

Under the Wires

**Remembering Wellington's
trolleybus heritage**

...plus other bus news



**Compiled by
Alan Wickens**

November 2020

IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE

OVERHEA(r)D	3
A FOCUS ON 360, LOOKING BACK ON ITS LIFE, YEAR BY YEAR	4
MORE HOBART TROLLEYBUS MEMORIES	7
THE OUTSTANDING MODEL OF VOLVO 208	8
READERS' SEGMENT	12
361 STILL FLYING THE FLAG FOR THE TROLLEYS	14
HERE AND THERE	18
THE DAVID JONES COLLECTION – PART 2	20
TRAMS AROUND STOUT STREET	24
A LOOK BACK AT KARORI DEPOT	26
SPOTLIGHT ON THE MEDIA	28
DINING UNDER THE WIRES – UPDATE	32
DAMAGED CARDIFF TROLLEYBUSES MOVE TO A NEW HOME	33
UNREPEATABLE KILBIRNIE DEPOT SCENES	34
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE DESIGNLINE PROTOTYPES?	36
A VISIT TO NCS DEPOT	37
210, NEW ZEALAND'S OLDEST WORKING TROLLEYBUS	39
MORE ON 'THAT' CHASSIS	41
ROUTE 2 TO SEATOUN AND NOW MIRAMAR	42
RAILWAY STATION TERMINUS CHANGES	43
TAILPIECE	44



This ancient-looking tower wagon was probably the sole maintenance vehicle helping keep New Plymouth's four trolleybuses running. Maybe a keen-eyed reader from the area is able to offer some more information as to the make of this vehicle and maybe even where it was photographed. The NP system closed fifty-three years ago on 7 October 1967.
Photo: Graeme Bennett.

Thanks to this month's contributors:

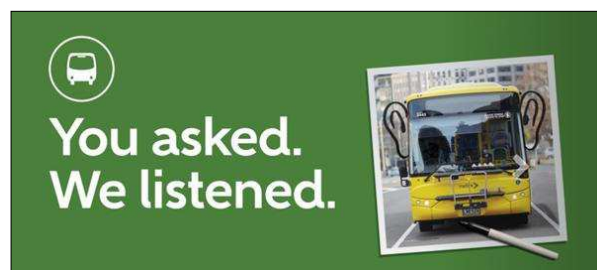
Peter Bennison, Ian Robertson, Museum Wellington, Peter Coventry, David Jones, Graeme Bennett, Graeme Inwood, John Webb, Michael McKeon, Michael Jarka, Basil Hancock, Gunter Mackinger, D.L.A. Turner and all who provided feedback.

Thanks also to Mike Mellor for checking the text and Henry Brittain for being a never-ending source of information.

OVERHEA(r)D - Issue 84

Three years ago on 1 November 2017 we were waking up to the fact that Wellington no longer had a trolleybus network. Instead the city and suburbs reverberated to the sound of the diesel engine, just as it still does today, other than for the ten electric double-deckers. Work began immediately to take down the overhead wiring and the associated infrastructure – there would be no going back or change of heart. Nine months later all trace of the wires had been removed (barring those inside Kilbirnie depot).

Substantial changes made to some routes and timetables in July 2018 were not always well received, to put it mildly. They were labelled by the media as a “bustastrophe”. Since then various tweaks and tinkering by the Regional Council have been taking place following customer demand and feedback from bus users. Together with several reviews the result has been further changes made and implemented from 25 October. The most notable being **Route 2** services splitting at Miramar Shops with one branch continuing to Miramar (Darlington Road) and the other continuing to Seatoun (7 days a week). This change will be welcomed by those on the Miramar peninsula who were required to change at Miramar on a journey to the city. Bus users approaching these services from the rear will also be pleased to see that Miramar services are now numbered **2m** and Seatoun **2s**. More on page 43. Prior to the 2018 route changes you will recall that Route 2 buses went to Miramar and 11 services to Seatoun. The GWRC planners discovered that new ways are not necessarily always better than old ways. Other changes made on 25 October have effectively put an end the need to change buses at the suburban hubs which also proved unpopular with bus users. Only those using Route 12 outside of the peak hours will find it necessary to change at Kilbirnie. Well done to the Regional Council for listening to feedback. The full details of the changes can be found on page 28.



Auckland moved down a Covid restriction level (from 2 to 1) on 7 October matching the rest of the country. With regard to public transport this removed the requirement to wear face coverings on buses, trains and ferries though it still remained a suggested practice by health authorities.

Despite the Airport Flyer service being back on the road since the beginning of July, albeit on a much reduced timetable, the service still does not appear on Real Time Information panels at relevant bus stops and neither is Snapper available on buses for fares. Vehicles currently dedicated to Route 91 are 2501/2/3/9/10/11 plus former trolleybus 361.

Work on the Tramway Historical Society's (THS) overhead at Ferrymead Heritage Park is progressing. Alan Roi, our trolleybus contact at the Museum reports: *“Our overhead crew has been working at the rear of the trolleybus Shed. When the overhead was first constructed, it was intended to put wires around the outside of the shed to provide an outside parking area and a set of points was erected at the rear of the shed. It is now felt that these points were in the wrong place and they have been removed. The overhead at the rear of the shed has been raised using the poles that we recently back stayed. As the geometry of the line is somewhat altered, we have removed a sweep from the depot line and a solid segment is being added in a different position. The line crew are re-adjusting the depot wires and reconnecting them to the main line. It is hoped that before too long we will be able to energise the overhead and run a bus to test the overhead. We envisage there will be quite a lot of adjusting and final tensioning required before the overhead is usable. We have had the pleasure of working with Michael Jarka from Dunedin. Michael is a long term bus enthusiast and at one stage lived in Auckland. There, he was involved in tram overhead maintenance at MOTAT. His help on the overhead was really appreciated.”* We look forward to hearing that the trolleybuses are back on the road. A feature on 210, one of the THS vehicles, can be found on page 28.

Trams were an essential part of Wellington's public transport system for many years, running on the Capital's streets for sixty years from 1904 to 1964. As seen in these pages in the past, **Graham Stewart** was very active with his camera in the later years of tram operation. For a number of months *The Dominion Post* has been publishing one of Graham's tram images on the Capital Day page of its Saturday edition under the heading “Where am I?” Should the newspaper survive another sixty years, say until 2080, I wonder if it might run a similar puzzler with trolleybuses as its subject matter? Despite our interest, somehow I don't think they held the same affection with the public as the trams.

