

# RUNNING BACK

**It's 50 years since the last Sydney tram shot through. Here's what happened at the recent SYDNEY VINTAGE TRAMWAY FESTIVAL 2011**



Photo: Mal Rowe

On the 26th and 27th February there must have been some thousands of people, some there for a glimpse of what they remember, some to see just what trams were like and to sample their ride and feel.

But for tram-lovers, or at least devotees of public transport, the singular attraction had to be the news that there would be a coupled set of trams in the manner once seen in Sydney's peak hours and on race and beach days.

It was confirmed on the Museum's website only the previous day that the set would actually carry passengers. This was made possible by the Powerhouse Museum, who hold the only other car of this model in complete working order.

Almost all models of Sydney passenger cars carried passengers over the two days and works cars, such as ballast motors ("truck trams"), tower trams and line scrubber cars also paraded.

Finally, there was a "last tram" re-enactment of the final day fifty years ago, when three modern corridor trams carried tram fans of the day on their farewell journey. Farewell messages were chalked by visitors as was the case in 1961.

Many within the Tramway Museum put great effort, some over many months, into the Festival.

A skilled track crew worked tirelessly over months every Saturday, including during the weekend heatwave, to complete re-laying of one section in time for the weekend.

A skilled heritage timber artisan, with assistants, completed a major repair of the historic Railway Square Waiting Shed - the popular picnic shelter admired by so many.

And all those trams.

The Museum's workshop crew worked unstintingly to have all the older trams thoroughly checked and brought into perfect order.

The visiting Powerhouse Museum tram had its bogies and many other items thoroughly checked.

Receiving a full service, though generally in excellent order despite its 50 year rest, it was returned from being a museum exhibit to a fully-functioning tram.

The Traffic Team, which was augmented by many workshop folk, also accredited drivers, worked solidly for the two days ready to undertake any work as needed.

They were even assisted by visitors from interstate and New Zealand tramway museums.

Finally, the leader of the Festival team, David Critchley, who spent countless hours contacting so many organisations, our Chairman, Howard Clark, who worked with the Powerhouse Museum executive officers who put in many extra hours to achieve a prize exhibit's return to real tram tracks carrying the public.

In a government museum, such an exchange of an exhibit is never simple.

*TMSV and the Melbourne Tramway Museum salute our friends Up North and wish them every good wish as Sydney rediscovers the many benefits of taking the tram.*

*Story and pictures courtesy  
www.sydneytramwaymuseum.com.au*



INSIDE:  
1934.  
MELBOURNE'S  
WATERSHED  
YEAR.

## RUNNING JOURNAL



TRAMWAY MUSEUM SOCIETY  
OF VICTORIA

NEWS FROM VICTORIA'S ORIGINAL & BIGGEST TRAMWAY HERITAGE CENTRE

NO. 201 / 2011 \$2\*

# FAMILY FUN PARK? OR TRAMWAY TEMPLE?

**Tramway enthusiast backs 'positive spirit of MTM'.  
Suggests Family Fun Park could broaden Bylands' appeal.**

On Page Seven one of the country's leading advocates of tramway preservation and promotion writes to *Running Journal* with enthusiasm for the future of the TMSV and the Melbourne Tramway Museum.

"The possibilities are endless," he argues.

"The public, which is where the revenue comes from, don't just want to go to a site to have a tram ride, as great as it seems to us."

So says Richard Gilbert.

What's your view?

Agree? Disagree?

*Running Journal* wants to hear your ideas.

### IN ISSUE NO. 201

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**NOT A MEMBER? JOIN US NOW! [www.tramway.org.au](http://www.tramway.org.au)**

\*suggested donation

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Of course, 2011 can never be anything other than an *annus horribilis* for the people of Christchurch. And for New Zealanders wherever they are.

Our thoughts are with them all and especially our many friends at the Tramway.

One image, seen around the world, had a tram, stopped, literally in its tracks, by the carnage all around it.

Michael Esposito, MD of the Wood Scenic Line that owns the Tramway, was quoted in the New Zealand Herald as believing that the trams could be out of service for up to eighteen months.

