



The

Squeaky Wheel



Issue #43 - June 2022

MOTAT SOCIETY COMMITTEE 2021/2022



Covid19 Lockdowns and Protection Level restrictions prevented the MOTAT Society from holding its 2021 Annual General Meeting until 30 April 2022. This was then held as an online conference which unfortunately did not meet quorum. As per the Society rules, a second AGM was then scheduled and held on 11 May 2022. The MOTAT Society would now like to announce its new Committee Members for the 2021/2022 year (**Above: left to right**):

- Bill Rayner
- Bruce Wild - Deputy Chairman
- Alan Curtis - Treasurer
- Scott Pilkington
- Makyla Curtis
- Ross Goldsworthy
- John Tutchen - Chairman
- Henry Swan
- Peter Burch

The Committee welcomes onboard new Committee member Scott Pilkington and thanks departing members Leyton Chan and James Duncan for their contributions through the 2020/2021 period. The roles of Chairman, Deputy Chairman, and Treasurer were discussed at the first meeting of the new Committee on 23 May 2022 and it was decided that due to the limited timeframe that the recently elected 2021/2022 Committee will cover, the status quo from the previous year will remain until the 2022 Committee election.

The Wonderful Story of Baldwin Steam Tram N°100 *by Chris Cameron*

Today, we like to think that identifying important artefacts for preservation for future generations is part of the fabric. It was not always the case and the destruction of items of beautiful engineering has been endless.

The story of Baldwin Steam Tram N°100 is an extraordinary tale of incredible luck, exceptional engineering skills, and the tenacity of a group of dedicated tramway museum volunteers determined to return a 130-year-old steam tram to service. Built in 1891 for a working life, first in Sydney and later in Whanganui, the right people were there to rescue this beautiful engine, and the right people have spent an extraordinary amount of time returning No 100 to working glory.

This latest book from the MOTAT Society, compiled and edited by Chris Cameron, a long-time volunteer at the MOTAT Tramway, has brought all these stories together in this 80 page book, replete with many photographs, and some great engineering detail. The stories are told from a very personal perspective, from each author's engagement with the locomotive.



Available now for just \$35 post free in New Zealand.
Visit our website to order www.motatsociety.org.nz/shop

THE WIRI STATION BUILDING

The following is a brief report prepared last year at about the time it seemed as if the Wiri building was, at last, coming to adorn the Waititiko station platform at MOTAT 2. This has been an exercise of procurement underway since 2011 when the building was to become redundant and removed from between the Main Lines at Wiri to make way for track alterations and electrification.

Brief History

A single line Railway between Penrose and Mercer was opened for traffic in 1875 as part of the planned North Island Main Trunk Railway to Wellington.



Top: The building complete with chimney, with a special passenger train heading north on the Up Main Line, late 1950s. Photo: Courtesy Ian Jenner.

Bottom: Wiri station building mid 80s. Wiri ballast pit beyond. Photo: Courtesy Ian Bates.

In 1914 with a small rural community to serve in the Wiri area 12m 14ch (23km) south of Auckland, adjacent to the Wiri Mountain, a small station yard was formed and a station building constructed.

Wiri, with basalt rock located just below the surface and basalt scoria in the face of the mountain nearby, was to be an ideal location for future ballast supply, eventually replacing the Mt Albert and Mt Smart ballast pits.

The station building was small by normal standards - 3.35m wide by 14.3m long - and unusual in that the verandahs were supported by the building framework and not by lightweight rails shaped to fit the underside of the verandah, attached to the outer wall and then bedded



Above: Aerial Photograph of part of Wiri Station Yard March 1992. Photo: Aerial Surveys Ltd Nelson.

Below: Wiri station building between two main lines (train on Up Main) with railway quarry to right and Wiri mountain and scoria pit on skyline. Photo: RBC 21/5/1960.



Above: The redundant building about to be removed from between the two main lines 18 August 2011. West yard and ballast pit closed pending future development. Photo: Unknown.

in the platform. It was all timber construction on timber piles, clad in rusticated weatherboard, with a corrugated iron roof.

The building was divided into three parts - the waiting room, office, and store. The waiting room seats are still in place. The verandahs appear to have been built on both sides of the building at the time the station was constructed to suit the future duplication.