Belated congratulations to **Mike Mellor**, a winner in this year's Absolutely Positively Wellingtonian Awards announced in September. The annual Awards are one way for the Council to honour members of the community who have made outstanding or lengthy contributions, usually in a voluntary capacity, to the Capital and its people. Mike received the following citation for his contribution to the city: *Mike is one of the foundation members of Walk Wellington, an advocacy group that went on to become Living Streets Aotearoa, which focuses on improving conditions for walkers and creating a more liveable urban environment. Mike was the Environmental Sustainability Representative on the Wellington Regional Land Transport Committee for six years and is currently a member of the Greater Wellington Regional Council's Public Transport Advisory Group.*

This month it is possible that a start will be made on removing the last vestige of the overhead network – the remaining wires inside Kilbirnie depot. These will be taken down, eradicating all evidence of trolleybuses having ever run (other than wall anchors and traction pole identifiers). Only the tram rails, firmly embedded in the concrete, will remain.

I trust you will enjoy this month's selection of features and photos. My thanks to those who have continued to support the magazine with their contributions.

Alan

Front Cover: The seaside suburb of Seatoun was always a quiet backwater to visit with the hope that every fifteen minutes a trolleybus would turn up. On 29 December 2014, 360 didn't disappoint and is pictured departing the terminus in Hector Street with the 10.58am service to the Railway Station. 360 continued to operate until the last day of trolleybuses in Wellington on 31 October 2017. The overhead remained on this one-way loop until July the following year.

A FOCUS ON 360 - LOOKING BACK AT ITS LIFE, YEAR BY YEAR

360

The on-going series about the Designline fleet - this month we remember 360.

Right: Our journey begins on 22 December 2008 at Kilbirnie depot with 360 newly arrived in Wellington and awaiting its registration.



Left: 360 coasting down Glenmore Street on 2 September 2009 on its journey to Lytall Bay having just passed under the Kelburn Viaduct. Other than the tunnels, this was the largest major structure that the trolleybus network passed beneath.

Right: Moving to 27 September 2010, we find 360 turning left from Willis Street into Lambton Quay while working a Route 10 duty from Newtown Park. Seats (just out of view to the left) at the intersection were a good place to sit and watch bus traffic – any trolleybus on duty would be guaranteed to pass this spot.



Left: 360 follows the wires from John Street into Hutchison Road, Newtown and passes one of the small Mercedes buses, 40, that was working the local route 29 Southern Shopper to Island Bay. 19 January 2011.



Left: As with many trolleybuses, advertising first appeared on 360 in 2012. On this occasion it was for *Wither Hills* wine and on 3 October 2012 the bus was heading along Lambton Quay towards the Railway Station.



Right: Crawford Road is a link between Kilbirnie and Newtown and on 11 June 2013, 360 was working an 11 from Seatoun to the Railway Station. It was close to this spot that the last piece of street overhead was taken down in June 2018.



Left: On 28 March 2014, 360 approaches the traffic lights at the intersection of Adelaide Road and Luxford Street on its journey from Island Bay to the city centre. Here it will turn right and continue through Berhampore on this Route 1 duty.

Right: Of course there were times when faults occurred and on 16 July 2015 one of those occasions happened at the Railway Station terminus. The shiftman truck is in attendance as staff attempt to rectify the problem.





Left: 360 leaves Hutchison Road and enters Wallace Street with a city-bound service on 23 November 2016. The advertisement is promoting Selaks wine.

Right: 360 (far right), shows it ran until the end – 31 October 2017. On the last day we would ever see trolleybuses working on Wellington’s streets, it is joined at the Railway Station by 378 and 371. This was a fine opportunity to witness this event.



Left: As has been well documented, following closure of the trolleybus network in Wellington, the still young fleet languished predominantly inside Kilbirnie depot. On 16 May 2018, 360 had spent seven months in storage at the depot. It wouldn’t be until 14 August 2020 that it would finally see the light of day when it was towed to “pastures new”. In fact that term was what literally happened to quite a number of trolleybuses that remained unsold. Until a permanent home is found for them many continue to sit in a paddock in Masterton in the Wairarapa, north-west of Wellington.

Next month “the life and times” of 361 are featured. It remains the only operational “trolleybus” in New Zealand; no longer a trolleybus as such but at least electrically operated.



Above: A 1951 view of Leyland TB5-type chassis "Canton" (third batch) number 86 (in service 1945 to 1963) at the bottom of Park Street, New Town near the junction with Risdon Road, en route to Cornelian Bay.

Right: In the same year we see BUT ETB/1-type chassis number 204 (in service 1950 to 1968) in original Hobart Municipal Tramways livery turning right in Lower Macquarie Street en route to the start of the Huon Road service. The Hobart system closed on 24 November 1968. Photos: The late P. Eaton.



A three-axle trolleybus began service in Hobart in 1935 from the city to Huon Road. In 1937 it was joined by four similar vehicles running to New Town Station and later Cornelian Bay. In the period 1942–52 a further 58 trolleybuses were acquired. The first trolleybuses in Hobart were built by the City Council on Leyland chassis. From 1950 more modern buses, built by City Bodyworks, Hobart on British United Traction chassis were introduced. The early trolley buses were garaged in the tram depot and towed backwards by a tram to reach the running wires in Macquarie Street where they took up daily service. Separate trolleybus depots were provided in 1944 and 1954 in Collins and Davey Streets.



Left: Jumping to the preservation years with BUT ETB/1-type chassis number 235 (in service 1952 to 1968) and viewed at the Tasmanian Transport Museum Society, (TTMS), Anfield Street, Glenorchy. It features the final larch green and cream livery of the Metropolitan Transport Trust.



Right: Leyland TB5-type chassis "Canton" (first batch) number 74 (in service 1942 to 1964) in storage at the TTMS. The more recent photographs were taken by Peter Bennison of Auckland on 17 November 2010. Interestingly, this bus had the same chassis and electrical equipment as Auckland's Farmer's Free trolleybuses.

THE OUTSTANDING MODEL OF VOLVO 208



The amazing creation of Volvo 208 made by
Ian Robertson.

It was built as a presentation to Kevin Crompton on his retirement as General Manager of Wellington City Transport. Constructed in 1983, the model, now owned by NZ Bus but is on a long-term loan to Museums Wellington. 208 needs some minor repairs but when these are completed it is planned to put the bus on display at the Wellington Museum.

Creator, Ian Robertson picks up the story. *There are two models. This photo shows the chassis model in front of the whole bus. Both models are to a scale of 1:10 so are just over a metre long. I lost count of the hours they took to build, but probably over 600 for the full body model.*

Each model was made under different somewhat complicated arrangements, though Wellington City Transport was involved in both. I was working as a bus driver for WCT at the time and suggested to the Engineer at the time, Ron Burdett that a model might help in the design of the bodies. This gave rise to the chassis model first.