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"Some of the tracks have snapped, others have raised up a bit, the overhead power cables and poles have come down in some places," he says.

We look forward to the day when cars like no. 244 are again serving their city.

And stopping only to pick up and put down passengers.

## Colour Supplement soon for RJ

| FORM 134<br>Supplementary Running Journal  |             |         |          |          | Punch Mark |
|--|-------------|---------|----------|----------|------------|
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Aware that *Running Journal* in its new role as a news and publicity vehicle for the TMSV and the Melbourne Tramway Museum hasn't run on time for one reason or other, Mal's current excellent publication will, aided by Liam and Tony, become a kind of Supplementary Running Journal that we're planning to have 'on the street' every two months as a colour newsletter to keep us up-to-date with all the latest news.

## SOCIAL PROGRAM FROM MAY

The first of a continuing series of bi-monthly Social Meetings will be held on Monday 2nd May at 7.30pm at Hawthorn Depot.

The topic for the evening will be a discussion of the Prahran and Hawthorn Trust one hundred and one years after its establishment.

Features of the evening will include refreshments and a slide show. A \$2 donation will be requested to help defray costs.

Subsequent meetings will be held in July, September and November.

Details will be posted online and in coming issues of *Running Journal News Update*.

## HELP!

**Please come and help do some necessary work around the site any Sunday. Or any other day that suits. Or just come and help show off our trams and other items to our increasing numbers of visitors.**

**Bylands is a great place to meet folk with similar interests.**

**Incidentally, you can often find special sale items (like hard-to-get books etc) at Bylands. We look forward to seeing you soon.**



# BYLANDS: AN ALTERNATIVE POINT OF VIEW

In response to the letter in 'Running Journal' No.200 disapproving of the new format and commenting on lack of progress in obtaining Rail Safety Accreditation at Bylands, I wish to offer an alternative view.

I applaud the Board of the MTM for trying to increase the profile of the Melbourne Tramway Museum. The colour newsletter is an example of developing a professional approach to market the museum to a discerning public in a competitive tourist and recreational world. Should the production continue, this is a great start, and should it not, it will at least show the current management have tried and understand they need to test various ways of increasing the museum's profile.

Like Mal Rowe, I share the late Bob Prentice's strong vision for Bylands. Pursuing rail safety accreditation is not as vital as getting the public through the gate.

Bob wanted the site to be a family pleasure park, with playground activities, picnic facilities and such attractions as pony rides in addition to the tramway museum.

Get those facilities up and running and Public Liability Insurance for the site would be easily obtained.

Visitors could look at the museum's wonderful collection of trams as part of a great day out.

**"... if it is part of a fun day out then everyone benefits."**

# BYLANDS: AN ALTERNATIVE POINT OF VIEW

As we learned at the recent COTMA Conference, the Wellington Tramway Museum at Queen Elizabeth Park is about the same distance from Wellington's CBD as Bylands is from Melbourne's.

They've found that as the surrounding rural area becomes suburbs with a population of 65,000 expected within 20 years, local people are using the park for recreation.

The same opportunities apply at Wallan and Kilmore. Bylands should be promoted as a family fun park where people from these 'suburbs' can enjoy family activities, not far from home along with visitors from the Melbourne area.

The public, which is where the revenue comes from, don't just want to go to a site to have a tram ride, as great as it seems to us.

But if it is part of a fun day out then everyone benefits.

As we saw at Queen Elizabeth Park, families made a day of it with tram rides, a visit to the static tram display in the Depot, picnic facilities, purchasing ice creams and souvenirs from the tramway kiosk / shop, pony rides and in their case, a visit to the beach.

If MTM joined with other groups to develop this style of attraction the workload is shared amongst other groups such as pony clubs and the site would develop quite a following. Maybe a miniature

railway could get involved. The possibilities are endless.

Whilst success in this area can be enjoyed, the drawn out and costly Rail Accreditation process can be pursued, funded by dollars earned at the family park entrance gate.

