch one). So far so good! The tram was then driven to the Beach. A reported fault with notch 6 (extra power over notch 5) was not found. On the return journey the tram also performed correctly. Allan still had a few more electrical checks to do so the tram was returned to Road 5.

And, finally the GOOD News! A group of four members had quietly and collegially identified a fault and set about fixing it. Great team work!

Goodbye "Sebastian"

We said good-bye to our Daimler tower wagon, known as Sebastian, on Sunday 3rd March. It has been acquired by WTM member Peter Beale. Apart from Peter's long time interest in trams he is also an avid collector of military vehicles and has a number of WWII trucks in his collection.



Above: Sebastian about to be loaded for departure, Sunday 3rd March 2019.

Photo: Henry Brittain

In the 1990's Peter commenced restoring the Daimler's body which included the making and fitting of new front mudguards, having a new header tank made for the radiator and other miscellaneous items of restoration. Pressure of work prevented him from progressing this and the tower wagon was placed in storage at the tramway, however now with more time available to him, Peter has decided to

recommence its restoration and now that the tower has been removed, he has been able to relocate the Daimler to his workshop in Bulls.



Above: On the truck, ready to leave.

Photo: Henry Brittain



Above: Earlier days! WTM's three tower wagons in the barn, December 1998.

Photo: courtesy Henry Brittain

OVERSEAS NOW!



Above: Les Brunton of the Beamish Museum in Yorkshire, England, sent Allan Neilson this lovely photo on 21st February with the following description: *We are borrowing two trams for the summer: Manchester 765 from Heaton Park (delivered last week) and Blackpool & Fleetwood 40 (due beginning of March). We commissioned 765 last Friday, and it's going into service tomorrow.* The Beamish Museum is planning to recreate a 1950's period village or small township and this will include an extensive trolleybus service. As part of this Beamish is planning to purchase a considerable quantity of the ex-Wellington trolleybus overhead parts that WTM is currently sorting out for sale.

TALKING OF TROLLEY BUSES



Left: On 22nd September 2001 Wellington Volvo's Nos 239 and 207 were standing alongside each other in the Karori Bus Depot. Compare this with trams 239 and 207 on page 2.

Photo: Henry Brittain

TRAM STATISTICS
from Keith McGavin
Daily figures collated by Mike Vash

This issue we report on February and March 2019, on the Quarter up to the end of March, and for the nine months year to date from 1st July 2018.

Overlaying most if not all of the period is the issue of the Transmission Gully roadworks on State Highway One adjacent to our entrance at MacKays Crossing, and the temporary (we hope) reduction in highway signage and the temporary turnoffs into Queen Elizabeth Park and the Museum.

February 2019

Passenger journeys	this year, 1,098
	last year, 967
Tram kms	this year, 392
	last year, 292

The increased number of passenger journeys was due to a couple of mid-week special charters. Normal weekend and holiday passengers were down by 13%.

March 2019

Passenger journeys	this year, 924
	last year, 737
Tram kms	this year, 396
	last year, 335

The increased No. of passenger journey numbers in March were mainly due to the “Jewels in the Crown” Day on 10th March (see Marketing and Operations notes) when 299 passenger journeys were made. But it was a good month generally with mainly settled warm weather – unusually so for March.

The last Quarter (from Boxing Day 26th Dec 2018 to 31st March 2019)

Passenger journeys	this year 5,187
	last year 4,847
Tram kms	this year 1,837
	last year 1,674

Despite the Transmission Gully roadworks we achieved an increase of 7% in passenger journeys. It is attributable to more

specials this year, the “Jewels in the Crown” Day on 10th March and probably also to the good long and settled Indian summer though March.



Above: Jayden Charteris at the controls of tram 260, 23rd February 2019. Photo: Allan Neilson

Nine Months Year-to-date to 31 March 2019

Passenger journeys	this year 8,689
	last year 8,398
Tram kms	this year 3,399
	last year 3,370

Passenger journeys are just 3% higher overall and all of the increase can be attributed to the fact that tram operations last year did not start until mid-August.

In addition, although we have had more Special Charters this year, we did not operate for most of the weekdays in school holidays this year and that cost us about 500 passenger journeys.

Overall though, in the current circumstances it is gratifying to be able to record an increase at all.

HISTORICAL CORNER

Contributors Henry Brittain,
Alan Smith and Keith McGavin

This issue we present an extended "Historical Corner" with a number of items. We hope you find it of interest.