The chassis for the real buses were supplied by Dalhoff and King, then agents for Volvo in New Zealand, who paid for the model. I made the model with their co-operation with drawings and information. The chassis was a Volvo B58 bus chassis but with electric motor and control equipment. The model shows the arrangement of this equipment as well as general bus equipment such as suspension. In the end the design of the buses themselves was well advanced by the time I had completed the model. The model was given to Wellington City Transport by Dalhoff and King. I understand the model was useful when part way through the contract it became necessary to alter the position of the air intake to the cooling system for the electrical control equipment so that the intake was on the opposite rear corner of the body. The air intake on the model is in the original position on the nearside rear corner.



The bus bodies were made by Hawke Brothers in Takanini who paid for the model of the finished bus. In this I was also helped considerably by Hawke Bros. I spent some time at the Hawke Bros factory where they were assembling the buses themselves, availing myself of body drawings as they were being created in their drawing office and observing construction on the prototype bus as it progressed. Once again by the time I finished the model, the buses themselves were entering service in Wellington. During the time of the contract, Hawkes and New Zealand Motor Bodies were merged into Coachwork International, owned by New Zealand Motor Corporation, so when the model was completed I delivered it to Motor Corporation. It was Ron Burdett's idea to have this model made and so, like the chassis model, it was given to Wellington City Transport in recognition of the contract.

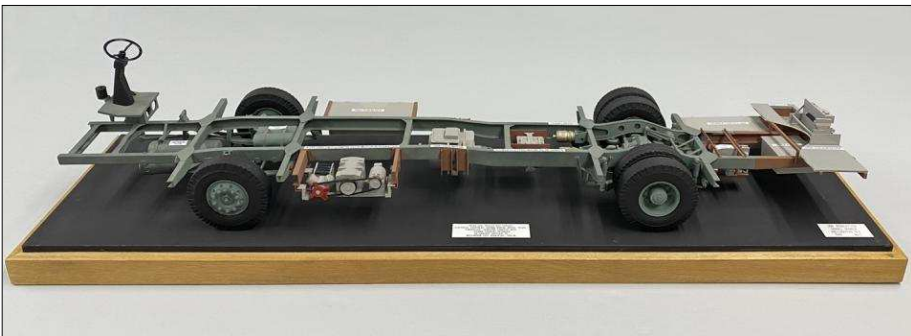
When Wellington City Transport was taken over by Stagecoach the models were included, and subsequently they passed to New Zealand Bus who they still belong to. They are now in the care of Museums Wellington where they are on long-term loan and will eventually go on display at Wellington Museum, situated at 3 Jervois Quay.



Ian Robertson
Model Maker No 4
Wellington, N.Z. 1983

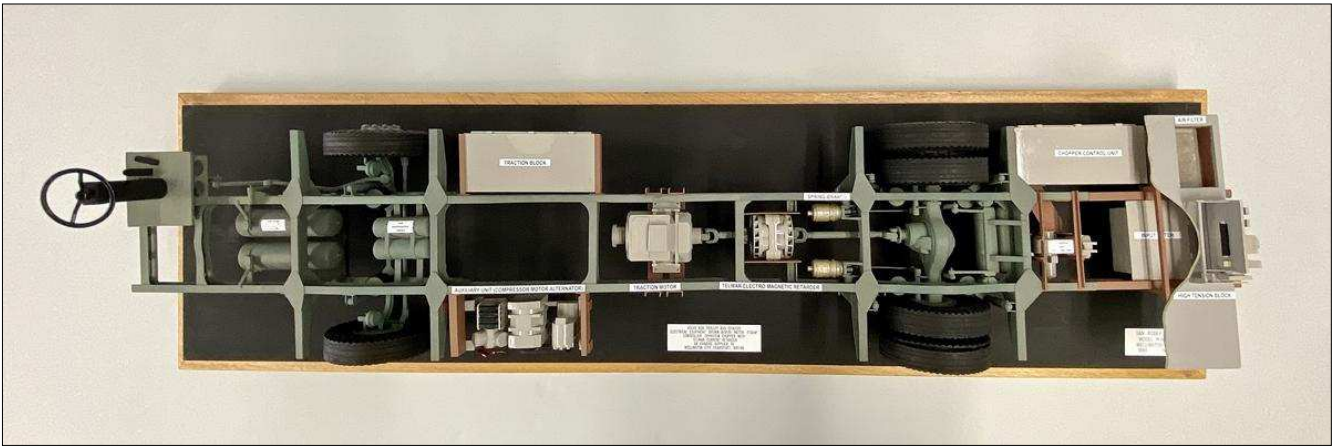


The attention to detail, both inside and out is incredible as these photographs demonstrate.
Photo right: Courtesy Daniel Campbell-MacDonald - Museums Wellington.
Below: The chassis model built by Ian Robertson in 1980.



IAN ROBERTSON
MODEL MAKER
WELLINGTON, N.Z.
1980 No.2

VOLVO B58 TROLLEY BUS CHASSIS
ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT: BROWN BOVERI MOTOR: 1756HP.
CONTROLLER: THYRISTOR CHOPPER WITH
TELMAR CURRENT RETARDER
68 CHASSIS SUPPLIED TO
WELLINGTON CITY TRANSPORT: 1981-86



An overhead view of the chassis model.



Museums Wellington also currently has in its care of this model of a Designline trolleybus. It is believed to have been commissioned by the company when they received the contract to build what turned out to be the very last trolleybuses in New Zealand. Like Volvo 208, this (unnumbered) model is on a similar scale and measures about a metre long. It also belongs to NZ Bus.



The photographs were taken on 22 September 2020. My thanks to **Nikolas Brocklehurst**, Registrar, and **Daniel Campbell-MacDonald** of Museums Wellington for allowing me behind the scenes access to photograph the models.

Left: When working in the Stagecoach era, 208 followed by 268 turn out of Mercer Street on 11 November 2002 to cross Victoria Street and continue into Wakefield Street. Photo: Alan Wickens.



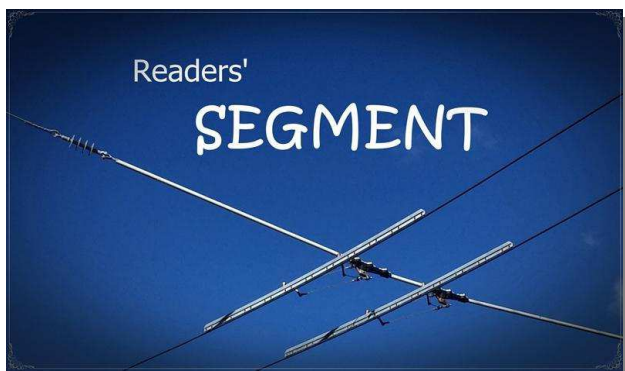
The Volvo fleet were numbered 201-268 with 208 becoming the first of these trolleybuses to enter service in 1981. Unfortunately, 208 did not survive into preservation, being withdrawn in 2008. Parts from many of the Volvos were later refurbished to be reused in the Designline trolleybus fleet. We are, however, fortunate that this superb model of 208 remains to remind us of the many years of service Volvo trolleybuses provided to Wellingtonians.

