

## 5.0 PERSONALITIES

A number of prominent figures in the development and operation of Melbourne's Tramways are regularly credited with either being the driving force behind one or other company or tramway undertaking, or having been critical to the history of tramways through technical innovation, political intervention or achievements in protecting and improving the system. The following is an incomplete list of some of the major players.

### 5.1 C H James

James was initially a North Melbourne grocer, but became a very successful but unscrupulous land speculator land developer and sponsor of the Fairfield Park Tramway. In addition to his Fairfield venture he proposed horse tram from Picnic Point to Cheltenham through his own large tracts of land and campaigned to have the West Riding of the Shire of Moorabbin established as a separate shire.<sup>197</sup>

### 5.2 George Duncan

**George Smith Duncan** (1852-1930) was a tramway and mining engineer. He was born in Dunedin New Zealand. Between 1879 and 1883, he was responsible for the development of the Dunedin cable tramway system. He was then appointed consulting engineer (and subsequently engineer) for the development of the Melbourne cable tramway system, a post he held until 1892. his brother James Duncan was also a shareholder of the Clifton Hill to Northcote & Preston Tramway Company.



Figure 88: George Smith Duncan, 1852-1930, chief engineer Melbourne Tramways Trust, Melbourne, c.1880<sup>198</sup>.

<sup>197</sup> Sparks Fly between Harold Sparks and David Abbott , <http://localhistory.kingston.vic.gov.au/htm/article/315.htm>

<sup>198</sup> Part of Bruce Howard collection 1936- Romance of Australian trams photograph collection [picture] ca. 1870-1976. National Library Australia .pic-vn4778575

### 5.3 Francis Boardman Clapp

Francis Boardman Clapp was a Melbourne businessman who established the Melbourne Omnibus Company in 1869 with William McCulloch and Henry Hoyt. Clapp was instrumental in introducing cable trams to Melbourne after becoming aware of the success of the San Francisco system. He bought the Victorian patents of Andrew Hallidie's inventions in 1877 and changed the name of his company to the Melbourne Tramway & Omnibus Company Limited (M.T. & O.C. Ltd). He remained managing director until the takeover of MT&OC in 1916, when the franchise ran out.<sup>199</sup>



Figure 89: Francis Boardman Clapp, 1833-1920.

### 5.4 F A McCarty

McCarty was a civil engineer, closely involved in the development of the Beaumaris Tramway Company.<sup>200</sup> He was Also consulting Engineer to other tramways such as the FNPTT, in the partnership of McCarty & Underwood and has been described as “one of the best known electrical engineers in Australia, and consulting engineer to the 'Complex Ores Co’”.<sup>201</sup>

### 5.5 Thomas Bent

Thomas Bent was a Land Boomer and politician, Treasurer and Premier, who is regarded as self serving in his public activities. He was instrumental in the approval of construction of the St. Kilda Brighton tramway, which directly benefited his bayside landholdings, overcoming department opposition from the Victorian Railways and using the term “Street Railway” to force them to build and operate tramways to Brighton and Sandringham. He was also involved in land deals associated with NMETL.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> J. Ann Hone, 'Clapp, Francis Boardman (1833 - 1920)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 3, Melbourne University Press, 1969, pp 397-398.

<sup>200</sup> Horse Trams From Cheltenham to Sandringham, <http://localhistory.kingston.vic.gov.au/htm/article/98.htm>

<sup>201</sup> Harnessing The Great Lake. The Mercury (Hobart) Saturday 10 September 1910 p.8

<sup>202</sup> Weston Bate, 'Bent, Sir Thomas (1838 - 1909)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 3, Melbourne University Press, 1969, pp 144-146.