HISTORICAL CORNER -1

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION and
CORRECTION from October 2017
TRAMLINES re tram 170 charter in 1960

*Info. from Henry Brittain and
Keith McGavin*



Above is Double-saloon tram No.170 at Thorndon tram terminus on a special charter for tram enthusiasts on Saturday 18th June 1960.

This was originally a black & white photo by a photographer for the Evening Post and was colourised by Brendon Graham – www.colourising.nz – and published in Tramlines October 2017 issue.

We now know the name of the motorman on this tram tour which traversed most if not all of the then open lines of the system. His name is Will Murtha and we are advised by his son that he started working for Wellington Tramways in 1918 and worked for 42 years on the trams. This tour is thought to have taken place on his last day prior to retirement and, if so, the tour over

the whole tramway system must have been a fitting way to end his lengthy career.

There was an error of identification in the list of names provided in Tramlines October 2017 of those in the photograph. Graeme Bennett advises that the last person on the right (standing on the tram step) is Gavin McCabe (now of McCabe Industries Ltd., Upper Hutt), not Don Clement.

The full list of those in the photo, from the left is:

- Conductress (in cab) name unknown
- Graeme Bennett
- Motorman Will Murtha
- Allan Lang
- Bill Horne
- Keith Robinson
- Keith McGavin
- Gavin McCabe

HISTORICAL CORNER -2

N.Z. Tramway Track Gauges

A question from Alan Smith

2019 marks 70 years since the start of the closure of the Wellington electric tram system, a process which was spread over 15 years, from Wadestown in January 1949 to Thorndon-Newtown in May 1964. Within those 15 years replacement by buses was also completed for each of the other six New Zealand cities operating trams at the end of World War II in August 1945.

The *New Zealand Railway Observer* in its December 1945 issue published a summary of the tram situation as at war's end, the editor explaining that "with the exception of the details concerning rolling stock and track gauge, which were supplied by Mr. D. R. (Ross) McQueen, the information has been taken from the 1944 *New Zealand Official Year Book*."

Ross McQueen was a meticulous recorder of tramway matters (some of his 1949 photos appeared in the July/August 2018

Historical Corner-2 NZ Tramway Track Gauges, continued

issue of *Tramlines*), so we can reasonably rely on what he said about track gauge. His 1945 notes recorded the track gauge for Wellington as 4'0", for Auckland, New Plymouth, Wanganui, Christchurch and Dunedin as 4'8.5", and for Dunedin as 4'8" i.e. half an inch - a bit over 1cm - narrower than for Auckland et al.

Was this really true? And if so, why? Ross was the sort of fellow who would no doubt have got down in the street and measured such things with his own tape ruler. Were such things measured in different ways in different cities? Were the Dunedin wheel flange profiles different? What was going on?

A mystery, which perhaps some 21st century reader may have the validated answer for.

Alan Smith

HISTORICAL CORNER -3
Three-Horse Express

Alan Smith

Grant Taylor found this photo in February on Facebook's "Johnsonville Memories" page. Well, it's Wellington anyway and the general feeling is that is near where Thorndon Quay, Mulgrave St, Featherston St and Lambton Quay all join together - in later years, very much the hub of the electric tram system.



Although the horse tram looks clean and shiny, the grand new waiting shelter on the right ready for the start of the electric trams (which reached here in September 1904) suggests that the photo was taken towards the very end of the horse tram era - perhaps as a special record of that transition. Talk about disruptive technologies!

There are two connections with today's WTM. The first is that the horse car may well be our own collection's oldest tram - ex Kelburn trailer #6. There is no way of telling if the two cars are the one and the same: and, as can be seen from the photo, the horse trams recycled as Kelburn Cable Car trailers for a further 70 years' service were shortened by having one whole compartment cut out.

The second connection is a bit more tenuous. The ceremonial cutting of the first sod for the Wellington electric tramways apparently took place at about this spot (the first opened line, in June 1904, was however through Newtown, while construction to Thorndon and elsewhere was still being finished). A year or so ago, WTM suggested to the Wellington City Council that a commemorative plaque about this would be well justified. There was keenness amongst some WCC staff to have such a plaque, but their preference was to mount it in the pavement at the foot of Cable Car Lane to celebrate more generally that "trams once ran past here". Then staff moved, and no doubt there was another restructuring

or three, and we've now just heard that the whole matter of "commemorative plaques" in the city has been paused while the wider policy is reviewed. All very elusive - rather like the Facebook snap and its emergence in a Johnsonville page... We'll keep pushing for it. Those trams really did open up the modern City of Wellington!

