

# TRAM LINES

NEWSLETTER OF THE WELLINGTON TRAMWAY MUSEUM INC.

No. 2018 /1

FEBRUARY 2018



## FROM THE CAMERA OF JAMES PATERSON, U.S.A.

Another classic photograph from James Paterson's collection from the late 1950's. We will continue to include photos from James' collection as space allows.



Above: A wealth of detail is evident in this photograph of damaged double-saloon No.172 in Kilbirnie Workshops. To the left a Wellington Tramways half-cab bus is in for some attention while further over is earlier type double-saloon No.127 advertising "Frosty-Jack Ice-cream" on the centre side panel. In the foreground are three sets of driving wheel sets complete with gear wheels and some tram motors and other equipment.

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*Cover Photo: This Christmas – January period saw our Fiducia tram No.260 in passenger service for the first time since 1980. It is also the first time in 15 years that we have had two Fiducia trams (Nos. 239 and 260) in service together. Here is No.260 on 7<sup>th</sup> January returning towards the depot (notwithstanding that "Athletic P<sup>K</sup>" is showing on the destination blind)!*

*No. 260 has just descended the hill and crossed the model aircraft club's tramway crossing.*

*Photo: Tommy Secker*

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Assembled by the WTM production team.

Published bi-monthly

Contributions welcome

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## FROM STEVE PORTER'S WORKBENCH

I trust you all, your families and your friends have entered the New Year fit and well.

The Museum has come through a very busy Boxing Day to the Wellington Anniversary Day (22<sup>nd</sup> January) period in good order and financially better off.

Nevertheless I am sure that our VP Marketing and Operations, Russell, will be addressing with members how very precarious our operations through that period were.

The future of our museum, and its operations, relies on members volunteering their time. In an ideal world members should only need to volunteer to assist in operations once or twice a month. I know some members willingly work more than that and that is appreciated.

The need however is clear. If we are to fund the daily needs of our activities through tram operations, we need to staff those operations so that we do not wear out the few. Please offer your services whenever you can and when gaps are advised consider filling the gap or swapping a duty to meet the urgent need.

In the longer term the fix may well come from involving more people in operations. Our cause is Wellington Trams. Sell the social and heritage aspects of what we do to others and get them signed up as members. We can then have them trained to help with this great hobby.

On a slightly different subject we have many projects on the Mechanical and Electrical side of the business that need to be started and completed.

We have the usual on-going maintenance jobs associated with keeping three and ideally four trams available for operations. In addition, we have deferred track work, recovery of four wheeled tram number 86, drainage works, rationalising storage etc. etc.

The ability to get some of these Maintenance & Engineering (M & E) tasks completed is to some extent limited by the apparent shortage of people on the roster as the gaps are sometimes filled by people who are then not available for M & E stuff.

Please make yourselves, your friends and relatives available for duty by enthusing them with the museum we all believe in and enjoy.

*Steve Porter*

President



## NEWS OF OUR MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

### Welcome to new members:

*Wendy Donald, now of Linden  
(recently from MOTAT, Auckland), and*

*Aaron Jonassen, of Wainui-O-Mata.*

We hope you gain much satisfaction and pleasure from your membership of the Wellington Tramway Museum.

### Deaths:

#### Guy Vincent

Sadly we have to report the passing on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017 of Guy Vincent, late of Foxton. Guy had not been well for some time. He will be remembered as a regular motorman on our rosters. He also helped with work on our overhead in earlier years and, as a radio and sound buff, he provided music and sound at a number of our events.

#### Marlene Wilson

Just as we go to press we have been advised of the sad and untimely passing, on 30<sup>th</sup> January, of Marlene Wilson after quite a lengthy illness. Marlene has been a very active member since she came on the scene in 2013, managing the shop and assisting regularly on many and varied projects.

Marlene was Vice President Marketing and Operations in 2015/16 and a Board member up to last November's AGM when she stood down due to ill health.

We plan full recognition of Marlene in our next issue.



*The late Guy Vincent at the controls of tram 151 on 27<sup>th</sup> December 2007 during one of our "Anything Vintage" Festivals.*

*Photo: Keith McGavin*

## SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL REMINDER

SUBSCRIPTIONS WERE DUE AND PAYABLE ON 1<sup>st</sup> JANUARY and (unless you are a Life Member), must be paid by 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH to retain current membership. \$50 Ordinary Membership, \$30 for Seniors, Juniors and Spouses. Family and "Paid Life" memberships also available.