## 5.6 George C Clauscen

Clauscen, who moved to Northcote around 1885, purchasing the well known property 'Sunnyside', was instrumental in establishing the Clifton Hill to Northcote and Preston Tram Company in 1888 and was well connected with major players of the land boom being a co-director with Benjamin Fink in at least one company. This was a very "land boom company" in that its purpose was to bring the cable tram line to Northcote which it did at the height of the boom.<sup>203</sup> He was ex- Mayor and also served on the Northcote Council between 1890 and 1892.<sup>204</sup>



Figure 90L George C Clauscen .<sup>205</sup>

## 5.7 Alexander Cameron

Cameron was the critical figure in recognising the potential of electric tramways and helping establish the Prahran & Malvern Tramways Trust , then going on to manage as the first full-time chairman of the newly constituted Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board ( MMTB). Chairman of the P&MTT for most of its existence and first chairman of the MMTB until 1935. He was responsible for setting the course for Melbourne's Tramways through his pioneering administration of tramways. In March 1923 Cameron went abroad to investigate traffic problems returning the next year with his long-held view confirmed that electric trams were superior to buses and that overhead wires were preferable to the underground conduit system. He continued to fight off criticisms that electric trams were noisy, that overhead wires disfigured the streets, and that trams caused congestion.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Victoria and its Metropolis: Past and Present..

<sup>204</sup> Lemon, Andrew. Northcote Side of the River. North Melbourne, Hargreen, 1983.

<sup>205</sup> Darebin Historical Encyclopaedia.

<sup>206</sup> Kathleen Thomson, 'Cameron, Alexander (1864 - 1940)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 7, [Melbourne University Press](http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A070534b.htm), 1979, pp 530-531. <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A070534b.htm>

## 5.8 Alan G. Monsborough

Alan Monsborough was the principal architect of the MMTB, responsible for several of the depots, substations and other buildings including the former headquarters building at 616 Little Collins Street, the Tramway Signal Cabin in Swanston St. and the Wattle Park Chalet.

## 5.9 Hector Bell

Hector H Bell was a City of Richmond Councillor, HTT Board Member, and was appointed to the MMTB in 1919. He became the second chairman of the MMTB, replacing Cameron in 1935, had been a founding member of the Hawthorn Tramway Trust and appointed to the MMTB upon its formation in 1919. He also travelled abroad (in 1938 to Britain, Germany, America and Canada) to study the latest trends in transport management and was instrumental in modernising the fleet of trams and busses, and replacing the remaining cable trams.<sup>207</sup>

## 5.10 Sir Robert Risson

Sir Robert Risson was Chairman of the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board from 1949 to 1970. He was head of the Brisbane City Council (BCC) Transport Department, where he developed his tramway administration skills before taking on the role as Chairman of the MMTB in October 1949 and became its champion in a period when most Australian Cities were eliminating trams. Risson's strong personality saw him clash with unions as well as politicians, and while he championed the trams at a time when they were seen as out-dated, he also was known for introducing ticket inspection in Victoria. Premier Rupert Hamer, who strongly disliked Risson, eventually got rid of him. When he retired from the MMTB in 1970, he became the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Transportation Committee until 1978



*Figure 91: Major-General R.J.H. Risson. Australian Army.*

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<sup>207</sup> King & Wilson, 2007, p.10.



Figure 92: Chairmen of the MMTB 1919-70, *Running Journal* 6 no 3 Dec 1969.

### 5.11 Clarrie O'Shea

Clarence Lyell O'Shea, Clarrie O'Shea (1906 - 1988) was Victorian State Secretary of the Australian Tramway & Motor Omnibus Employees' Association who influenced the direction of the union in campaigning for workers' rights and privileges, particularly in the areas of shorter working hours, improved leave and sick pay allowances, and better retirement provisions. He campaigned against one-man operation on trams, and was famously gaoled in 1969 over failure to answer summonses and pay fines imposed by the Conciliation and Arbitration Court. This resulted in a general strike of over 500,000 workers across Australia on Friday, 16 May, and subsequent rolling stoppages, particularly in public transport.<sup>208</sup>



Figure 93: Clarrie O'Shea, State Library Victoria Image Number: hp004050 The Herald & Weekly Times Limited.

<sup>208</sup> Brian McKinley, (1979) *A Documentary History of the Australian Labor Movement 1850-1975*,

## 5.12 Lou Di Gregorio

Lou Di Gregorio commenced with the tramways at Essendon tram depot in 1965. He became secretary of the tram union in November 1989 stepping down in February 2010. In 1985 as a union delegate, Mr Di Gregorio won his first serious fight, keeping the tram route from Footscray to Moonee Ponds open. "The [Cain] government made a decision to close it," he says. "I ran a very hard campaign, all the MPs in Labor in Parliament, I forced them to either support us or to not support the tram line."



Figure 94: Clay Lucas *The Age* November 13, 2010. Photo: Vince Caligiuri