Left: A study of 208 basking in the sunshine in the open-air park at Kilbirnie depot in 1989. By this time the bus was eight years old but still has plenty of life left in her. The pole nearest the camera has definitely got a kink in it from somewhere.

Right: 208, now in 'Big Red' livery, stands alongside 241 in earlier WCT colours, at the layover area at the Railway Station sometime in 1991.



Left: 208 photographed again in 1991. On this occasion it is travelling along Stout Street and crossing Whitmore Street as it nears journey's end at the Railway Station. The overhead along Stout Street was removed in 2003 once the new interchange at the Railway Station had opened.



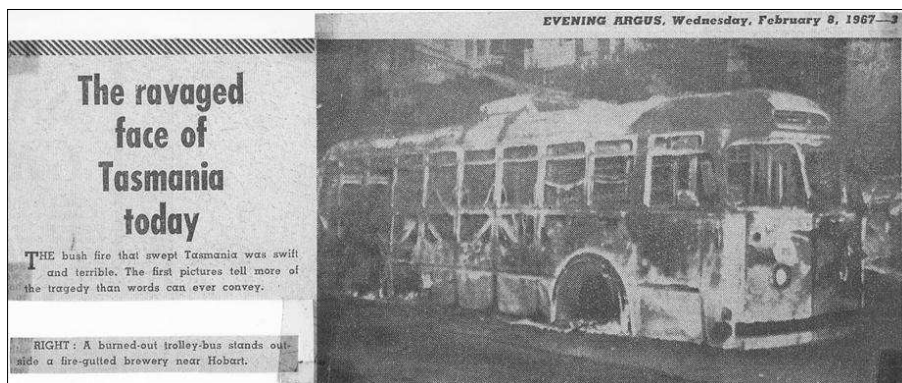
Readers' SEGMENT

Your Comments and Feedback

"Thank you for sending your latest masterpiece (September 2020). As usual, it contains lots of interest with both historical and current information from Wellington and all around the world. It was a most pleasant surprise to receive your "Aotea Quay Special" earlier in the year and the additional information about the route in subsequent issues of UTW. I have also enjoyed learning more about the trolleybus systems in Dunedin and Auckland, New Zealand and also Australian trolleybuses. I

have included a cutting of a burned out Hobart trolleybus following a bushfire that I saw in an edition of the Brighton (UK) Evening Argus on 8th. February, 1967. At the time it was news to me that trolleybuses ran in Tasmania." **Andrew Henbest, U.K.**

[Over to our Australian cousins to help us identify the trolleybus or throw some more light on this incident – Ed]



"Having just received your October issue prompted me to forward a couple of links. Development of trolleybuses is still ongoing and looks like these could bring the costs

down substantially though unfortunately a bit late for Wellington. One link shows the double articulated trolleybuses in Linz, Austria and the other is dynamic charging developments which could change the whole structure of trolleybus networks: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nuc3ltKin00&t=195s&ab_channel=T3Transport and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLn_wyj8whU&ab_channel=KT4Dani

Apparently Berlin is looking to phase out its diesel buses using this system on the major routes: <https://www.trolleynews.eu/trolleynews/beitrag/?id=7388> I always look forward to receiving your news. **Michael Ball.**

PS: Why have Auckland and Wellington gone to double-deckers? From experience in the U.K. they are dreadful for young families and older people and they are such slow loaders. That is why the double deck trams in Christchurch introduced in 1905 were quickly changed to single deckers. [No doubt other readers have an opinion on the suitability of double-deckers? – Ed]

Another excellent edition of UTW! Thanks for printing some more of my trolleybus pictures. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the late Allan Harbrow, and to Allan Steel and David Maciulaitis for scanning my lifetime collection of negatives, slides and photos. It is important to remember as you head ever nearer the buffers at the end of the platform of life that you need to make provision for things like photograph collections. Family do not always share your interests and too often personal memorabilia end up in the skip and we are all losers. With regard to the picture of a rear engine chassis at Kilbirnie, attached is a picture of CTB 456 AEC Swift with NZMB body. Clearly bodied as a demonstrator with the model name 'Commonwealth' many of the design features are reminiscent of the Leyland National. Perhaps Commonwealth was chosen to give an illusion of an export National? The picture shows the bus in post demonstrator CTB livery atop Mt Victoria. **David Jones, N.Z.**



"It certainly takes longer to read UTW nowadays but it's not a complaint, more a compliment. Glad N.Z. has returned to better times; we are doing our best to see the end of the C-word in the U.K. – still such a long way to go. The historic photographs of the golden days of trolleybuses in so many locations (and trams) are magic. Black and white or colour conveys scenes that are becoming distant memories especially like "Trams in John Street" from D.L.A.

Turner. These have the clarity of pictures taken last week, not 1964! Ian Little must have had a good reputation being allowed his preserved trolleybuses in everyday streets. It was great seeing 369 having "a final jaunt" around the city for old times' sake. Many buses pretend to be "London Transport" even Ansaldo 125 it seems. Nice to have a follow up to the Melbourne restaurant trams with Christchurch and a reminder of a trip from Ed Halstead. Good to have Walsall trolleybuses remembered - thanks for that Alan. I visited Crich Tramway Museum last



Above right: "Horsfield" tram Leeds 180 from 1930 and (left) Leeds City Transport Convert tram 345 from 1921, upgraded in 1939. Photos: Phil Waters.

week on a wet and windy day but got a warm welcome from two Leeds trams and their staff. Pleased to see them adapting to the restrictions and making it safe for us to visit. Should mention I have seen the "trolley trucks" before in the Soviet Bloc countries as maintenance vehicles as well as freight carriers. They use wires the same as service trolleybuses and utilize the infrastructure in an efficient way we don't understand in the West; brilliant! Let us see what another month brings to us all. Think most people will be glad to see the back of 2020, restart for another go next year!" **Phil Waters, U.K.**