The Museum's Bank Account No. is: 06 0501 0075414 00. Email details of your payment to [treasurer@wellingtontrams.org.nz](mailto:treasurer@wellingtontrams.org.nz) or post to Treasurer at P O Box 342, Motueka.

A renewal notice was included with the December Tramlines. *Please contact Henry Brittain (details page 3) if you require information or a further renewal notice.*

You must be a 2018 member in order to continue to receive Tramlines.

### IMPORTANT

1. 'TRAMLINES' is now additionally available as a full colour-printed magazine (A5 page size), posted, for just \$35 per year.

*This option is proving very popular, especially now that TRAMLINES includes a selection of notes and articles on Wellington tramway history. (Note – members with email will continue to receive an emailed copy as well.)*

2. DONATIONS towards Tram 17's trucks: Reconstructed TRUCKS for Tram 17 will nearly complete the largest and most ambitious project the Museum has ever undertaken. Please donate towards the cost and help ensure that Tram 17 runs again (see also page 16 and the "Flyer" attached or enclosed).

## OPERATIONAL NOTICE – TRAM DRIVERS

### HOT WEATHER

Hot weather is expected continue well into February so we will be looking for any signs of excessive rail expansion that could cause heat buckles.

**Drivers – please be extra vigilant on very hot days and report any unusual track condition due to rail expansion promptly.**

## FROM THE MARKETING AND OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

**Russell Jenkins, Vice-President**

Well our summer holiday running is over and with the weather playing its part it has been a good time for the tramway. From my observations, and comments from others involved, we have had a lot of happy visitors and hopefully this will show up with return visits and them telling others of the good time they have had.

The down side to the January Holiday operations has been the extreme difficulty we have had getting members to assist. It can be a long day with only two members running the tramway in a busy period. With some members spending three or more days per week in order to fill the roster it has been hard going at times.

I remind ALL members that income from our Christmas and New Year operations provides a good proportion of our annual income that enables us to enjoy our hobby and continue to run the museum. So we need as many of you as possible to help, if only for one day a week, over our vital Christmas – January period. In the meantime the M&O Committee and the Board will be looking at various measures to make next year somewhat easier on those who bore the brunt of the load this year.

A big “Thank You” goes out to Tommy Secker who visited the museum during January and took some amazing photos of 260. If you haven’t done so already, check them out on our Facebook Page. (A couple of Tommy Secker’s photos are included in this issue – one follows here, and one is on the cover.)



*Above: Fiducia tram No. 260, with Robert Vale at the controls, heads for the beach. 7<sup>th</sup> January 2018.*

*Photo: Tommy Secker*



*From the Marketing and Operations Department, continued*

The trams available for services over the summer period have been double-saloon No.159, plus "Fiducias" Nos.239 and 260. It was great to have these three trams available as we were able to offer visitors different tram experiences. Apart from some relatively minor issues all three trams performed well. We are finding some minor issues with No.260 but this was to be expected and overall the tram has given good service.

We did have some problems on 5<sup>th</sup> January but they were not of our making. During the morning Electra experienced problems with the power feed to Paekakariki and we lost power on three occasions. On the third occasion, they advised that there could be a delay in getting it back on and so 159 was parked up and secured along the Tiki Straight. When the power was restored we went back in order to bring it back to the kiosk only to find that a couple of backpackers had decided that the open saloon would make an ideal lunch venue.



*Maybe this is something we could try in the future. Two back-packers decided when double saloon No.159 was laid up along the Tiki Straight due to a power outage on 5<sup>th</sup> January that it would make an ideal lunch venue!*

*Photo: Russell Jenkins*

On another occasion a young couple took the tram to the beach and set off for a walk. On their return when asked if they had enjoyed the walk along the beach, they said that it was beautiful and the young lady then added "He asked me to marry him and I said YES". I hope that they always remember our tramway when they look back in the future.

We have a number of charters over the next couple of months and requests for additional staff may be made. If the call goes out, please give serious thought to putting your hand up, even if you are not a regular member of the operations crew.

Remember, that there is always something that you can do to help when the trams are operation, even if it is for a short time during the day to enable the crew to have a break.

*From the Marketing and Operations Department, continued*

Keep up to date with the tramway on our webpage [www.wellingtontrams.org.nz](http://www.wellingtontrams.org.nz) or the Tramway Facebook page. Tell your friends and colleagues about us and invite them to come and have a look.