I encourage the positive spirit of MTM to consider these offerings in tandem with the progressive direction they are now showing.

**Richard Gilbert**  
Tramway enthusiast

Victorian Railways no 41 gleams in the Sunday sun at Haddon

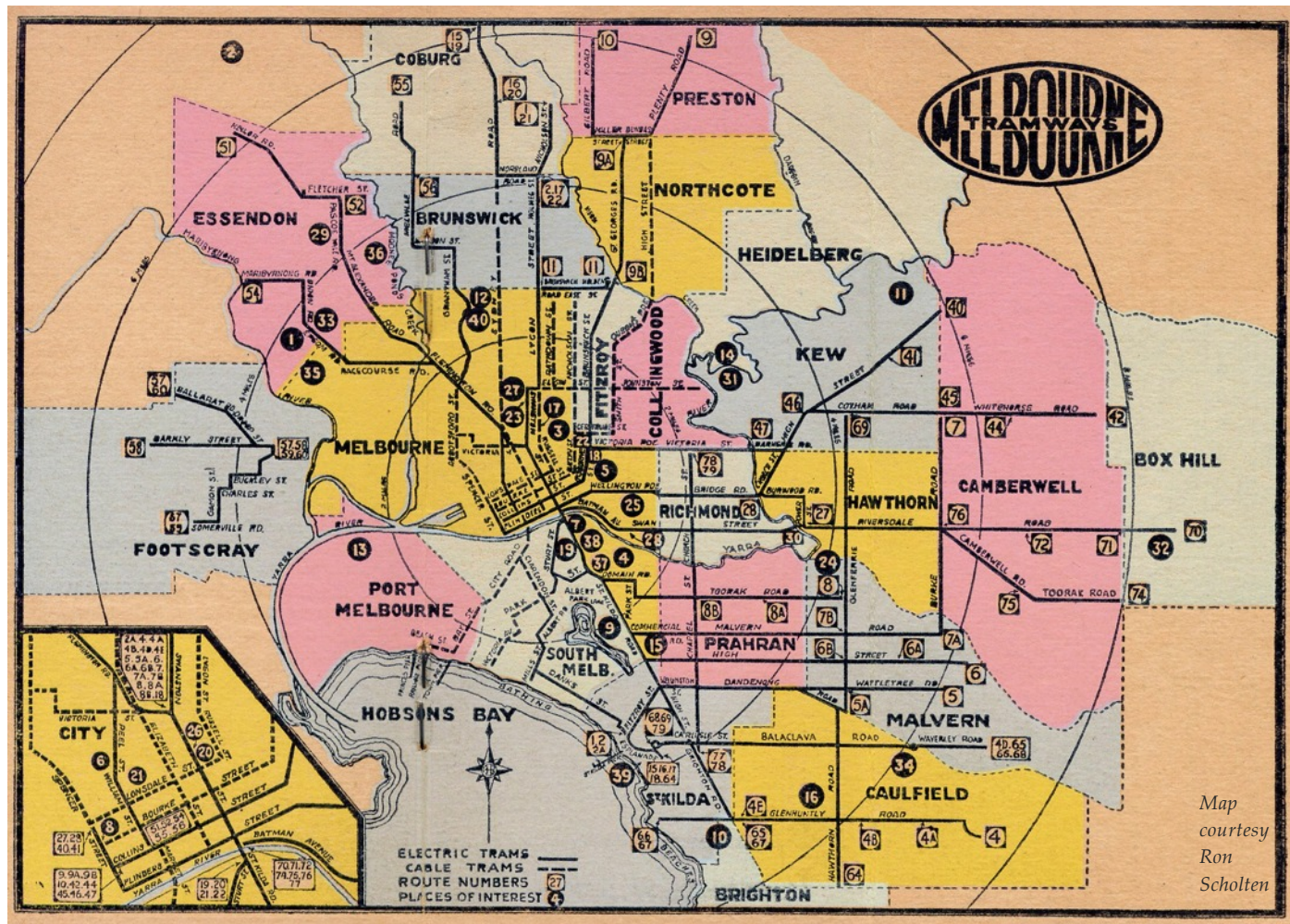


Photo: Tony Miles

**SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:**  
[journal@tramway.org.au](mailto:journal@tramway.org.au)



# 1934: A WATERSHED YEAR



A while back I was given the map above of the MMTB system in 1934 by Ron Scholten. It was part of a booklet advertising tourist services – mostly on MMTB buses – in what are now the suburbs of Melbourne. The map shows the system about half way through the process of conversion from cable to electric operation. Flinders, Collins and Swanston Steets are converted, but not Bourke, Lonsdale or Elizabeth. In the expanded map of the inner city area, the single track electric connection that connected the electric lines at the Haymarket corner to the siding in Victoria St is clearly visible. That was the connection laid in 1927 to connect the Essendon lines to the rest of the system. With the job half done, there was a global financial crisis. So changes were needed to cut costs and to improve the type of trams to be brought into service.

**The Background** In 1934, Australia was in the early stages of recovery from the Depression, but money was short. One immediate method of cutting costs had been to reduce all wages by 10% at the beginning of 1931. Another approach was to recycle as many parts as possible in building new rolling stock. More troubling was that some of the cable services were converted to bus operation.

**The W2s** The MMTB took over a very mixed collection of trams from the various Trusts and the NMET&L Company, plus a fleet of cable trams that all had to be replaced.

Their initial effort had been to build some of the trams that they could build most simply and quickly – the Q and R class straight sill cars like our 199. They were most unpopular and the Board rapidly moved on to the highly successful W – W1 – W2

design, building over 400 of these in the short period from 1923 to 1931.

**Yappers** In the early 1930s the MMTB realised that they needed a better design and initially built the four Y1 trams, introducing a wider body with front and centre entrances.

They were a modern design reflecting the “Peter Witt” design from the USA, but without the passenger flow principles of that design.