"Congratulations on another excellent issue of UTW. The highlights for me were; P3- Overhea(r)d - good news re Ferrymead. P11- The bottom paragraph re bus drivers pay deal. For too long, key workers have been both underpaid and undervalued. I hope that whenever things get back to normal, their endeavours are remembered. Page 14- Letters from Phil Waters and my good friend Peter Blears. I have an account with HP; I pay for a certain amount of pages per month. This also means that whenever the ink drops below a certain level, new cartridge(s) are automatically sent to me free of charge, as well as a pre-paid envelope to return the used cartridges in. This method has certainly helped me to keep the cost of printing down. P15- Re the photo of the Restaurant Tram in Christchurch - this is the only city/ town where I have seen a tram stop in such a location. P18- Re the damaged double-decker; oh dear! P19/20; All of the Crossley pictures. The location of 7 must be one of the strangest locations a trolleybus has been photographed in. P21- Again, all of the pictures. Page 23- More Trams In Mount Cook. Re the lack of traffic; if asked what has been the biggest change I have witnessed in my lifetime the answer is easy, the growth of the motor vehicle. If as a child somebody had told me that the two-way streets that were almost empty of traffic my friends



and I played football in would become one-way with cars parked almost nose to tail on both sides I would never have believed them. P24/25- Another Look At Dunedin. P28/29/30/31- The David Jones Collection; every picture a gem. P32- Trolley Truck Oddity. Enclosed are two pictures of similar vehicles that I have seen in Kyiv, Ukraine (left) and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (right). P33/34/35- Look Back at the 2004 Trolleybus Festival; this must have been utopia for any trolleybus fan. P36- Marking Walsall Trolleybus Closure 50 Years Ago - The booklet was one of the first about trolleybuses that I can remember purchasing. Replacing trolleybuses with older diesel buses also happened in my home town of Derby (U.K.). P37- Another Tasmanian Memory - The photo and informative text. P38- On



Washington Avenue - 10 Years Apart. P40/41- The Original Lyall Bay Terminus, particularly the middle photograph on the latter page; is that Stirling Moss on the wheel of the Ford! P42/43- Trams on John Street, and the later contemporary views. Finally, I would like to correct a couple of errors that I made in my previous letter. Firstly the Moscow system lasted for 86 years, 9 months and 10 days and not as stated. Secondly, the PMP videos are available from www.pmpfilms.co.uk or at ebay.co.uk by typing Trolleybus DVDs in the search bar/engine." **Tom Douce, U.K.**

"Very many thanks for the latest edition of UTW. When you see one that has 40 superb colour pages (Sept 2020), another superb issue comes along with 44 pages, with not just superb colour but also superb black and white, and that is not to take away anything from the previous issues - again, quite superb. The colour photos of "The Dying Days of Trolleybuses at Kilbirnie", David Jones's photo section, Grant Fletcher's "2004 Trolleybus Festival" and Phil Walters' "Walsall Trolleybus Closure" (I remember both Walsall and Wolverhampton trolleybuses as we used to visit Wolverhampton regularly in the '60s when I had a relative there). Other superb topics; Crossley 7, Trams in Mount Cook, Another look at Dunedin, and Original Lyall Bay Terminus, and all those listed are not to take anything away from the remainder of the issue. Please do keep up the good work and thank all your contributors on behalf of all us readers." **Peter Blears, U.K.**

"Thanks for another great edition. I am writing concerning the mystery chassis on page 44 of the October 2020 issue. I don't know what it is but I know what it isn't, and that's an AEC Swift. The Swift had a horizontal engine and a radiator on the offside, with a low floor, as in the lower of the two chassis in the AEC brochure seen below. The Swift shared an identical chassis frame and some other components with the Leyland Panther. There were plans for a high floor coach version, as in the upper chassis, but I am not sure that any were actually built. A few Panthers were built as coaches with the high frame though. The chassis in your pictures clearly has a vertical engine and a transverse radiator, and the frame is straight, compared with the cranked frame of the Swift. It is also not a Bristol RE, Leyland Panther or Panther Cub, Seddon RU or any other British chassis I am aware of. Scania and Volvo did not have any chassis of that layout, and I doubt that it is a MAN or Mercedes. The wheels suggest that it is not American. My guess, and it is only a guess, is that it is either a Japanese chassis (Hino, Isuzu or UD-Nissan) or a local chassis such as a Nissan Scorpion, although it doesn't look like their type of frame construction. The other interesting things are the front end, where it appears to have a locally modified drop frame for the entrance steps, and the very deep cranked section in the rear crossmember under the engine. So, I am afraid that I cannot tell you what it is, but I do know what it isn't. I hope this helps to some extent." [Over to our bus sleuths - Ed] **Basil Hancock, Australia.** Basil has contributed more on this mystery on page 41.



361 – STILL FLYING THE FLAG FOR THE TROLLEYS

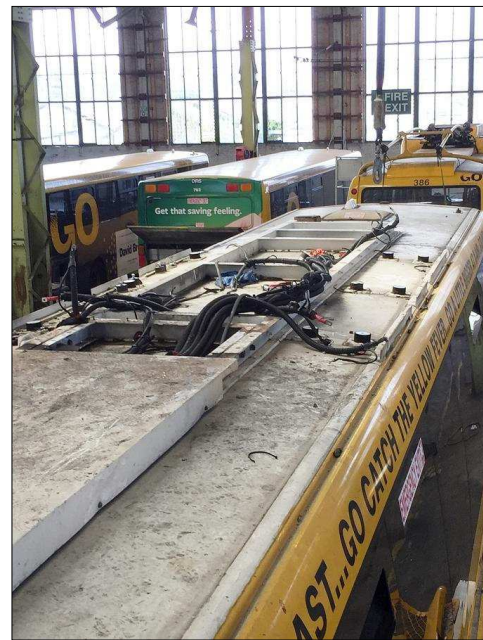


Following its construction at Designline’s premises in Ashburton, 361 first appeared in Wellington at the end of 2008. Like most of the trolleybus fleet it led an uneventful life until the latter part of 2016 when it was chosen to be a “guinea pig” for the upcoming trial of battery powered operation and withdrawn from service. Its numerical colleague, 362, had already been gutted of its rear electrical components and rooftop equipment, chosen for what became the unsuccessful Wrightspeed project (a subject of a forthcoming feature). It was in 2014 that the decision was taken by the Greater Wellington Regional Council not to renew the contract to operate trolleybuses so NZ Bus proceeded to trial different motive power for the buses that had limited life left. 361 lingered in Kilbirnie depot for almost eighteen months from August 2016 until it was towed to the nondescript workshop in Newlands in February 2018 where the projects for both trolleybuses were being developed. Here, 361 was fitted with a large clump of rooftop batteries and new electrics. Towards the end of April 2018 it appeared in its new guise and shortly after was covered in a very eye-catching vinyl promoting it as an electric bus – *The Future is Today This Bus is Electric*. Of course the bus had always been electric, so it was only a little more radical in that it wasn’t constrained by overhead wires. Following a month of trials the bus entered service, ironically one of its earliest duties being on Route 91 Airport Flyer services between the Railway Station and Wellington Airport. It then became a ‘regular’ on Route 11 services between the Railway Station and Seatoun for about four months before rejoining the *Airport Flyer* dedicated fleet.