*A recent charter was for sKids (school holiday programme for kids) on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January. Two trams were used, Fiducias 260 and 239. Here is one half of the contingent in tram 260. Photo: Robert Hatten*

## **AROUND THE SITE AND DOWN THE LINE      Allan Neilson, Vice-President**

Trams 260, 239 and 159 have been available for holiday operations with 151 undergoing body repairs. 260 experienced some minor running-in teething problems, mainly with the sanding pipes, so various running repairs were required over the holiday season.

As three trams were generally available over the Christmas-New Year holiday period, one was pulled out for servicing and any minor running repairs for a day. As the overhead is not installed up to the Workshop Road 5 each movement into the workshop pit road (road 5) required operation of the Clarktor tractor (Tug) to shunt the tram in and out of the workshop, which took a bit of time compared to just driving under overhead power. Hopefully we can get the overhead installed in February or soon after.



*Left: The three service trams on 27<sup>th</sup> January. Tram 239 on the right has stopped just short of the "still to be done" overhead on workshop road 5 and will be shunted into the workshop using the Clarktor tractor on the far right. Photo: Allan Neilson*



### *Around the Site and Down the Line, continued*

Over the Christmas period the heavy, long, turnout sleepers previously stored between the Sprinkler Container and Rear Storage Building were relocated to beside container No 4 and stacked in standard sizes. This enabled us to clear the area immediately above the sprinkler system supply pipes so they can be exposed to further investigate the system leak. These pipes have been partially uncovered to date.

#### ***Some other activities:***

- Work has commenced on cleaning out the drain at the north eastern corner behind the Palace tea room and behind the compound to better drain this area.



*Above: Drainage improvements at the north-eastern corner of our property. One sleeper is shown to be across the cleaned out drain. Subsequently Steve Porter (left) and John Tier have completed a sleeper bridge to allow our digger access to the other side. Photo: Keith McGavin, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2018*

- Parts of the roof of container No 3 were found to be severely corroded and painting repairs are under way.
- Considerable track greasing was carried out over the holiday operating period, partly to aid tram 260 as its wheel flanges are a little thicker compared to the other trams.
- Work continues on the plywood panel repairs to the side of tram 151. Good paint build-up is being achieved by mixing in plaster-of-paris and Bernhard Riddering is confident that a very smooth panel finish can be achieved.

#### **Storage Plans**

Preliminary planning is under way to sort out some storage re-arrangements. The current proposal (subject to further consultation and ratification) is for Road 5 of the Rear Storage Building, currently occupied by the Trackless Tram, to be kitted out with racking so that tram mechanical parts can all be put in one place, which will in turn help unclutter the Workshop. This will certainly be possible if the New Plymouth trolleybus and Daimler tower wagon are de-accessioned to good homes to create additional space. It is proposed that tram 86 and the Trackless Tram No 1 be put on Road 1, the western-most road of the Rear Storage Building.

This proposal will allow the Workshop east side to be re-organised so that better room can be allocated for restoration activities and the woodwork machinery can be more effectively laid out. Some tidy-up work at and around the pit to enable maintenance activities including improved access hopefully will be achieved too.

## An acquisition for WTM - "Small Palace" tram No.86

from Henry Brittain

A work party has visited the body of Wellington Small Palace tram No.86 at Te Marua on three separate occasions and demolition of the building that it is cocooned in has commenced.

The chimney has been demolished and the weatherboards removed from the eastern side which has exposed one complete side of the tram. On this same side we have stripped off the roofing iron which means that the tram roof is now visible and accessible.



*Above: Tram 86 is gradually appearing as its exterior structure is dismantled. Removal of the corrugated iron roof is revealing the original tram roof.*  
*Photo: Henry Brittain, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018*

Apart from where the roof bows were cut to allow the wall to be moved out, 86 is in remarkably sound condition. Both sliding windows for the motorman still open and some of the compartment drop down windows still operate as they did in service. The bumpers at both ends of the tram have been removed. However we have replacements for these from Palace car 82 which we dismantled (in rotten condition) about 2004.

