

COTMA CONFERENCE - HOBART 1996

Some notes on Hobart tram and trolley bus routes to be traversed on 31 August and 1 September 1996

The City Depots and the Railway Trams

This afternoon we commence our journey, of retracing some of Hobart's tram and trolley bus routes, at the site of the original depot of the Hobart Electric Tramway Co in Lower Macquarie Street.

On the left, next to the Red Lion Tavern, was situated the original depot of the HET Co, constructed in 1892 - 93. Trams exited onto Macquarie Street to run to both the railway station (the start of the Cascades line) and to the GPO (the start of the Sandy Bay and New Town lines).

Back behind us is the HMT office built in 1914, which formed the Macquarie Street frontage of the new municipal tram depot. Trams exited to Campbell Street and then onto Macquarie Street via a single line.

We will now follow the single track of the railway service down Macquarie Street and left into Park Street. On the left hand side of the bus, at the corner of Collins and Park Street (now occupied by the Transport Commission office) is the site of the 1944 trolley bus garage (which accommodated 40 buses). Vehicles entered the garage from Collins Street and exited onto Park Street

A short distance along Park Street we come across Mistral Place, a street which was constructed after the trams ceased operating. The railway tram terminus was very close to the intersection of Mistral Place and Park Street.

West Hobart trams terminated in Liverpool Street on the roundabout side of the Tiger Line terminal. The North Hobart line ran straight up Park Street (another roadway now unrecognisable from the tramway days) and a short-lived (and little used) stub went along the Domain Road to terminate opposite the railway station. It was all single track in this area, but the double track on the Liverpool Street line commenced opposite the TigerLine terminal.

We will now retrace our path (after negotiating the roundabout) back along Park Street and will drive past the site of the "new" trolley bus depot (now the Grand Chancellor Hotel). The new depot, opened in October 1954, could house 48 trolleys, 20 diesel and petrol buses. It was entered off Macquarie Street, opposite Campbell Street and buses exited onto Davey Street.

Trolleys ran along Davey Street to either Elizabeth Street or Argyle Street to access their departure points. In the original system, prior to the introduction of one-way streets, all the trolleys terminated opposite the Customs House on the edge of Constitution Dock, after traversing Macquarie, Dunn and Davey Streets.

Sandy Bay Trams and Trolley Buses

The one-way street system prevents us from travelling up Macquarie Street from the depot, but we will travel along part of Davey Street which was traversed by trolley buses in later years when taking up running from the depot to Sandy Bay. Their city terminus was in Elizabeth Street at the side of Franklin Square.

Departing from Franklin Square we rejoin Macquarie Street at the GPO and then follow the route of both the trams and the trolley buses to Sandy Bay. Soon after leaving the City the line ran alongside St David's Park and at the Sandy Bay end of the park was the scene of two accidents when double deckers derailed and overturned.

There were two prominent short workings on the Sandy Bay line. The first, at Lord Street, is encountered not long after leaving the shopping centre. The second, at Derwentwater Avenue, was at the end of the double track. The line had been duplicated from Nelson Road to Derwentwater Ave in 1933, although the destination blinds described the short working as Lambert Avenue, one block away.

Before we arrive at Derwentwater Ave, we will pass the entrance to the Wrest Point Casino. This road was built on the site of the Queenborough trolley bus turning circle. After passing the Casino, we have a short section of single track on the river side of the road before encountering a long loop from Harvey Lane to Mawhera Avenue. There was only one other loop on the line—from Nutgrove Ave to Heathom Ave.

The line was extended short distances on three occasions between 1913 and 1915. The original 1893 terminus was at Nutgrove Ave. It was then extended 25 chains to Beach Rd in 1913; four car lengths down Beach Rd in 1914 and 225 feet in 1915. The tram service was cut back to Maning Ave in June 1952 to enable the road to be rebuilt. Trolley buses took over the full service in December 1952. Beach Road was a busy place in summers past, both in the days of trams and trolley buses. The tram terminus was double tracked and the trolley bus turning circle was also “double tracked”. Petrol buses replaced the trolleys in October 1968.

Proctors Road Trams and Dynnryne Trolley Buses

We will now retrace our path to Nelson Road and cut “across country” to the Proctors Road line in the suburb of Dynnryne. First on the scene is the terminus of the Dynnryne trolley bus which opened in June 1945, replacing the tram. Up the street, at the intersection of View St and Proctors Rd, was located the second terminus of the Proctors Rd tram. The line had been extended 8 chains from Lord St to View St in June 1934. Trams started operating to Lord St in October 1922. Travelling towards Macquarie St, there were two loops: in King St at Pillinger St and in Antill St.

Unfortunately the Proctors Road line was an economic failure due to an inadequate passenger catchment area, thus leading to the first experiments, in 1924, of one-man trams. Trolley buses which took over in 1945, were also under-utilised and were replaced by petrol buses in November 1968. The route has since been absorbed into other services. At the intersection of Antill Street and Macquarie Street we will turn left and travel up to Cascades, Strickland Avenue and Huon Road.