Duplication of the railway between Papatotoe to the north and Papakura to the south 8m 27ch (13.38km) was completed on the 29 March 1931 following the completion of the Auckland Westfield



Clockwise from top left: Graffiti Canvas - Wiri Station Building 28 June 2005, Down Main (east) side, looking derelict but housing essential signalling equipment. Closed as a passenger stop, track raised above platform level; Interesting Verandah supports; Wiri Station Name board (Photos: RBC 28/6/2005); Floor joist replacement completed by Papatoetoe Railway Station Trust; Work at a standstill. December 2014 (Photos: Bruce Wild); Wiri building prior to shutting down of signal panel and relocation from between the two Main Lines (Photographer unknown).

Deviation (November 1930) and the building of the 'new' Auckland Railway Station.

In 1931 Wiri became an Island station, located between two Main Lines, with the construction of the new Down Main on the Eastern side for southbound trains, and the old Main on the Western side becoming the Up Main for northbound (Auckland) trains. Pedestrian access was by a footpath from Wiri Station Road level crossing to the south.

Wiri was a minor stopping place for local passenger services and was retained as a non timetabled station until 2005. However, the building was retained because of the signalling equipment installed within to operate points and signals for entry into the East and West Yards, the ballast pit, and industrial lines north and south, and latterly the sidings serving the inland port for the Ports of Auckland.

With further expansion of the rail yard imminent and the straightening out of the Main Lines to make room for a maintenance facility for Auckland's electric trains and extensive changes to the track system to the north for the New Manukau Line and electrification, the signalling system in the Wiri building became redundant. The change over to the new system was scheduled for 2011 requiring the whole building to be removed.

in 2011 the station was taken over by the Papatoetoe Railway Station Trust and relocated to a site on Cavendish Drive, Puhinui, where the floor joist and bearers were replaced and other repair work carried out.

In 2014 the Council required the Cavendish Drive site and the station was removed to the Puhinui Reserve where it has been in "storage" ever since.

In 2021 the PRST decided that they no longer needed the

Below: The Wiri building on a site awaiting restoration in Cavendish Drive Puhinui 2012. Photo: Bruce Wild.



building and agreed to hand it over to MOTAT. The Deed of Gift of the building to MOTAT was eventually signed on 12 April 2022. Currently, planning is underway to transport the building from Puhinui to MOTAT.

Interesting Dates in the Life of the Wiri Station

1914: Station Building constructed (Cost; 380 pounds, 0 shillings and 1 penny).

1915: Platform Front constructed and backfilled. Platform Ashphalted (400ft x 15ft) (120m x 4.5m) Loading bank for freight constructed.

1917: Quarry on western side of yard developed and crusher installed.



Above: The Wiri building located at the Puhinui Reserve. December 2020. Photos: RBC.

1918: Water pump supplied for station ex Towai.

1931: Platform asphalted Down Main side (following duplication of lines).

1968: Internal alterations to accommodate flush toilet for staff, and connect to new septic tank.

1970: Verandahs cut back to improve track clearance for containers

2005: Closed as a passenger station.

SPOTLIGHT ON MOTAT'S ORAL HISTORIES

Not generally well known is MOTAT's considerable and growing oral history repository. Over the last twenty years the Walsh Memorial Library has been developing its collection of oral histories.

The library has over 400 hours of recordings archived, covering themes of aviation, transport, telecommunications, and more. Interviews with former MOTAT volunteers and staff members and others give an intimate and lively account of the museum and stories about our collections.

Members of the MOTAT Society are welcome to visit the library and listen to interviews. For this issue of *Squeaky Wheel*, we continue to feature excerpts transcribed from two of these histories which we hope will give you a taste of what is available.

The first is from the late Eric Burns about his time employed with the Auckland Transport Board. The other is an interview with the late Phyllis Harwood, an early Conductress on the Auckland Trams, by Megan Hutching of MOTAT.

The MOTAT Library is open Monday to Friday 10am – 4pm (except public holidays). Contact via phone 09 845 3690 or email library@motat.org.nz.

ERIC BURNS - CONDUCTOR TO MOTORMAN

In a 2006 interview the late Eric Burns spoke with current MOTAT Volunteer and Society member David Annan about his time as a conductor and then motorman on the Auckland Trams starting out in 1946.