While all this had been happening trolleybus operation had ended (31 October 2017) and the fleet of buses had gone into storage at Kilbirnie and Karori depots. The Wrightspeed project had also run its course and a decision was taken to abandon any further development of the idea with 362 joining the unwanted fleet. Despite the continuing success of the 361 conversion, NZ Bus decided to sell their remaining trolleybus assets leaving just the one working example on the road – 361, albeit not quite as it was originally designed! Originally, 361 was just numbered *TEV1* (Trolleybus Electric Vehicle?), however its former trolleybus number was later restored. The conversion to electric bus was by CRRC.

Above: 361 spent less than eight years as a conventional trolleybus. As it will be well remembered the bus ambles along Glenmore Street towards the city on a journey to Lyall Bay on 10 May 2010.

Right: By 19 October 2016, 361 had been withdrawn a couple of months and by this date had just had its poles and rooftop components removed.



Left: The electronics bay in the rear of 361 was empty when this photograph was taken on 16 November 2016. The former battery covers off the roof space lie beside the bus.



Right: Moving ahead to 20 December 2017, despite the trolleybuses now having all been withdrawn, 361 was still waiting for its conversion. On this date it was jacked up and missing its front axle.

Left: On 17 January 2018 it had been jacked up even higher and not only was its front axle missing but the main rear one had also been removed.





Left: After the lengthy wait at Kilbirnie, 361 was finally moved to Newlands on 14 February 2018, minus its main rear axle.



Right: Two months later on 23 April the battery conversion had been completed and 361 was returned to Kaiwharawhara depot. Michael McKeon managed to capture a photograph of the movement as it passed him in Hutt Road just before it reached its destination. The six banks of batteries on the roof were still to be covered. A few trial runs were then made around the city between then and the first week in May when the amazing transformation was released to the public...



Above: The actual first day of operation is not known but it was somewhere close to 8 May 2018 when this photograph was taken in Cambridge Terrace at the intersection with Courtenay Place. The bus was on a test run as the sign at the base of the windscreen states *Not Available for Service*. Further tests were undertaken; the bus was noted in Karori on 22 and 24 May and also in Kelburn and at the Railway Station terminus on 24 May.

On 31 May, 361 was seen on revenue-earning service for the first time in its new guise when it performed duties on Route 91 – the *Airport Flyer* – but only between the Railway Station and the Airport. This was short-lived activity and soon the bus took up regular duties on Route 11 to and from Seatoun.

Right: By the date of this photograph, 14 June, most of the trolleybus overhead had been taken down but there was still an opportunity for a photograph of 361 under the wires in the Kilbirnie area. Crawford Road was the last section of wiring to be removed so it was fitting to record the bus on its old stamping ground with the overhead still in place. By the end of the month it had all gone. Note that the bus had its former trolleybus fleet number reinstated. This can just be seen at the bottom of the windscreen on the driver's side.





Left: 361 continued regularly working to/from Seatoun until the new bus contract started on 15 July 2018. In September the former trolleybus was back on the Airport to City run again. On 25 September, 361 was photographed at the Airport terminus, which at the time was situated at the southern end of the airport facilities. It has continued to remain as a Route 91 bus, except when out of service, up until the present day.

The Covid-19 pandemic hit New Zealand in late February 2020. One of the many devastating effects it had was the almost overnight shutdown of international and local travel. Whilst restrictions on travel around the country have since eased considerably the international borders remain all but shut to overseas travellers. With air travel just a shadow of its former glory days this has resulted in a rethink of the frequency of a dedicated bus service to and from the Airport. The Airport Flyer service disappeared entirely after 25 March and when it resumed on 6 July 2020 it only

operated fifteen round trips a day compared to pre-Covid-19 timetabling of seventy such daily services. In addition the service was cut back – where once it travelled between the Airport and Lower Hutt, now it only shuttles between the Railway Station and Airport. There are now only nine round trips in the morning and six in the afternoon – no services operate at the weekend. However, 361 soldiers on together with five other Airport Flyer buses; 2501, 2502, 2503, 2509, 2510 and 2511. Most of the other once dedicated Flyer buses have been given new duties by NZ Bus mainly on services to and from Eastbourne on regular routes. As has been illustrated in previous issues much of their orange livery has been covered with grey vinyl plus the addition of Metlink branding. The one exception was 2508 (the first to be ‘repurposed’) which was partly covered in a garish blue vinyl.



The Airport Flyer terminus was shifted to its present position nearly two years ago. It is now on the ground floor of the parking building and is reached after a walk from the arrivals area. Although the position of the bus arrival/departure point is marked I have heard criticism that it is no longer as convenient or easy to find as it was before – just outside the arrivals door. On 29 September I decided to sample 361 – on the 10.15am city to Airport run and the 11.00 return. It was a pleasure to once again sit in what I once called “the trolleybus spotter’s seat” (just inside the front door) where a clear view of proceedings could be gained. The vinyl wrap does cut down the light somewhat though. However, 361 has superb acceleration and easily edged the speed limit on the sections of SH1 in the eastern suburbs when it was appropriate. The disappointing aspect was that the driver only had two passengers for his entire trip. As there was no call to stop anywhere on the route from Courtenay Place to the Airport it wasn’t surprising that we arrived seven minutes early!

Above: 361 resting between duties having arrived at the Airport at 10.40 on 29 September 2020. With a drastic cut in flights due to Covid-19 there was a distinct lack of foot traffic. The latest heavily pruned timetable of fifteen daily services is attached below the bus stop sign.

The return service left on time at 11.00am with one woman off a flight from Rotorua. No-one else boarded the inbound trip so consequently with no passengers to contend with along the way 361 arrived at the Railway Station seven minutes early. The driver told me that although this journey wasn’t typical he had experienced a number of similar trips with little custom which doesn’t bode well for the future of the Airport Flyer. This trip was the last of the nine morning runs with the first of the six afternoon trips not resuming until 3.15pm from the Railway Station. During this down time the Flyer buses return to their Kaiwharawhara depot base.

Right: 361 poses briefly at Stop B at Kilbirnie hub in Evans Bay Parade on its way back to the Railway Station.