*Right: The interior of Tram 86 on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018. The photo shows how the left wall of the tram has been moved out to provide a wider space. The large space on the right is the centre entrance, which housed a fireplace. Roof bows were found to have been cut.*

*Photo: Henry Brittain*

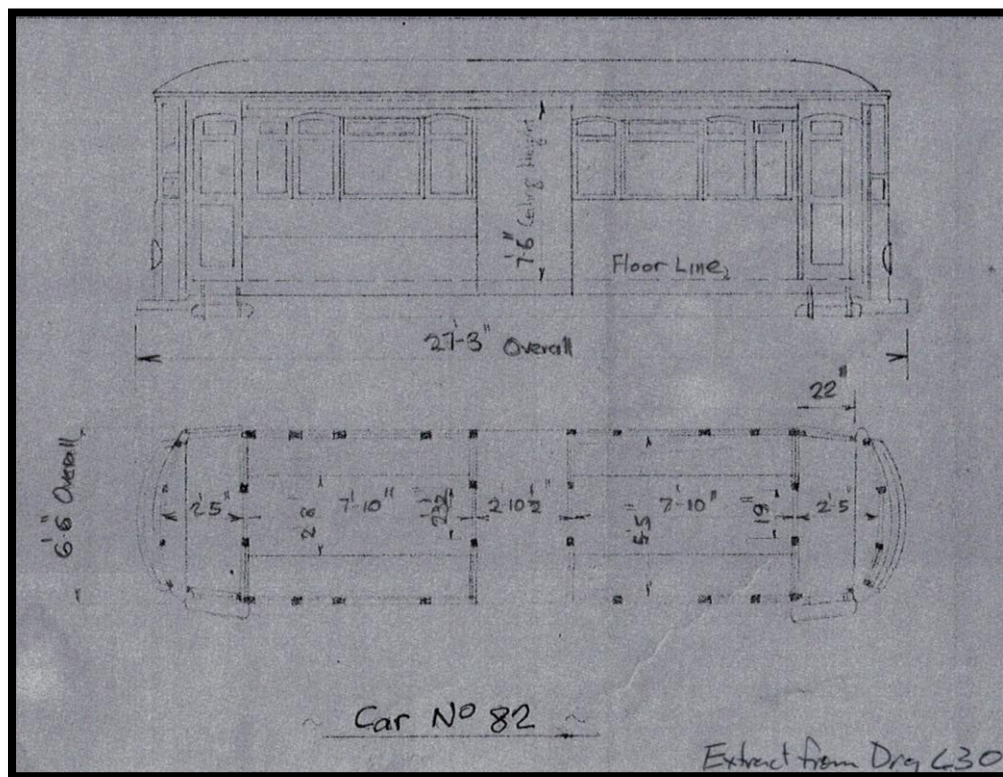






Above: This photo, taken on 14<sup>th</sup> January prior to dismantling of the roof but following removal of the outside wall shows one side of tram 86 almost intact and still in its 1920's chocolate brown colour.

Photo: Henry Brittain



Above: An outline plan of Tram No.82 – the same class as No.86. We speculate that it was labelled “Car No.82” as No.82 survived in use well after others of the class had been withdrawn and could well have been the only tram of this design still on the books when the plan was prepared.

Source: Wellington Tramway Museum archives.



One surprising discovery was that the tram is still painted in the original chocolate brown colour that was the standard Wellington colour when 86 was built. It would seem that 86 was never painted in the banderillo red introduced in the 1930's and the tram may have been one of the early casualties of the retirement of this class of tram.

It is easy to understand why these trams were not popular with both the Tramways Administration and its staff when you stand inside 86 and realise how small it was. The motorman's compartment is cramped, and the passenger accommodation is confined and narrow.

Work parties will continue to prepare the tram for eventful repatriation back to Queen Elizabeth Park.



*Above: Part of the "A" end apron of tram 86, showing the faded and disintegrating number, and the tail light and headlight area.*

*Photo: Henry Brittain*

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## **TRAM No.17, UPDATE**

**from Keith McGavin**

At The Wheelwright Shop, Gladstone, in the Wairarapa, much reassembly and finishing work is continuing on the body and chassis, the target being to have the tram back with the Museum by Easter. Members will have a chance to see progress at our group visit (details in the December 'Tramlines') coming up on 3<sup>rd</sup> February. A full progress report will be included in our next issue.

Meanwhile the Tram 17 Committee has been focussing on the project to reconstruct the trucks for this tram. A critical issue is the fundraising and we still need more donations to meet the Lottery Board's criteria for a valid application. To this end a new fundraising flyer has been prepared and is being distributed to all members with this copy of Tramlines. We appreciate that many of you have already made generous donations, some with the latest annual subscription, but it would be fantastic if you could help further by adding to the amount already raised. It is a major project – well over half a million dollars – and now is our best chance of achieving the goal.