"An old mate of mine, Sam, he'd already joined, he was a conductor. I can't remember whether he talked me into it or what. But I joined anyway. . . . you went down to the Head Office in bottom of Albert Street there and put your application in and that sort of thing and then they told you when to come in for schooling because you had to go to a Conductor's School. And that was held at the Gaunt Street Depot. . . . I think from memory you were about a week at the Conductor's school and then you were put out with a Conductor on each run who taught you the rudiments of the sections and things like that sort of thing. And you did a different run for – I can't remember exactly how long it was but it was probably only about a fortnight altogether. Two to three weeks that you learned all the roads. . . all of them. Every single one of them. Before you went out on your own you had to do all the routes. And from memory, the conductor who taught you signed your sheet to show that you had done the routes and you couldn't go cheating.

"I did the broken shift generally. . . an a.m. broken shift would start roundabout half-past six to seven – about half-past six or thereabouts – and you'd go out and do a couple of runs bringing the crowds into town, workers into work and that sort of thing. School kids in. And you would



Above: Inside the last tram.
Photo: Graham Stewart.

finish roundabout nine to half-past nine at the depot and then you'd be off until round about half-past 12 till one o'clock when you would pick up the end of the early morning straight shift. And you'd do the mid-shift – what they call the mid-shifts of the car. So you might do a round trip for say Avondale/Meadowbank which would be a two-hour round trip.

"You would do that on the straight shift car while the morning shift had knocked off and you'd hand it over to the night shift at the end of a couple of hours and they would work on. You would then go back to the depot - by this time it would probably be roundabout three o'clock or half-past three or thereabouts - and you'd pick up a tram at the depot and go out and start doing the rush hours.

"Now the p.m. shift, which was again a broken shift, was quite different in that you would not start until seven o'clock or even half-past seven and you'd do the rush hour trips and then you'd be back at the depot probably about half-past nine or quarter to ten or thereabouts. It might have been ten o'clock. You'd knock off then and you would pick up a mid-shift probably round about two in the afternoon or thereabouts. Might be half-past one or two. And you would do a couple of hours on that again between the morning shift and the night shift and you would hand over to the night shift crew on the straight shift car and you would go back to the depot then and get another tram and come out and do the rush hour. But you would work on until probably about seven o'clock or thereabouts."

Eric exchanged his Conductor's hat for that of a Motorman after approximately two years in the Conductor role. Legislation meant that you couldn't apply for the Motor School until you turned 24 and had done a minimum of two years as a Conductor. Eric attended Motor School for two weeks and then did 100 hours of unpaid hours alongside qualified motormen.

"And you did 60 hours under one motorman on one particular run and then you did a day on all the other runs. And so that was eight hour day on all the other runs under a training motorman nominated by the



Above: Conductor on top of tram fixing tram pole. Lower Queen Street.
Photo: Graham Stewart.

". . . I was assigned to the Epsom Depot, but at the time from memory it didn't matter which I was at because you did all your training at Gaunt Street depot which was down in Freeman's Bay. . . . In my case I was in Morningside. Which was roughly an equidistance from either depot. So I was quite pleased I went to the Epsom Depot. Epsom Depot was a slightly smaller depot than the Gaunt Street Depot."

Shifts were made up of broken and straight shifts and whilst juniors initially got the broken shifts they proved quite popular with the senior personnel who put in for the broken shift badges leaving no room for new recruits.

depot. . . Now I did my 60 hours on the Avondale/Meadowbank run. It was convenient for me because I only had to walk down to the bottom of the street.

"Well the big cars of course they were [Streamliners] they call them. They had four motors on them and they were quite powerful trams. And then you had the others which we call singles, they were ones that didn't have any back on the cabin. You stood out in front in full view of all the passengers. And they had only two motors on them. Now it was very easy for the free wheel on that bogie for you to lock it up if you applied the brakes too heavily or in adverse weather conditions. Whereas on the four-motor cars you had a motor like a centrifugal force which helped keep the wheels rolling so that they didn't skid so easily.

"You also had track brakes. That was a big hardwood block which screwed down onto the rail between the wheels of each bogie. Now on the streamliners they had the roller bearing bogies but they also had an air-operated track brake whereas the others were hand-operated. Now in the air-operated track brake and the adverse weather you had to be very careful because when you applied that brake you could actually take a bit of weight off the wheels or the bogie and you could go into a skid very easily.

"You always had [to take care] coming down Queen Street of course and down the Wellesley Streets and Parnell Rise. They were very steep inclines. And you always had just a little bit of problem there that a car could go into a slide if you were trying to stop halfway down. . . . Oh yes you had to be very careful on the braking coming down on those streets. Particularly in adverse weather. You know a light drizzle or something like that. . . . You had to be very careful coming down that you didn't go into a slide. I once lost a pole coming down Parnell Rise and I was unable to stop until I got down on the flat under the railway bridge. And it had only come off just a bit before the bridge but it wracked the side of the bridge and sort of put a real bend in the pole. I was still able to use it."