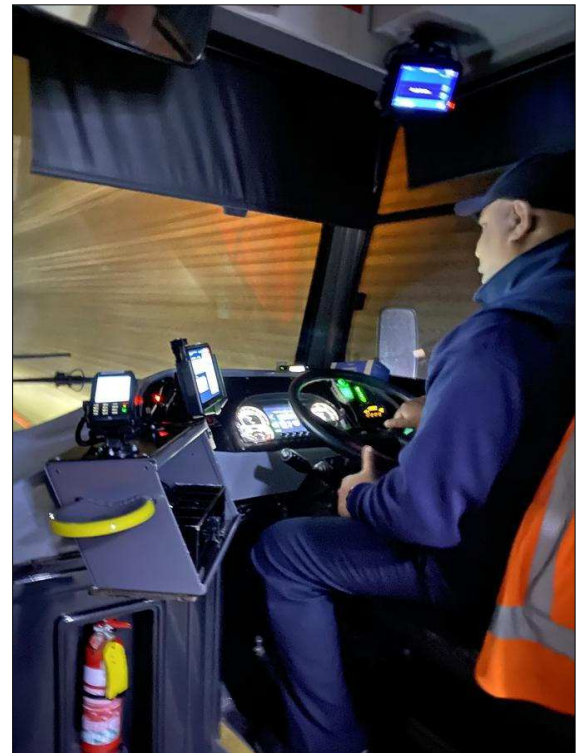
Airport Flyer		91	
Wellington Airport Flyer Revised Timetables July 2020			
To Airport – Monday to Friday			
Stop	Time	Time	Time
Wellington Station Stop C	6:30	6:45	7:15
Courtenay Place Stop C	6:45	7:00	7:30
Hastings Stop B	6:45	7:00	7:30
Kilbirnie Stop A	6:52	7:07	7:37
Wellington Airport	6:57	7:12	7:42
To Railway Station – Monday to Friday			
Stop	Time	Time	Time
Wellington Airport	7:00	7:30	8:00
Kilbirnie Stop A	7:07	7:37	8:07
Hastings Stop B	7:12	7:42	8:12
Courtenay Place Stop C	7:17	7:47	8:17
Wellington Station Stop C	7:30	8:00	8:30



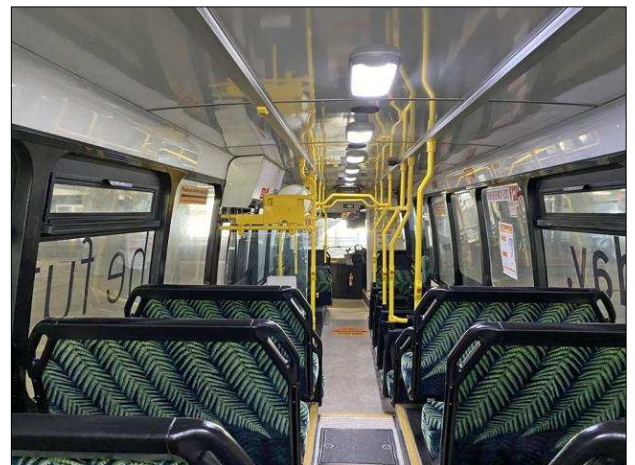


Above: The driver has the right of way (the 'B' light is lit) with 361 about to dive into the eastern portal of the Hataitai tunnel.

Below: Finally, arrival at the Railway Station terminus. With the tiny passenger load dispensed with the driver only has to change the display to *Not in Service* and then it's a short drive back to Kaiwharawhara depot to end his morning shift.

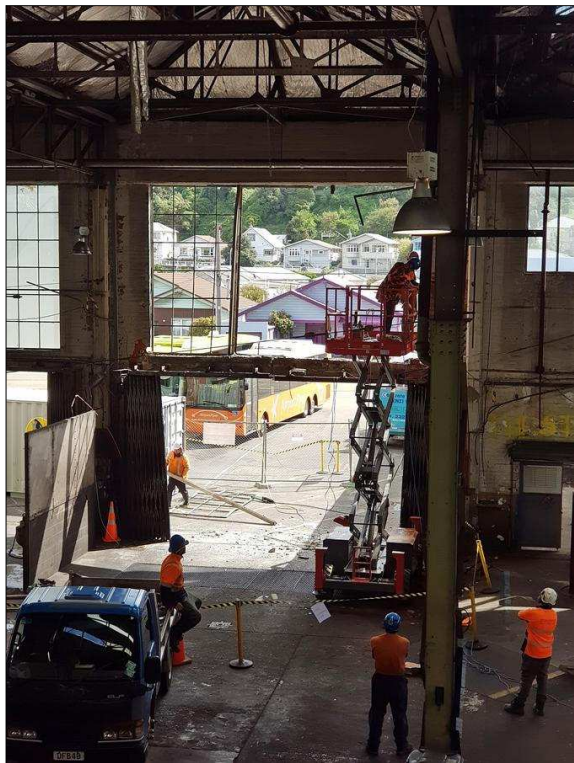


Right: The familiar Designline "trolleybus" interior. Other than the addition of a couple of Covid-19 stickers and a revised *Flyer* timetable the rest is how you remember it. Next month 361 will feature in the "Life and Times" series.

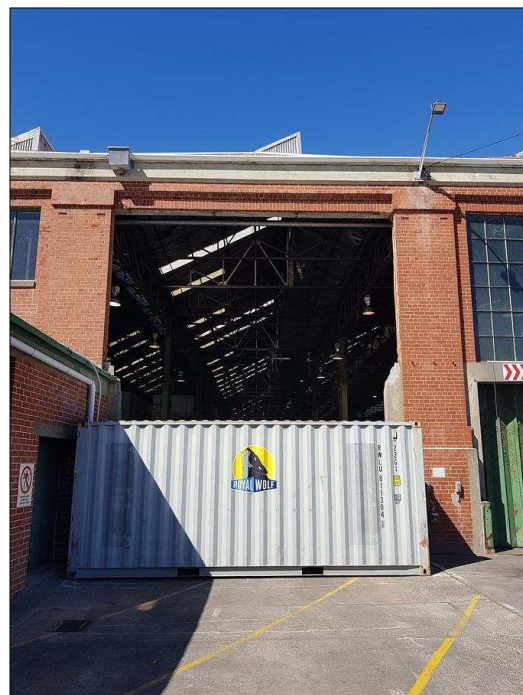


HERE AND THERE

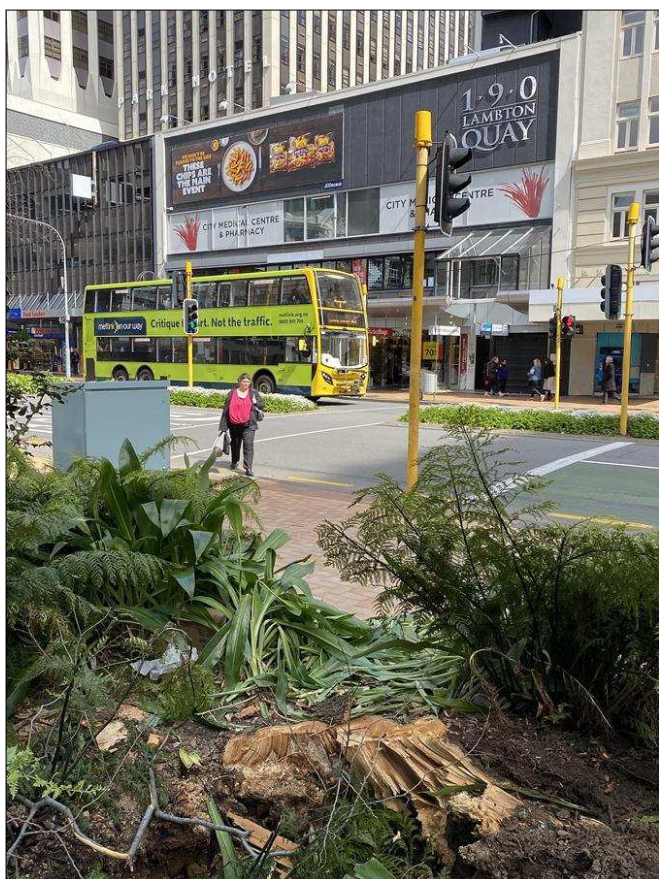
Right: As reported in October's Overhea(r)d, the Yutong demonstrator has now moved to Mana/Newlands for evaluation. On 29 September 2020 it was on driver training and photographed at the eastern end of Courtenay Place as staff took a short break. The bus has been numbered 7000 for the duration of the trial.