On the technical side we have received a tender and had positive discussions with the Heritage Tramways Trust of Christchurch. This charitable body carries out all major maintenance on the Christchurch City Tramway and recently has been doing major tram truck construction work for the Sydney Tramway Museum. Once funds are raised then, all going well, the construction contract will be let to them.

This is an exciting period in the conservation of Tram 17 and I look forward to reporting on more progress next issue.

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## HISTORICAL CORNER -1

### SOME WELLINGTON TRAM ACCIDENTS

by Henry Brittain

*All photographs from the author's collection.*

In the last edition of *Tramlines*, I wrote about two accidents that occurred in March 1908 involving new Palace trams.

Accidents were a common occurrence on the Wellington Tramway system and there are some well-known and documented accidents that have been recorded and published in books and newspapers. Not so well recorded are the numerous accidents that resulted in panel damage to trams which had to be repaired and returned to service without undue delay.

To complete this aspect of the City Tramway system I have selected a range of photographs that depict some of these incidents.

Incidents were not just confined to accidents in the street. This photograph on the right shows what happens when a tram does not stop at the end of the barn.



The unidentified double saloon has burst through the rear wall of the Kilbirnie tram sheds and, although relatively unscathed, considerable effort would have been required to return it back into the building. Of interest are some breakdown jacks in the foreground which are now in the possession of our Museum. The incident is undated however given that the centre of the tram has not been closed in, it is most likely the 1920's or early 30's.

In 1943 tram 243 overturned late at night on the corner of Coutts street and Onepu Road, Kilbirnie. The force of the impact is graphically shown in the photograph to the right where it slid into a lamppost after coming off the rails.



### *Historical Corner 1 – Some Wellington Tram Accidents, continued*

These two photos taken in the mid 1950's show two double saloons locked together on the Kent Terrace siding. The front tram was parked up when the service tram (176) full of passengers heading towards Courtenay Place ran off the main line and into the parked tram. While the points were set into the siding, there would seem to be two possibilities for the accident. One is that the front tram's staff did not reset the points; the other that some unauthorised person set them by using the lever that was buried in the footpath for use by tram staff to switch the points. I saw the after effects of this accident on the way home from Wellington College and suggest the latter reason as it would be unusual for trams to enter the siding to lay up late in the afternoon, and most likely it had been there all day without incident.







Double-Saloon No.204 has run into another vehicle while travelling up Crawford Road. Looking at the damage it was most likely a bigger road vehicle. The tram is being prepared for return to Kilbirnie workshops and will traverse the “up” line to achieve this. This would have meant that all service trams would have been diverted along Kilbirnie Crescent so that 204 could make its trip down the hill before reaching the crossover in Lyall Bay road. Of interest is the tramway break down wagon parked on the left of the picture.

*Henry has some more details of Wellington tram accidents to share. These will be featured in a future issue of ‘Tramlines’.*