Eric trained initially on the lighter 1400s but most of his initial 60 hours was done on the bigger straight shift cars - streamliners, semi-streamliners - the large four-motor cars. After training Eric took on mostly broken shifts from the Epsom Depot, explaining that seeing as he was already there as a conductor it was natural for him to stay there as a motorman.

"You didn't start quite so early in the morning and you didn't have the real late-night finishes except on a Saturday night and the Sunday. On a Sunday of course you were rostered on a normal trip like the Avondale/Meadowbank or whatever you know. Those ones. And you did either a morning shift or a night shift. They were quite good. But the rest of the time I was on a broken shift which I quite enjoyed because as I say you didn't start so early in the morning and you didn't finish so late at night so to speak. So that was quite good.

"I don't know of any that changed depots because they advanced or what, unless they lived somewhere different and requested it. . . . The only tramline I never worked a tram on was out of the back of the Epsom depot onto Greenlane Road. They did have some tracks that went out and I never, ever ran on those. But I ran on every other section of the track that had Auckland trams on them."

While Eric's time on the trams was generally accident-free he does recall incidents that occurred for some of his colleagues.

"I never ran into the back of another tram. Ever. That was called a rear-ender. And that came about from the very early days when a horse-drawn tram going down say Wellesley Street or something like that – and if the motorman didn't keep the brake correct he might run into the rear end of the horse.

"I had a conductor that worked with me for quite a long while. His wife wanted him to be a motorman so they could crew together. She was a conductress. And he had a rear-ender so that put him back on the bag* because if you had a rear-ender you were back on the bag for quite a period. And he stayed on the bag. He didn't really want to be a motorman."

(*On the bag' is a colloquialism for being rostered as a conductor or conductress. It referred to carrying the conductor's cash bag ready to issue fares.)

Eric only once had the opportunity to crew Tram 253 (Queen Mary), a tram quite different from other streamliners in that she had Regenerative Braking, relatively new technology at the time, which fed electricity generated from braking back into the overhead lines for other

trams to use.

"Only the once I had to crew her and that was when I did a mid relief on a Herne Bay car and that's the one she was on. She used to be on Herne Bay/Three Kings. Now on that car she had so many resistance notches in series and then went into running notches. Now running notches did roughly the same speed . . . more or less, up or down road so to speak. On those running notches if you overran – say you had it in a mid notch and the car was running downhill, excess electricity was [then] returned to the wire. The idea was to assist the other car up the hill [with the surplus electricity]."

Eric preferred driving the bigger cars which gave you better traction, better take-off, and were better in braking than the singles or the 1400s.

"Because it only had one motor on each bogie it was easy for the free wheel to pick up and slide so you were better off with the big car.

"I only once ever had to have the conductor – in this case it was a conductress - drive from the other end. I had a short in the controller on the motorman's end and it meant that the conductress . . . went to the other end. . . . Betty Butterworth, and she was a very good conductress. And she drove from the other end. Now in the driver's cabin I got one ding for her to shut off, two dings to open up. So I still had the brake and everything in the front."



Above: Tram 248 and 253 on tram tracks on suburban road next to tram stop shelter. Photo: Graham Stewart.

In 1952 Eric purchased a taxi business and left his job as a motorman for the Auckland Transport Board but his love of trams kept him involved by way of the Old Time Transport Preservation League.

"And the blokes who were forming it I knew them personally. . . . the idea was to preserve some of the old transport. . . . I was the only one actually working for the trams at the time. Merv Sterling, whose brother used to be a motorman, I can't remember whether his brother was there at the time or not. But I was the only one that had been involved with the trams as such who joined. The others were all people I knew. I'd known them for many, many years.

"Well there was the two Stewart boys – Bill Stewart, there was also Peter Mellor – Peter Mellor was actually the first secretary of the Old Time Transport Preservation league. . . . he and Graham Stewart saved the MOTAT 100. They got it from Whanganui and stored it on a farm all those years. And eventually, Graham got it put . . . up into the workshops at Royal Oak there. And so that kept it from rotting away to nothing. . . If it hadn't been for them the things would have been lost. They'd have gone."

Later Eric got involved with MOTAT, first in the steam section and then again with trams.

