

Melbourne Tram Museum - Hawthorn

June 2024

Report Paul Henshall, Photos Paul Henshall, Ray Binks & Keith Wilshier.)

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Our group on the old cable car

On Wednesday 12th June 2024 at 1030am, 14 Probus members visited the Hawthorn Tram Depot which opened in 1916 and ran until 1965. Now a museum and the home of Melbourne's heritage tram fleet it consists of 19 Tramcars:

- Cable Tram Grip/Dummy, 28 built in 1885, Trailers 256 built in 1887.
- V class built from 1908- first electrified trams in Melbourne.
- Several versions of the Iconic Melbourne W – class trams.
- The prototype of Z- Class which marked the steady modernization of the fleet which was introduced in 1975.

Our Probus group was divided into two groups of 7. Each group had an experienced volunteer museum tour leader, who had been associated with trams, and employed by M&MTB over their working careers. They gave us an excellent “run-down” on the history of the museum, and then details of each tram, and we eventually got to tour through all the 19 trams on display.

At end of the tour, we all gathered at the cable tram – the oldest of the trams in the museum, for group photos. Following the photo shots, we travelled to 30 Mill café in Camberwell Rd for lunch - some travelled by car, and the remainder travelled by tram on Route 75. Some of us had the wrong address, but eventually we were all seated for lunch at 12.30pm. After lunch, and a good deal of “chat-time” we all went our own way home.

History of the Museum

Hawthorn Depot is located next to the junction of the Power St and Riversdale Rd tram tracks. The Depot, a three-story building, was constructed in 1915-16. It originally housed offices, amenities, electrical substation, and stabling shed with four tracks. In 1917 with fast growing passenger numbers and trams, the depot was enlarged with a second shed and workshop underneath. The Substation continues to power nearby trams, on the Yarra Trams routes 70 and 75.

The Hawthorn Tramways Trust was taken over by the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramway Board (M&MTB) in 1923. The cable trams were converted to electric traction and additional lines were added. The depot operated the new City to Chapel St and Richmond to Power St services, in addition to the Wattle Park and Burwood lines. In 1925 the depot became the home to Tram Driver and Conductor school.

Hawthorn Depot sheds were built for narrow trams and in 1939 M&MTB purchased new luxury SW6 trams, due to customer demands for more comfortable trams. As the new trams were too wide to fit the sheds, the brick façades were removed in the 1940s allowing the SW6 trams to fit.

Cars led to a major decline in public transport patronage and as a result the Hawthorn Depot was closed in 1945.

In 1996 the depot was included on the Victorian Heritage Register, redeveloped and completed in 2002. The main depot building was converted to residential units and a new apartment building was added at the rear of the site. The original shed was restored in January 2003, and then opened as the Melbourne Tram Museum.



The entrance to the Tram Museum



Heritage Council listing



Introduction to the Museum in the old training room



Creative art on the Tram paintwork.



No 53 to Brighton Beach



Some more of the various trams on display



Remember the old running boards



Look Out!!



Drivers compartment on the Z class trams.



Rita, Lynn and Peter trying out the old seats.



Barry at the California combination 8 Tram.



Lynn about to try the controls.



Paul fancies a turn at the controls.



Everybody was keen to have a drive.



Tickets please.



Remember these.



Is that one shilling and three pence?



View of old cable car.



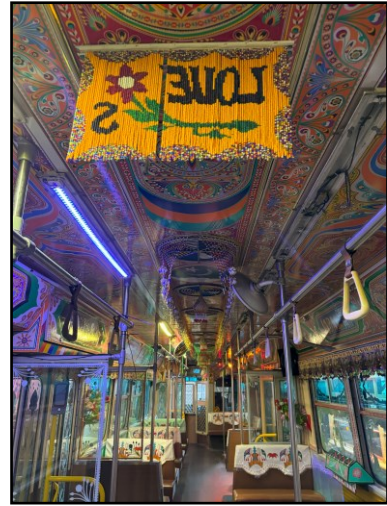
Peter and Lyn with one of the many guides.



Very fancy cable cars.



Tram decorated by the Pakistani community for the 2006 Commonwealth games.



Inside the decorated tram

Some very interesting signage and advertisements on the trams



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