HISTORICAL CORNER (4)

THE ALLEN STREET TRAM LINE, COURTENAY PLACE, WELLINGTON

By Keith McGavin, with supporting research from Henry Brittain and Alan Smith

Photographs as credited

1939 and 1940 were the years of the last significant improvements to Wellington City's tram lines. The Bowen Street deviation, which shortened the tram (and road) route to Karori, was a major work which opened in August 1940 but not long prior to this were the additions made to the tramway network in the Rongotai area for New Zealand's Centennial Exhibition which ran from 8th November 1939 to 4th May 1940. These additions included a temporary double track siding laid in Calabar Road, Kilbirnie, from Broadway, and a balloon loop line at Tirangi Road, Kilbirnie from Coutts Street. In addition there was a temporary loop line in Kilbirnie from Onepu Road, along Endeavour Street, Yule Street, and Resolution Street. These loops and sidings were all designed to handle the crowds attending the Exhibition.

Then, in the central city, improvements were made at the Railway Station terminus with the addition of a line in 1937 from Lambton Quay, along Stout Street to Featherston Street, and in 1938 a connecting loop line along Waterloo Quay and into Bunny Street joining on to the Featherston Street tracks. These improvements, which added greater flexibility and capacity to tram operations at the Railway Station terminus, may have been as much in connection with the opening of the new railway station in 1937 as they were about handling the anticipated surge in tram passengers for the Exhibition.

The Allen Street line:

At the other end from the Railway Station of Wellington's "Golden Mile" is Courtenay Place. Some trams, notably those from Karori, terminated here. It was also a place where Hataitai or other route No.2 trams could reverse on their way to and from Newtown Depot. There was also a layby siding in Kent Terrace, adjacent to Courtenay Place and Courtenay Place was the junction for trams to Oriental Bay. Quite a lot of tram movements were involved. The crossovers / sidings available to handle this were:

- Courtenay Place crossover, just to the north of the waiting shelter.
- Kent Terrace crossover, alongside the Taj Mahal
- Elizabeth St. crossover, (No.2 route, off Kent Terrace, approx. 100 metres past the intersection)
- The Morgue siding.

It was decided that, with the anticipated increased demand expected from the Centennial Exhibition, that more flexibility was required and that improvements would be made. The following is an extract from the Tramway Journal (Wellington Tramway's official staff magazine) of June 1939:

(d) Courtenay Place.—The shunting facilities at this important City loading point have long been a problem on account of the blockages that occur when trams are using the shunt at peak loading periods. Approval has been given of a single track through Allen Street to connect Wakefield Street with Courtenay Place. Motor-men, conductors, and officials will appreciate the inestimable value this length of track will prove in handling the evening Exhibition loading. Empty trams from the Exhibition will pull round via No. 10 route into Wakefield Street, through Allen Street, and straight on to Courtenay Place line without having to "change over" the tram, or causing any delay to the main traffic route.

Historical Corner -4 The Allen Street tram line, Courtenay Place, Wellington, continued

Allen Street, along with the parallel Blair Street, were at the time and through until about 1990 home to Wellington's wholesale fruit and vegetable market and thus Allen Street was a place of great and constant daily activity from the early hours until at least late morning. This caused some issues with tram traffic and restrictions on when the track could be used. Henry Brittain has supplied some excerpts from the Order in Council authorising the Allen Street line as follows:

From Henry Brittain:

Amongst other things the Order in Council (which was No.21 dated 8th November 1939) stated:

- *Construction to have substantially commenced on or after 30 Nov 1939 and to be completed and open for traffic on or before 30 June 1940.*
- *All cars shall be stopped before passing junctions or crossings of two or more tramway routes and at any other places as in the opinion of the Inspecting Engineer are necessary for the safe working of the tramways.*
- ***The Local Authority is hereby authorised to use the Tramway each day after the hour of 5pm or before the hour of 5am and not otherwise. (Bold type – editor)***

The First Schedule describes the total length of the line from its commencement in Wakefield St to its termination in Courtenay Place as 8.75 chains.

Surprisingly the date of this Order-in-Council, as with the Orders-in-Council for the Exhibition lines around Rongotai, indicate that they were passed in retrospect, and the dates during which construction was meant to commence and be completed by do not align with the dates of the Exhibition.