"I started the Sunday running there all those years and years ago. And used to run the steam engines with an L wagon on it and it was the L class loco we ran and got the Sunday running. And we only had that little short piece of track in front of the Waitakere station to run up and down, but we gave people rides. . . . I can't remember what year I started doing trams again. But I had all the necessary tickets. I've also got all the steam tickets and things and I drove 100 at one stage – that was the steam tram."

Due mainly to wider doors than the Wellington and Melbourne

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Trams Eric's preferences for potential trams in service at MOTAT lay with the Auckland trams, 248 in particular.

"I prefer the Auckland Trams. No doubt about that. Far better trams!"

At the time of the interview - in October 2006 - Eric was also looking forward to being able to take the controls on Tram 44 when she was up and running.

References

Eric Burns et al. 18 Oct 2006. MOTAT oral history interview with Eric Burns, 07-763. Walsh Memorial Library, the Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT) <https://collection.motat.nz/objects/43416/motat-oral-history-interview-with-eric-burns>.

MOTAT's Queen of the Rails: Duncan <https://www.motatsociety.org.nz/post/motat-s-queen-of-the-rails>



Above: Tram 248 with tram behind and car on tree lined street.
Photo: Graham Stewart.



Below: A more recent photo of Tram 248, Eric's favourite tram.
Photo: Unknown.

PHYLLIS HARWOOD - TIME "ON THE BAG" - 1947 TO 1956

Phyllis Harwood began her working life as a ticket writer for Woolworths. She then travelled and worked overseas - a cook at a private school in Bangor, made pelmets for curtains in Belfast - and then during the war, worked again as a ticket writer at McKenzies department store in Queen Street.

"We fire watched. Now in England, in London they'd be up on the roof with a bucket of sand and something else and as they threw their little fire bombs down they put them out. But we had to sit downstairs on the ground level and knit or talk waiting for the fire bombs to be put out. How can you fire watch when you're right down there! But we as girls we used to be there - we stopped at half-past five. I think at six o'clock we were allowed to go out and have something to eat and we went at half-past nine. And then the boys came and they had a little room with beds in. And they fire watched all night."

"I used to do it with the manageress and she was a nice little woman. But she used to sit in the office and do office work and things. And I would sit and knit you see. And one day she looked down and she went - she froze. She froze so badly I noticed. . . . And she had picture holes and they weren't being used at the bottom and one had a hole and there was a big fat rat looking up at us. And she froze. She honestly couldn't move. . . . and so I got a tin box and put it over the hole and shooed it back. But it was really funny. The rats in Queen Street were terrible. [They came] up the sewer. You see there was a stream right up the middle."

After the war, Phyllis and her friend Noel Evans and three other friends from McKenzies travelled to Australia. Intending to continue ticket writing Phyllis unfortunately had to compete with graduates of the Sydney Art School and ended up dressmaking instead.

"I ended up going dressmaking because the landlady came and asked us what we were doing and I said 'I'm hoping to be a ticket writer.' 'I was like 'I wouldn't mind dressmaking.' 'Oh my dressmaker wants someone,' . . . She rang up and had me a job before breakfast was over."

"The new look came out before we left and everyone had little waists and longer skirts. And of course you needed a new wardrobe. So before we came home we'd been to all the Dior fashion parades and all

before we came home we'd been to all the Dior fashion parades and all that kind of thing so we had a new look in our eye. We came back and we had tight waists and fitted tops and it was the sleeve you see it was so tight that you couldn't put your arm up. . . . And so we came back with all these new clothes and everybody said 'Where did you get them?' And I said 'I made them.' It was fatal. It meant I had to make for them."

When Phyllis arrived home the girls she'd worked with in McKenzies and Woolworths were all working as tram conductresses and encouraged her to join.

"They said 'You have more time off.' Otherwise, you'd just have Saturday and Sunday but there you had days off during the week and you had three weeks holiday. 'You get a man's wage,' . . . Equal pay. It was the first time. And they said 'It's outdoors and it's sunny,' you know. They were all enjoying it. So we went in straight away and . . . the first school was after Christmas. And so my father and mother were furious 'You're not going to do that rough job.' 'Ooh,' my father said 'You'll ruin your skirt.' My mother said 'You'll break your fingernails.' But I said 'I'll get some money and I'll be all right,' you know so I did it."

After a medical check-up and character references Phyllis, along with 20 other female colleagues were trained in the art of tram conducting - how to pull the pole down, how to turn the seats, where the fare sections started and finished.