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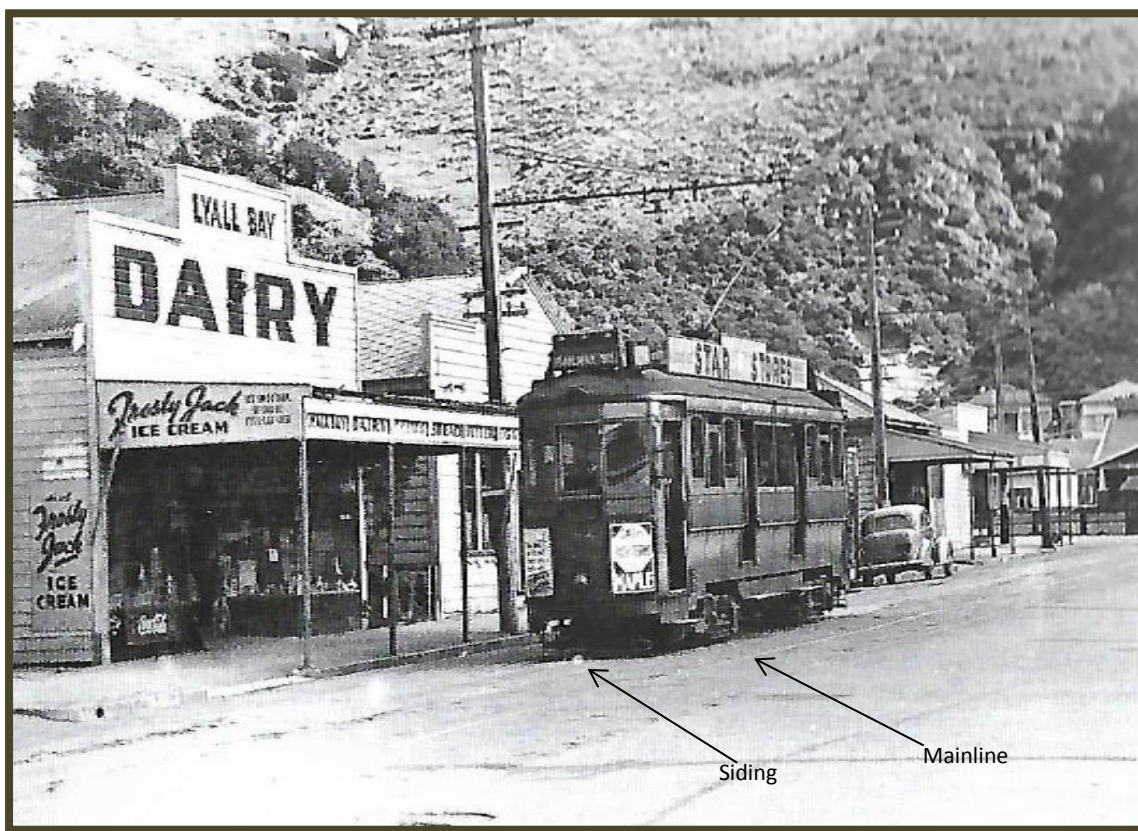
## **HISTORICAL CORNER -2 A SOLILOQUY ABOUT SIDINGS, by Alan Smith**

Member (and leading Kapiti Coast bus-addict) Mike Secker recently surprised some of us by stating that there had been a siding for trams off the balloon loop at Lyall Bay tram terminus on Wellington’s south coast. Mike is an old Lyall Bay lad from way back and clearly recalls in early post-war times the remains (possibly points removed) of a trailing siding in Rua Street alongside the single track running line which itself was laid close to the kerb on the “wrong” side of the road, as no doubt many a motorist discovered to their chagrin.

The photo (next page) by Ross McQueen shows the general layout in 1946, fourteen years before the trams here were replaced by buses, with what certainly looks like another line of tram track parallel to the grimy double-saloon. John Lawes also recalls a siding of some sort there - but it does not figure in the system maps in Graham Stewart’s standard reference books. As Graham said when I asked him after Mike’s comment: - there is logic for it given the probable need to park up trams on busy holidays (Lyall Bay was always a popular place for outings even if its geography more typically exposed beachgoers and promenaders to a thorough sand-blasting).

### *Historical Corner 2 – A Soliloquy about Sidings, continued*

WCC archives and other possible sources are being explored - for now; can any reader throw any more light on this bit of Wellington tramway history?



*Above: The only photograph we have found that shows what appears to be a siding in Rua Street, Lyall Bay. The tram is stationed in the siding even closer to the kerb than the mainline which itself was laid on the wrong side of the road (as trams in this street were invariably heading towards the camera, Rua Street being part of the large Lyall Bay reversing loop). Photo: Ross McQueen, 1946.*

Meanwhile, fast-forwarding to 2018:

I came across a photo of a Fiducia in the siding outside Clarrie Gibbon's kiosk in what was then "Post Office Square" between Queens Wharf and what is now The Intercontinental Hotel. This shows in a huge Turnbull Library photo used as backdrop inside the McDonald's Restaurant on Bunny St opposite the Railway Station and outside which Wellington's long-distance coach arrivals "terminal" now seems to operate, unlikely as this sounds. The photo is of Prime Minister Michael Joseph Savage's 1940 funeral cortege passing along Waterloo Quay on its way to the special funeral train at the station.

The photo looks south along Customhouse Quay and the trams at Post Office Square are a small part of the background - but clear enough to see that Fiducia in the siding there, possibly lined up ready to take some of the huge crowds back home. For trackwork minutiae addicts (like me) the photo also shows clearly how far south went the railway siding paralleling the single-track tram line in Waterloo Quay.

***"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.***