



GLEN EIRA

Historical Society Inc

Registration No: A0041700U

PO Box 202 Caulfield South 3162

Strolling the Horse Tram Route
Thursday 31 July 2014
Walk Conducted by Peter Carwardine,
Australian Railways Historical Society Victorian Division Inc

On a mild winter's day, ten members met Peter Carwardine for a glimpse into the world of the long gone horse tram.

Outside Elsternwick Station, Peter pointed out the location of the terminus and shunt of the horse tram route. We commenced our stroll down Glen Huntly Road, with him alerting us to a number of architectural gems along the way.

Old tram timetables hold lots of information about trams plus the local area such as names of mansions, but there were no labelled horse tram stops –perhaps it stopped on demand.

Likely there were no conductors or tickets, just a driver taking money. The horse trams would rattle along the way. The trams were so light that four men could lift the saloon cars.

Approaching Kooyong Road, we particularly admired the Melbourne side of Glen Huntly Road – more of the buildings are older (19th century) with more original features. On the other side, we peered in to see the pressed metal ceilings and plaster ceilings of a number of shops.

Other highlights included a leadlight window of Art Nouveau artistry possibly dating back to the late 1800s; and a block of flats in Art Deco style.

Echoing the journey of old, we stopped at Beavis Street where a D-loop allowed the horse trams to pass one another on the single line. Perhaps this loop indicated hopes to expand to a double tram track at some later stage?

While the exact dates are not now known, the horse tram route ran from circa 1889 until around 1912 and these hopes were not realised.

Our next stop was the horse changeover point near St John's Uniting Church opposite Hopetoun Gardens where there used to be a triangle junction for the horse tram. Peter described how the horses were walked down for changeover from the Horse Tramway Depot. The site of the depot is now shared by a couple of circa 1920 houses in Foster Street.

Our two-hour walk with Peter finished where the horse tram route turned up into Kooyong Road then Glen Eira Road, taking a few more turns before reaching Caulfield Racecourse.

Many thanks to Peter for sharing his knowledge with us. He also demonstrated the joy in walking familiar streets with fresh eyes to appreciate what has gone before as well as what we may still treasure.

Anne Kilpatrick