"You'd be put on a tram where they were just working and he [training conductor] would sit and he'd tell you what to do and he'd say 'Go and see what they're doing,' you know and then he'd see what you'd done you know? It was really he went right over the whole system. I think it was a week . . . and then

you're on your own."

Initially, Phyllis was only given a man's shirt, a skirt, and a hat in navy blue serge as a conductress uniform. Phyllis suspected that her employers believed she wouldn't be staying for long and so kept the uniform allocation to a minimum.

"I was only given a skirt and a shirt - navy blue. And I think we were given - yes that's all we were given, a shirt and a skirt. Down below the knee with one pleat in the middle. And I wore those until they started to



Above: Copy print of the final farewell gathering of the Auckland Tram Conductresses. Photo: Graham Stewart.

look raggy. Just where your bag goes would just go into a hole. . . . And we put elastic, I think, across our back and made it look as though it was supposed to be a coat. . . . I think it had long sleeves. . . . By the time I'd finished with it we looked like we had suits. They didn't say anything but that's all we had.

"And when it all got raggy in the end the Union man - he was such a nice man, he said 'What's the matter with your suit? Haven't you got anything else to wear?' I said 'No it's the only garment I've got.' I had to wash it every week and iron it. . . . And so, in the end, they gave me a coat . . . and you had to go to have a tailored line jacket that was all fitted. And some of the girls took them back to other tailors to get them fitted properly. . . . That had the silver buttons on it and you had a coat like a real conductor. But I didn't get that for quite a while."

After training, Phyllis started her conductress duties on broken shifts which covered the busy morning and evening schedules and picked up the meal relief shifts for those running the straight shifts. In the interview, Phyllis explained how her days as a conductress generally proceeded.

"You'd start about half-past six to half-past seven. . . . and you picked the car up and went and did workers trips to bring people in so there was always a lot of trams on the run. . . . And then you'd go up to Herne Bay, then you'd go out to Mount Eden and you might just do that once. . . . But you brought in as many people as you could. They found out where the crowd was and you went - they had it all worked out. Then you might be finished about half-past nine or ten but then . . . you got off your workers' tram and you picked up a meal relief. . . . And it meant that you didn't get home until half-past ten at least. And then . . . we'd go home and make dinner. . . . And then we'd go and pick up a mid-shift because the other shifts are doing the long late hours, eight hours and we did the bit in the middle. And when you finished that if you finished that quite late you would go into the depot and pick up workers trams to take the people home. You had to be there from about half-past four till six o'clock. And then by that time the straight shift needed another meal and so you'd drop those and pick them up and did their trip. And then you could go home."

"[We'd] make sure everybody was clear from the back and you'd ring the bell and start the car up again. You know you would see where they sit and make sure they were not well doing something like trying to open a window when he was going to start the tram moving. . . . if they were with babies too you had to wait until they'd got seated. And you'd get the prams up. . . . I have had up to six.

"[On one occasion] we got to Eden Park when a woman came along and she had one too [a pram]. And I said 'I'm sorry,' - there was something to do with babies in the Town Hall that day and I had them under the front gates and under the back gates and . . . there was nowhere else to put them because there were a lot of people. And I said 'No I'm afraid I can't.' She said 'I hope you have twins! I don't have twins so there!' And that was her telling me off.

"But sometimes they were enormous prams with wickerwork. And one had a nail stuck into the wheel to keep the wheel on and as I brought it up it made an enormous hole in my stocking. We used to wear dreadful stockings. Well, you see it was hard on them but you had to have something because you only had a knee-length skirt and we used to buy these dreadful rayon things. But they were warm and they were only very cheap. They were just a few shillings each pair.

"So every day you did that going in and going out, turned the seats and changed the sign and changed the gate and pulled the pole down. They did that at the end of everything. And [we] got a cup of tea - got a billy of tea. I never drank tea until I went on the trams. . . . Mother was a great tea drinker and always drank it strong and I was given it as a child

and when I came old enough to drink tea I thought 'Gee that tastes awful,' and never drank it. So the first day I was thirsty and the motorman said 'We get a billy of tea now. It's one and six. You run into the dairy there and order it for the next trip.' You see I wouldn't go in and say 'I want it,' you'd say 'I'll be in here in ten minutes.' We might have just had a little go up and turn round and come back and I'd run in . . . and then they'd give you a billy. . . . and do you know I drank tea after that. I've drunk tea ever since. It wasn't very nice but I got used to it.