The following map shows the tram lines in the Courtenay Place area, including Allen Street:



As can be seen from the map, and as pointed out in the extract from the Tramway Journal, trams arriving at Courtenay Place from the south and east (e.g. the Centennial Exhibition) and terminating at Courtenay Place would be able pull round to the Wakefield Street route (route 10), through Allen Street, and straight on to Courtenay Place without having to changeover the tram and without causing delay by using a crossover on a main traffic route.

Operational Issues:

The following letter from Henry Brittain's archives is of interest. It demonstrates that despite the trams' restricted hours, conflicts between the fruit and vegetable market operators and the tramways could and did arise. The Traffic Manager who wrote this letter was almost certainly Mr Len Robinson (initials LR on top left of the letter). Len was Traffic Manager into the 1950's.

AD/LR

GM.

Mr. M. Cable,
General Manager.
Tramways Department.
ELECTRICITY HOUSE.

14th. May 1941.

Sir,

Re: TRAMS IN ALLEN STREET.

We do not use Allen Street before 5.0 p.m. Monday to Friday, and 12.0 noon Saturdays.

Inspector Broughton waited on the Allen Street Merchants re parking motor cars at an angle from 5.0 to 10.30 p.m. Broughton states that when fruit boats arrive from the Islands motor trucks unload after 5.0 p.m. This is not often. Broughton, who usually helps us in tramway work, in this case appears to be more or less in support of the merchants.

When Allen Street track was laid we were grateful, believing that at last some of the difficulty of delaying main line traffic was definitely solved for all time. We cannot agree that the trams in Allen Street after 5.0 p.m. can interfere with the markets. As a rule the buildings are all closed at 5.0 p.m.

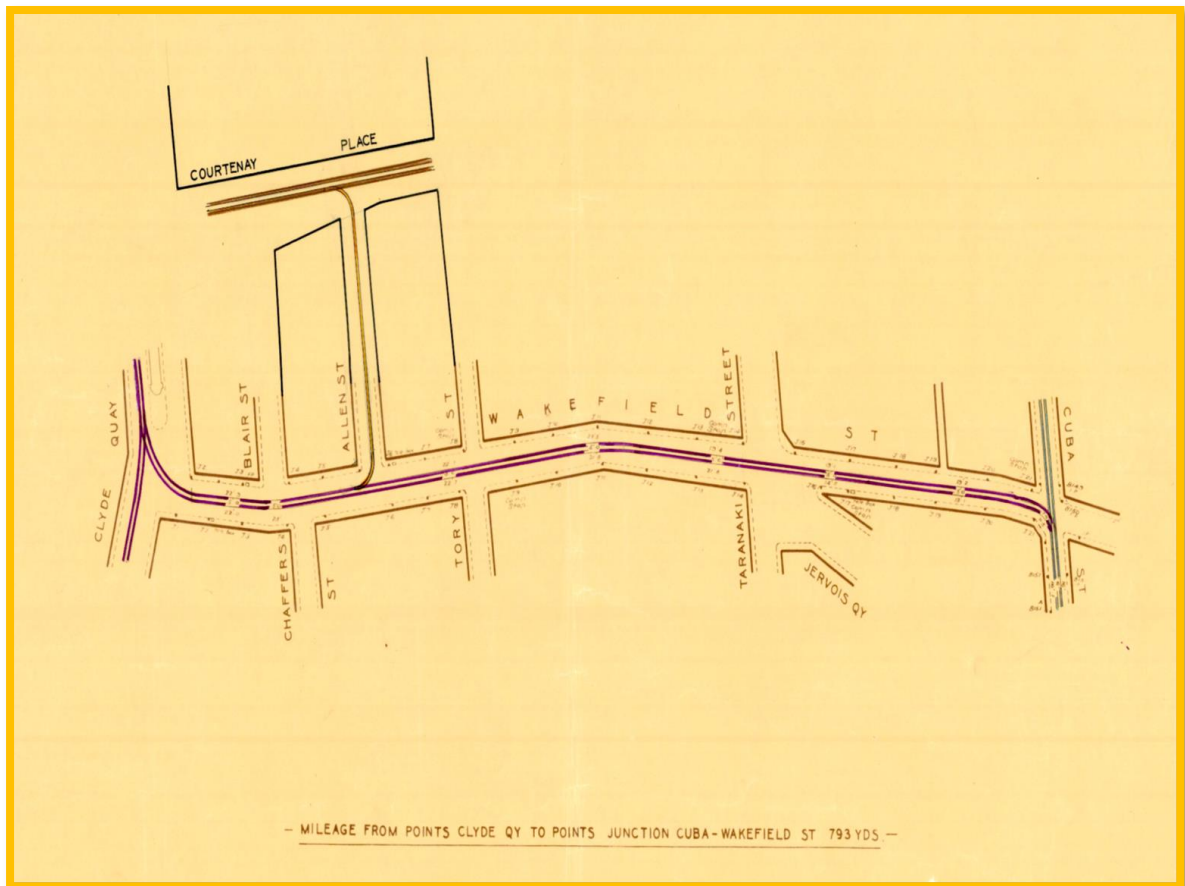
Allen Street has a notice erected at each end of the street stating that through traffic is not allowed until after 3.30 p.m., clearly indicating that by that time the bulk of the business is finished, and that is so.