Two of these had the first No 9 trucks – a hornless design with leaf springs as used in automotive applications. They also had large diameter wheels requiring a complicated frame to get reasonable step heights. We have car number 612. The Y1s were very expensive to build with these complicated frames.

The Union hated them because they were designed for the option of one-man operation. After the first



Photo: Noel Reed

four were built, the rest were cancelled. It's likely that the partially-built frames from some of the cancelled order were used to build X2 single truck tramcars. Our no 680 is an example.

**Fiddling with tram design – and doing it on the cheap.** The board still needed an improved design and started with a bigger W2 – the W3. Narrow-bodied like a W2 but with larger Y1-like wheels and slightly different versions of the no 9 leaf spring trucks.

Simpler in design than the Y1, the W3 step heights were very high and only 16 were built. To cut costs,

wheels from withdrawn single truck cars were used on the W3s.

(Destination City suggests that they came from Melbourne Brunswick and Coburg Tramways Trust S and T cars, but that's unlikely as the S and T trams were scrapped later.)

Perhaps they were from the old Trust cars – and especially the original P&MTT cars, withdrawn in the early 1930s. It's interesting to note that the cycle is now complete with old No9 trucks ex scrapped W3 cars very much in demand for 33" wheel and axle sets to build replica trucks for museum trams. Car 667 is our example of a W3.



Photos: Noel Reed



**Next try was the W4** Same mechanical design as a W3, same narrow body frame, but with a body wider than the frame to allow cross seats in the saloons and a reasonable passageway between the seats. The height problem was solved by placing the seats in the saloon over the wheels so that the wheels could be above floor level. [It's what our Combino and Citadis designs do now ... and how cable grip cars gave Melbourne its lowest-floored tram ever. We have no. 673.

**W5: false start, then success** A new design was under development. The first attempt was an example of

compromised engineering design based on shortage of money. The MMTB built the CW5 design – a wide body tram that looked much the same as the W cars in service today, but sitting on recycled two-motor maximum traction trucks from scrapped trams from the Municipal Trusts. They were underpowered and were shifted from one location to another, finally ending up on the Moonee Ponds to Footscray route – haven for odd trams for many years! It's worth noting that had this design not failed, the maximum traction cars would not have been available for sale to the SEC Provincial Tramways and we would probably have had none in preservation.