"We had motormen their wives would bring them a cup of tea out. I ended up with a very nice one Bernie - Bernie Berridge. . . . And his wife would come along with a little billy of tea and we'd drink it. I think sometimes she poured it and took it. And sometimes he brought it and you took it back.

"And then there's people who wanted to be put off. . . . one Sunday it was almost a trip. They came on and all the way out to Meadowbank I pointed out the scenery. You either sat and watched the scenery or talked to somebody. There was always somebody wanted to know something.

"And then there was one woman that wanted to know about Doctor Paul serial. How did she know that I watched Doctor Paul? Because you know see I was a broken shift and it was my first trip after lunch you see and that was in the morning . . . so we'd get home in time for a cup of tea and Doctor Paul on the broken shift. . . . She said 'What's happened to Doctor Paul?' . . . And I said 'Oh terrible so and so and so.' . . . and I was taking

fares and I'd come back and give her a bit more."

The main role of the conductress was to collect passenger fares. Phyllis recalled what it was like to carry the heavy conductor bags and bring them into the depot at the end of the day.

"You had a leather bag and it was in pennies for the front - there were no ha'pennies by that time luckily - but there was thruppences, sixpences, shillings. And notes you kept in your pocket. And you tried to give pennies back as much as possible. . . . Otherwise, you had so much weight in the front you'd be falling over. And then you'd have the problem of the little children . . . I was taking fares and ringing bells and I had all these little ones round and they were all putting their hands in to get pennies. I looked and there they were like little sparrows. I said 'No, no'. And I got along the next one and he's got his hand down and nice big eyes and looks up at me like this - shy. And I said 'Come on, give me your penny.' . . . And the man beside him said to me 'You can see he's shy, let him go.' And I looked at the little boy and said 'Just bring your hand up and give me the penny please.' And I put my hand out and he did.

"That was for a child [a penny]. Tuppence for adults. Unless you were in Queen Street. And you can go from the Town Hall to the Post Office at the bottom and that would be a penny. And you can go from there to the railway station for a penny. Or if you were in Queen Street the railway would cost you tuppence . . . you'd put the money under your thumb and you'd tip the thing and clipped it, on the section that they were going. There was concession. . . . You'd buy a ticket for the week or you buy a ticket for the day. They were a shilling or one and two. So you got two extra for the one and two. I think you got 12 rides for that. Otherwise it was ten for a penny wasn't it."

"Oh we'd all go into the depot [at the end of the day] and there was a big clamp and a big hole. And you put your foot down

there was a hole and you pushed your turn and they went into a safe. But the last trip in if it was easy, you totted up your tickets and as you went in say you had a five - four or five sections - well after a few you had to check them off. You'd check the numbers off that you've sold on the paper and you'd count up your money and put that in a bag. I always kept mine with me. Some girls would put it in the back cabin because the pennies were heavy and occasionally people would take it."



Above: Auckland Transport Board's Tram Conductress bag, skirt and cap. Photo: Unknown.



Above: Unidentified. Trams Auckland, tram 236 with driver, conductor and passengers, 14-0141. Walsh Memorial Library, The Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT).

The Wiri Station Building

...continued from page three.

2011: Removed from between Main Lines for electrification work.

Rail Heritage Trust recommends building be relocated to MOTAT.

Taken over by Papatoetoe Railway Station Trust and relocated to a site on Cavendish Drive.

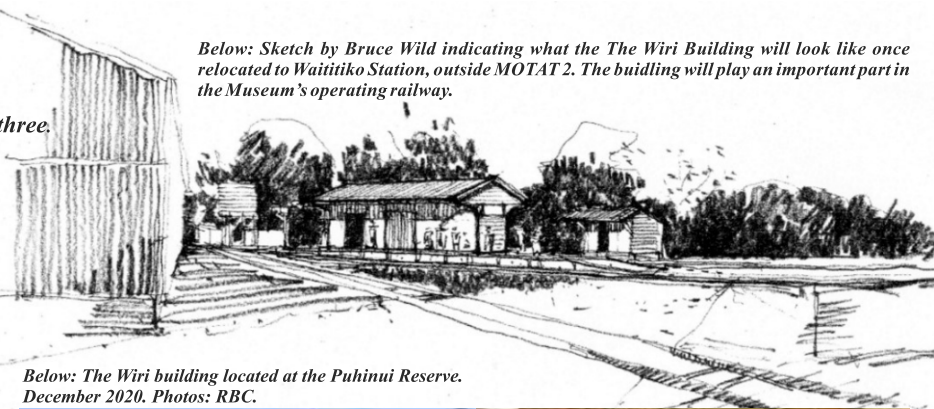
2012-13: Foundation work carried out by PRST with funding from ASB and Local Board.