Left: On 24 September 2020 contractors were at work at Kilbirnie depot removing the window frame damaged by double-decker 5086 which tried to “fit a quart into a pint pot” so to speak on 16 September. The lintel below the frame was badly cracked by the collision.



Right: The frame and lintel had been removed by 29 September giving the depot greater ventilation. The access continued to be blocked by the container, though if the opening is left as it is there will be no risk of a further collision! Photos: Peter Coventry.



Left: Further to the media report on page 28, a large tree in Midland Park alongside Lambton Quay was blown over in high winds on 3 October. Fortunately no one was hurt and no damage caused other than to the traffic light power box alongside. The site was quickly restored and by 5 October there was just the stump, a hole in the ground and a new power box to indicate anything untoward had happened. NZ Bus ADL 5087 drifts past the scene on its long trip to Eastbourne.

Below: Three years have passed and Auckland “stand-in” 2165 still tells us that *My days are numbered, a new bus will be replacing me soon.* As comfortable as the bus may be Wellington bus users continue to wait for that “new bus”.





Left: Former Airport Flyer 2508, the first to be “repurposed” for other duties following the bottom falling out of the airport transportation market is still operating in its rather colour-clashing livery. Other examples that have had the AF orange partially covered are now in silver – not so 2508 which remains the odd man out as at 5 October when seen at the Railway Station bus interchange.

Right: A 100% electric bus, and This Bus is Electric – wording on two battery powered buses as they pass one another at the Railway Station bus terminus on 5 October. 3701 is waiting for the traffic lights to change so it can continue on to its final destination at Grenada Village, while 361 sneaks by at 10.15am to start the final morning service to the Airport. Two very different CRRC powered buses.



Left: Former Christchurch Redbus 699, a 2004 M.A.N., now NZ Bus 2310 continues to soldier on proclaiming the message “Downloading a new bus 23% complete” which it has done for well over two years. Perhaps by 2021 when some new buses arrive the “downloading” may finally be complete. The bright yellow former Go Wellington liveried bus departs the Railway Station terminus for the layover area on 8 October.

Right: A similar picture to that above but this time showing the livery change made to the Airport Flyer fleet. On 21 October, former AF 2506 turns at the Railway Station to begin a Route 22 to the University while 2509 waits for the traffic lights at the end of its morning shift on Airport duties before returning to Kaiwharawhara depot.



THE DAVID JONES COLLECTION – PART 2

This month we examine a selection of the second batch of B.U.T. trolleybuses, 49 to 81 that entered service in 1958.



Left: The thirty-three trolleybuses that comprised the second batch of B.U.T.s had a much different front end compared to the lantern windcreens of the ten Crossleys and B.U.T.s 11-48. They were built (as before) by Leyland Motors but this time the bodywork was by Metropolitan Cammell Carriage and Wagon Company. The electrical components were supplied by English Electric. In this view we find 49 approaching the Miramar terminus (just around the loop) in Darlington Road. The bus is about to turn in readiness for its trip back to the city. 49 was withdrawn in 1983.

Right: 50 stands in the yard at Karori depot. The pensioner flats behind the trolleybus were built on part of the original depot land. The photograph was taken before the dwellings were fenced off from the bus depot. 49 is exhibiting *Karori Mall* on its blind. This was the closest shopping centre to the depot. 50 saw service until 1985.



Left: We move now to Lyall Bay and a location that was featured on page 40 of last month's issue, Queens Drive. The driver of B.U.T. 51 has just pulled away from the bus stop and begins the right hand turn into Rua Street. Crossing 666 can be seen in the centre of the photograph. Also visible are the outbound wires crossing the intersection on the one-way wired section along Rua Street and Sutherland Road before reaching Queens Drive again.

Right: Another one-way section of overhead on the network was that in Dixon Street in the city centre. 52 and an unidentified Volvo head in the direction of the Railway Station. Just in view in the left background is Courtenay Place. 52 gave service until 1984.



Right: A quartet of buses led by B.U.T. 53 head along the north end of Stout Street just before reaching the Bunny Street intersection. The building on the right (no longer there) is where NZR buses left locally for Ngaio and Khandallah and was also the departure point for long distance services. Note the four wooden phone boxes, more relics of the past. Just above the Mk II AEC bus (behind 53) there's a glimpse of the overhead switch. It allowed one bus to turn left into Bunny Street or else to keep going and turn around at Rutherford House. This switch was a constant problem, mostly because of buses travelling too fast in Stout Street and hitting the switch at speed. There were lots of dewirements and damage to the overhead. It was only solved when they took out the Bunny Street overhead.



Left: Three different batches of B.U.T.s in woebegone condition are captured at Karori depot in 1984. 57, 94 and 35 all appear to have run their last and are missing their poles.

Below: What was probably an unusual sight at Mornington terminus – three trolleybuses in one view. 61 was being used for driver training and had become sandwiched between two Volvos. The driver of the front bus looks to be about to drop his poles to let the learner pass.





Left: A nice elevated view of 63 as it departs Aro Street terminus with a short Route 7 run to the Railway Station. Holloway Road runs away into the background up Aro Valley. Today this road is often choked with parked cars. 63 was early candidate for withdrawal only lasting until 1981.

Right: A scene that is hard to recognise today. 64 has dived towards the eastern end of Wakefield Street in the vicinity of Blair and Allan Streets and close to Wakefield Street depot. 64 is heading in the direction of the Central Fire Station. Today, traffic along this section of Wakefield Street is one-way and in the other direction. The bus had a life of twenty-four years and was withdrawn in 1984.



Left: Part of Route 15 to Hataitai via Roseneath was extremely scenic as witnessed in this view of 69 heading south along Grafton Road. Wellington Harbour is the backdrop with Matiu/Somes Island visible behind the poles. This particular section of Grafton Road was narrow and therefore one-way with returning traffic going via The Crescent. 69 was another bus in this second batch of B.U.T.s to be withdrawn in 1981.