We think, with reasonable parking of motor cars etc. and correctly marked spaces for trams to stand - one only at a time to be at the south end, whilst one or two remain at the north end. As a rule there are not more than two trams at the same time in this street, except Saturdays. With occasional guidance by the Traffic Inspectors there should be no friction.

My personal view is that passengers are of more importance than fruit or vegetables.

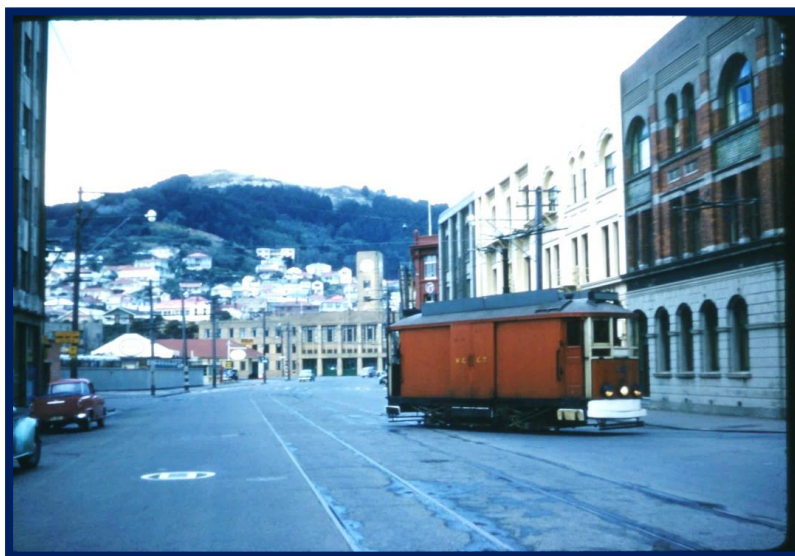
Yours faithfully,

TRAFFIC MANAGER.



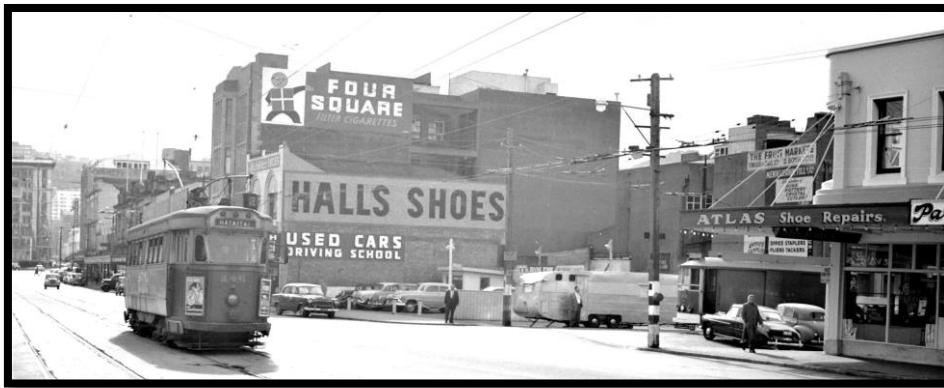
Above: An official plan ex City Tramways Department showing the Allen Street tram line.