Cascades Trams and Strickland Avenue and Huon Road Trolleys

The Cascades line was the third of the original 1893 HET services. The double track installed later by the HMT terminated at Antill Street. Loops were at Gore Street and at Darcy Street. Trams still ran to Darcy Street up to May 1946, even though the Cascades trams had been replaced by trolley buses in 1942.

Just before the road curves around past “Woodstock”, the line terminated at the Cascades tea rooms. This suburb was devastated on 7 February 1967 when bush fires ravaged Southern Tasmania. Trolley bus 234 was destroyed whilst operating to Cascades and the entire overhead to Strickland Avenue was destroyed in the same fire which gutted the historic Cascades Brewery. Trolley bus services were restored three months later on 1 May. The trolley bus turning circle at the Brewery had been installed in 1942 and the line was extended one mile up Strickland Ave in October 1948. Settlement in this valley has remained sparse.

We will now drive back down Strickland Avenue and Cascades Road to Darcy Street, turn right into Darcy Street and proceed to the terminus of the Huon Road trolley bus. A single trolley bus replaced a petrol bus on 24 October 1935, Hobart’s first trolley bus service. Cascades, Strickland Avenue and Huon Road trolley buses were replaced by petrol buses in November 1968, the last service being operated to Huon Road on 24 November by bus No. 235, now preserved by the TTMS at Glenorchy.

West Hobart Trams and Trolley Buses

Our journey back to the City via Macquarie Street will take us past Molle Street, the location of a short-lived link in both tram and trolley bus services to West Hobart.

On 1 January 1951, the day after the North Hobart line closed, West Hobart trams departed from the GPO via Macquarie and Molle Streets, entering the City via Liverpool and Park Streets. This was stage one of a grand plan for a City Circle tram service. However, the plan was unpopular with passengers and the Molle St service was withdrawn in April 1952. Trams reverted to two-way operation in Liverpool St. Molle Street was again used for electric transport, this time in 1958 - 59 for trolley buses, following the closure of the West Hobart tram line.

Our journey takes us past Franklin Square and the GPO and through the intersection of Macquarie and Argyle Streets, an overhead jungle of tram and trolley bus wires. It was not a "grand union", but trolleys could make three left turns (one involving "double track"), one right turn, two straight through movements in two streets, as well as the tram overhead for two tracks.

We turn left from Macquarie Street into Argyle Street, past the terminus of the New Town and Cornelian Bay trolley and along to Liverpool St to the West Hobart line. Trams and trolley buses both travelled along Liverpool Street to West Hobart and we traverse, at Elizabeth Street, Hobart's only right angle tramway crossing. Just to the right hand side of bus, as we cross Elizabeth Street, was the scene of Hobart's worst tram accident, the collision of 131 and 137 on 29 April 1960.

The double track ended just before Barrack Street with single track plus two long loops on the rest of the line to West Hobart. The next intersection, Liverpool and Molle, could be difficult to traverse in wet weather, especially if a heavily laden tram had to stop on the 1 in 10 grade.

Around the corner at Molle and Goulburn Streets there was a long section of double track up to The Y. This unusual place name, which resulted in several local businesses using the description, "The Y" was derived from the original 1914 track layout. This required a tram travelling from the City to West Hobart to run up Goulburn Street (one side of the Y) to a dead end (the tail of the Y), change ends and run along the other side of the Y to Cavell Street. The service to the City did the reverse. In 1931 the Council rebuilt the intersection and eliminated the shunt. Double deckers were prohibited from operating beyond the Y.

We continue along Cavell Street, turn left into Hill Street, then into Lansdowne Crescent, the location of the second long loop and the Warwick Street short working. Returning to Hill Street we pass the scene of another of Hobart's fatal tram accidents. When single trucker 55 derailed in October 1941 near Hamilton Street, it jumped the kerb and the conductor was thrown off the tram and killed.

The first West Hobart terminus (1914) was at the intersection of Hill and Arthur Streets. The line was extended to Newdegate Street in 1916. Trams terminated outside the shops whilst the trolley buses, which replaced the trams in February 1958, turned at the little park on the right just before the Newdegate Street intersection.

Federal Street, Augusta Road and Lenah Valley Trams

We will now take another short cut; this time down Newdegate Street to join the New Town line in Elizabeth Street at North Hobart. Soon after entering Elizabeth Street we arrive at the North Hobart Post Office, the site of a crossover for the Federal St spur. Work commenced in early 1924 for a 5-chain line down Federal St to Thomas St for trams to layover for the football matches at the nearby North Hobart ground.

Continuing on to the Augusta Road junction, we leave the main line and join the Lenah Valley branch opened in September 1922. There was a double track turnout at this junction, the only one in Hobart outside the City area, and a short stub to Clare Street for the sprinkler car to stand and fill up with water.