2014: Council requires building removed from Cavendish site, meeting MOTAT, AC and PRST.

2019: Doubts as to whether PRST will complete restoration at Puhinui Reserve.

2021: Ownership of building transferred to MOTAT.

by Richard Croker



Below: Sketch by Bruce Wild indicating what the The Wiri Building will look like once relocated to Waititiko Station, outside MOTAT 2. The building will play an important part in the Museum's operating railway.

Below: The Wiri building located at the Puhinui Reserve. December 2020. Photos: RBC.



Phyllis Harwood - Time "on the bag" - 1947-1956 ...continued from page seven.

Phyllis has many accounts of incidents on the trams including one where an obnoxious passenger after the six o'clock pub closing first would not move and then kicked Phyllis as she squeezed past to collect fares. The story of how she kicked him back in full view of the other men on the tram is recounted by Megan Hutchings in her article 'You've kicked me': Tram Conductresses¹ on the MOTAT website. She also remembers a day when she broke the rope on the tram pole.

"It was a big car and I pulled and pulled, it wouldn't move so I used to climb on the back, hang onto it and jump off hanging onto the rope. And it broke in half. And it didn't come down because the rope was holding it or something."

Another incident was with a tram pole coming off - a regular occurrence - and Phyllis had to go out in the pouring rain and put the pole back on.

"I don't mind in the suburbs but the Civic - just about ten to eight when everybody was there and it teamed . . . and I had to go out and put the pole up. Now I couldn't see very well, it was night and flashing and the water comes down the pole and runs down your sleeves and you can feel it running right down until it gets almost to your knees. That was one of the worst."

Luckily Phyllis' time on the trams was almost accident free. She does recall a time she swapped a shift with a friend so he could play a Saturday sports match.

"Well, I didn't know his motorman at all. He was a quiet little man, the kind that had a little handkerchief that wiped everything before he did it. And he hardly spoke to me. . . . We had a head off twice at the reservoir. I had to run right up to Great North Road and drag the head back down the centre of the road. . . . He nearly took the - coming round a sharp corner . . . And I was thrown forward and I scraped my leg a bit on the uprights up the fence. When I picked myself up everyone was sitting on the floor looking startled all dressed up to go to the pictures - hats and gloves and everything in those days. And I picked them all up and we came in and we were late."

Another accident outside the Blind institute could have gone really badly.

"And there was traffic all around . . . I was halfway back and I could see there was a lorry in front of us. And tram cars all down here. And it was the stop to pick up the blind. And it was about the time when they go home. . . . And I was standing looking to see if there was any blind people and all of a sudden the front started to fall down. The lorry - they were just moving and the lorry stopped. And the lorry tray came over the top of ours and demolished the front. And was it lucky, his feet [the motorman's] could have been cut off. As it was, where he was working, that was bent down And I thought heavens they've got his feet you know? I ran - it was quite a busy tram but everyone just looked. I ran and put my hands underneath and pulled him but his feet were all right. But he was still heavy and by that time the men had woken up and they helped get him out. And so we - I went and rang up and said 'We want another tram.' And the lorry had slowed and stopped and you see the tram will not stop immediately. It still goes."

In 1956 Phyllis left her job as a tram Conductress and continued her overseas travels before returning to New Zealand to become a Postie.

"Well they were closing down anyway and everyone was leaving and there really was a lot of work. You had to do the days off because there wasn't anyone joining. And as they left the people that were there already had to do the days off. So we did as many as we were asked."

Phyllis Harwood passed away in August 2015 at the grand age of 98 after a life filled with adventure².

References

Phyllis Harwood et al. 1 June 2010. MOTAT oral history interview with Phyllis Harwood, 10-0494. Walsh Memorial Library, the Museum of Transport and Technology (MOTAT).

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¹'You've kicked me': Tram Conductresses : Hutching
<https://collection.motat.nz/topics/78/youve-kicked-me-tram-conductresses>

²Phyllis Harwood Obituary
<https://notices.nzherald.co.nz/nz/obituaries/nzherald-nz/name/phyllis-harwood-obituary?pid=175668382>

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