Henry Brittain advises that the Allen Street loop line was intact up until the mid-1950's when the Tramways reclaimed the points that led back into Courtenay Place. It seems that for the trams that wished to reverse back towards the eastern and southern suburbs at Courtenay Place the crossovers at Courtenay Place and alongside the Taj Mahal were used more often. At some point the tram overhead wire was also removed. However trolleybus wires were erected so it was still physically possible for trams to enter Allen Street from the Wakefield Street end.



Left: Track grinder No.301, on a special enthusiasts' charter on 26th March 1960 enters Allen Street from Wakefield Street using the trolleybus overhead.

Graham Stewart photo



Above: Track Grinder No.301 on the right is just peeking out towards Courtenay Place in this photo of the same special charter. No.301 is on the extreme end of the Allen Street track, the connection into Courtenay Place having been lifted in the 1950's. 26th March 1960. *Photo: Graham Stewart*



Above: Here is 301 again, this time on its return trip down Allen Street. Note the trolley pole at an angle using the trolleybus overhead. Saul Goldsmith, (WTM President 1968 – 1974) owned an importing company, General Agencies Co., which had its offices in the Laery & Co. Ltd. building on the left. The WTM Board met in the Company's meeting room on numerous occasions over these years.

Photo: John Herbert



Above: Mk.I Double-saloon 151 was the next tram into Allen Street. Another special enthusiasts charter, this one on 28th May 1960. *Photo: John Herbert*



Above: Enthusiast charter with Mk.II Double Saloon No.170, 18th June 1960: Using the trolleybus overhead No.170 has travelled to the end of the line in Allen Street. This turned out to be the last tram ever to venture into Allen Street. The connecting curve and turnout to Courtenay Place had been removed in the mid 1950's. In those days Allen Street was home to Wellington's main fruit and vegetable market (along with "Des's Diner"!).

Below: Today Allen Street is an integral part of Courtenay Place's restaurants, bars and café scene. Many of the same buildings are still in evidence, many now housing apartments upstairs. With the rain showing up surface irregularities it almost looks as if the tram tracks remain under the asphalt road surface. I wonder!

Photos Keith McGavin



Opened (as far as we can ascertain) in November 1939 in time for the Centennial Exhibition, and used sparingly after 1940, Allen Street must have been one of the least used tram lines in Wellington. It saw a few trams each day, especially in the evening peak, and particularly during the busy war years but probably fell to very low usage after Oriental Bay route closed in 1950 and especially after Karori and Northland routes closed in 1954. The loop connection to Courtenay Place was removed sometime in the 1950's.

If anyone can find an old photo or photos of Allen Street showing a tram or trams in it “Tramlines” would be delighted to hear from you.

Courtenay Place Crossovers

Associated of course with the perceived need for the Allen Street loop were the various crossovers alluded to earlier. In the event it seems that these were used much more frequently than the Allen Street loop line. Here are photographs showing the two normally used crossovers in operation – being used in these cases by trams terminating at Courtenay Place and returning to the Railway Station via the “Golden Mile” – route 1.



Left: The crossover next to the Courtenay Place tram waiting shelter.

Below: The crossover adjacent to the “Taj Mahal” on the right. New City Hotel on the left.

Photos: WTM Archives



LATE NEWS PICTURES

Wellington Tramway Museum – photos from Russell Jenkins



Above: From left: Henry Brittain, Keith McGavin and Mike Flinn at the point stack, 3rd April 2019, stocktaking and measuring up the points.



Above: Fiducia 239 under test, 3rd April 2019, is ascending to the summit from the Beach. Part of Kapiti Island native bird sanctuary is in the background.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

We Are Looking For Tram Drivers

Yes – with a very busy time coming up over next summer, the Museum is looking for people interested in learning to drive a tram and to join our operational team. The first of around 60 tour groups from Grand Pacific Tours will be coming in September bringing overseas tour parties to the museum for a visit and a tram ride. **We need more drivers!**

Posters like the one below will be going up around the museum and on the trams over the next few weeks.



If as a member you would like to learn to drive, please contact either Henry Brittain or Russell Jenkins in the first instance.

If any visitors indicate an interest in becoming a member and learning to drive, please take their contact details and pass them on to either Henry or Russell.

"Tramlines" is the bi-monthly newsletter for members of the Wellington Tramway Museum Inc. Its aim is to keep members in touch with practical notices and the details of current developments and also includes articles on matters of historic tramway interest, especially Wellington. Please also see our website and Facebook page which are our instantly-updated Museum fact resource and notice to the wider world. Contributions and notes welcomed. Contact details are on page 3.