One can easily follow the Lenah Valley line because of the staging of construction of the concrete roadway. The shape of the loops can be seen near Calvary Hospital, at Waverley Avenue and at Giblin Street, the latter being a well used short working. The line closed in August 1957 and was replaced with diesel buses.

New Town, Moonah, Derwent Park, Springfield and Glenorchy Trams

Upon returning to New Town Road we travel out to the Maypole at Risdon Road, another short working. Up the hill, past Bromby Street, where No.50 hit No. 8 in 1937 (the system's first fatality) and onto Moonah. Just before Florence Street, on the right hand side of the bus, was the site of the Moonah tram depot, opened in November 1924. A few hundred metres along the Main Road, also on the right hand side, is Cooley's Hotel, the location of the original 1893 tram terminus. This Hotel featured prominently in the transport world in the 19th century and earlier this century as it was a suburban horse bus terminus, stagecoach terminus, tram terminus and the terminus of Hobart's first motor bus service, from Moonah to Glenorchy.

The Moonah line was extended in 1916 to a point between Albert Road and Hopkins Street and then to Windsor Street, Glenorchy in March 1923. However, before we reach Windsor Street, the bus will arrive at another junction, variously known as Derwent Park, Derwent Park Road (on the right) or Springfield Avenue (on the left). Metro's Springfield depot and head office dominate the intersection as we see it today.

The 30-chain Springfield branch was opened in May 1928 and the operation of the branch was subsidized by the owners of the housing estate for the next 20 years. Springfield was closed on 21 October 1960, the last tram service in Hobart. For many years the crossover on the Main Road, just prior to the junction, was used for short working trams in peak periods.

Travelling north along the Main Road we pass Windsor Street, the end of the double track (the line was duplicated to Windsor Street in 1944) and the scene of major activity on Hobart Show days when most trams terminated at this point. After much agitation by the Glenorchy Council, and opposition from the State Railways, the HMT agreed to extend the line from Windsor Street to Tolosa Street in April 1931. The single track was off-centre to facilitate the eventual duplication of the line, an event which never occurred.

The 1931 terminus on the Main Road created considerable traffic congestion and the track was extended 3 chains around the corner into Tolosa Street in December 1937, now the site of the Glenorchy bus station. The Glenorchy line closed in August 1960.

Cornelian Bay and New Town Station Trolley Buses and North Hobart Trams

The next section of our journey takes us to New Town and Cornelian Bay and we will proceed to retrace these two trolley bus routes as well as link up with the North Hobart tram line at Ryde Street.

A significant change in the roadscape around Cornelian Bay prevents us from travelling along the exact route taken by the trolley bus. Our trip starts at the beach terminus, opened in 1937, and we traverse Queen's Walk past the Cemetery gates. A diversion via Risdon Road is now necessary but we will see the other end of Queen's Walk from Risdon Road before the bus passes under the railway line. After ascending part of the Park Street hill we turn left into Bay Road and run down to the site of the New Town Station, the terminus of Hobart's second trolley bus route, opened in October 1937. One half of the New Town Station building now forms a significant feature of the TTMS museum at Glenorchy.

Between 1937 and 1955, outbound trolley buses operated via Harbroe Avenue, a very narrow thoroughfare. The route was replaced in the latter year by the more direct Park Street route. We now follow the combined Cornelian Bay/New Town Station route back to Ryde Street and Newport Street in North Hobart. These two streets intersected with Letitia Street and were the centre of much transport activity on school days and football days. Ryde Street was the terminus of the North Hobart tram and was adjacent to the Hobart High School and the North Hobart football ground.

Ryde Street was also the site of a trolley bus turning circle (although replaced in 1960 by the Newport St circle) and a layover line was later available for special football trolleys and school trolleys. The trolley bus service to Cornelian Bay ceased in March 1959 and that to New Town Station in August 1968.

Trams started operating to North Hobart in 1916, the same day as the extension to West Hobart. Both lines were through routed until December 1950, although to varying degrees over the years, with cutbacks occurring in the service to North Hobart as a result of passenger leakage to the through trolley bus service to New Town.

Following the tram line into the City there were loops at Albery Avenue near the Campbell Street school and at Patrick Street. As we approach the central area we find the one-way street system prevents the bus from following the original trolley bus route into the city.

As a compromise between the original trolley bus route which turned right into Brisbane Street, and the tram route which turned left into Brisbane St and then into Park St, we will follow the later trolley bus route straight down Campbell Street. A right turn will take us up Collins Street (which was once used by West Hobart trolley buses operating in the opposite direction) and into the City

Bus Station at the GPO, the site of Hobart's most important tram terminus. The area remains the focus of city public transport, one hundred and three years after the commencement of the electric tram service.

Our arrival at the GPO concludes this tour of the most significant parts of Hobart's tram and trolley bus system.

Prepared by Ian G Cooper for the Tasmanian Transport Museum on the occasion of the COTMA Conference.