There's little doubt that MMTB engineers would have been appalled at this compromise CW5 tram. Their failure allowed the MMTB finally to build what was probably their best design aside from the Y1. The W5 trams had a better version of the No 9 truck – the No 15. It was basically the same design as the No 9 but with 28" wheels and had the same power of 4 x 40HP (4 x 30KW).

This design was the stable tramcar design for the next 20 years – from the W5s that started appearing in 1935 to the W7s of the mid 1950s. Changes were made to controllers and sliding doors became standard, but the body design was unaltered for that whole period.

There were 120 W5s built, and the five CW5s were eventually converted to W5. The SW5, SW6, W6 and W7 account for another 200 trams, giving a total of 325 trams of this design. A big change in body design did not come until the mid-1970s: the Z tram, with a body layout not a lot different to the 1930 Y1 trams, but much improved electrics!

**A Watershed Year** So we have seen that 1934 was a transition year – at the halfway mark in the conversion of the cable system to electric operation a significant new design of tram was in process. After some false starts Melbourne ended up with what is arguably its most successful design and the design that is now simply known as the “W tram”.

Mal Rowe



# TRAMORAMA

More pictures from Mal's centrespread story about the importance of 1934 in Melbourne's tramway history introduce a new feature of *Running Journal*, TRAMORAMA.

Augmenting Liam's piece (page 3) is no. 205 after conversion to freight car no. 19 in 1947.

A short trip on a glorious autumn Sunday at Haddon. Sunday 27th March to be precise.

Across the base of the page is a splendid tramorama of you-know-where (also by Liam).

If you have pictures that you'd like to see in TRAMORAMA please email to [journal@tramway.org.au](mailto:journal@tramway.org.au)



Photo: Ron Scholten



Photo: Mal Rowe



Photo: Ron Scholten



Photo: Noel Reed



Sunday at Haddon



Photo: Liam Davies



Photo: Malvern Museum collection

## U-NIQUE

U class No 205 was originally imported in 1906 by the North Melbourne Electric Tramway & Lighting Company (NMETL), as No 4. It was constructed by J.G. Brill of Philadelphia as a reasonably standard single-truck saloon tramcar.

Produced without a windshield, it was modified later by the NMETL, to include a windshield, semi-enclosing the cab and protecting the driver from the elements a little more.

It served the NMETL until 1922, when the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramway Board (M&MTB) acquired the NMETL (the last tramway company to be absorbed into the M&MTB) and all their tramcars.

All NMETL trams had 201 added to their number, and were re-classed by the M&MTB, with No 4 becoming U class No 205. The M&MTB made several modifications over the years, amongst the first being the inclusion of standard destination boxes, a rebuilt cab and a standard M&MTB livery. It later

had doors installed replacing the gates it had during the NMETL years, as well as minor changes. U 205 served as a passenger car until 1939, when it was converted to use as a decorated or illuminated tramcar. In 1950 it had all internal passenger fittings removed and was converted to a freight car.

To avoid confusion with the introduced Z class it was

along with toastrack tram NMETL No 13 (M&MTB V214) in the government's Heritage Fleet, U 205 is the oldest Melbourne electric tramcar in existence."

It is currently being restored to its mid-1920's condition, including its M&MTB cabs and destination boxes and painted into the classic chocolate and cream livery.

It is anticipated that at some later date we will undertake the full conversion to NMETL No 4, in a condition as close as possible to when it entered service. This conversion will include the removal of the destination box, restoring the roof to a curve, the removal of its M&MTB cabs, with reproduction NMETL cabs taking their place, removal of windshields and painting to an original livery, thought to be burgundy and cream.



renumbered in 1976 - along with all works trams - having a W added to the end of its number, becoming 19W.

"It was withdrawn in 1978, and acquired by the Society in 1986,

V 214 has been painted as NMETL no 13, so it should probably be called NMETL No 13 and not V 214.

Liam Davies