

Under the Wires



*The Axe has finally **Fallen***

Remembering Wellington's trolleybuses,
past and present

Compiled by
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CONTENTS

OVERHEA(r)D	3
THE FERRYMEAD TROLLEYBUS COLLECTION	4
MORE TROLLEYBUS ANECDOTES	6
MORE ROUTE 10 DIVERSIONS	7
NEW BUSES FOR WELLINGTON	9
MOBILE BILLBOARD CORNER	11
FEEDBACK	12
DECOMMISSIONING NEWS	15
TROLLEYBUS TRIO IN ADELAIDE ROAD	17
TROLLEYBUS TERMINAL TRIP	19
SALZBURG EXTENSIONS	22
METLINK'S TRIBUTE TO THE TROLLEYBUSES	23
REMEMBERING AOTEA QUAY TERMINUS	25
NEW PLYMOUTH – 50 YEARS AGO	25
THEN AND NOW IN LAMBTON QUAY	26
KILBIRNIE VISIT	28
PORTRAIT OF A DESIGNLINE	31
THE LAST DAY OF VOLVO OPERATION	32
CAME THE LAST FRIDAY OF OPERATION	35
CAME THE LAST MONDAY OF OPERATION	39
GOVERNMENT WON'T INTERVENE TO SAVE TROLLEYS	41
POLES APART	42

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OVERHEA(r)D - Issue 50

As you read this, trolleybuses have finally been snuffed out in Wellington after sixty-eight years of continuous service. It all came to an end on 31 October (or actually a few minutes past midnight on 1 November) as decided by the Greater Wellington Regional Council. And so welcome to the **black** edition.

Author and historian Graham Stewart pointed out that on Monday 23 October it was 117 years since the first electric tram started running in New Zealand, at Maori Hill, Dunedin. One hundred and seventeen years of electric traction on the urban streets of New Zealand has now passed into history with the closure of Wellington's trolleybuses. Graham wondered if there was going to be a ceremonial last journey through the streets! Sadly not, just the last service bus which for the record was 384. There weren't even any trolleybuses operating on 23 October as it was a public holiday!

I have decided in view of its significance to publish a separate "last day" edition. This will enable me to also include a much wider range of photographs to cover this important event. This "last day" extra edition is planned to be released toward the end of the first week of November so watch out for it in your "In" box.

Earlier in October, the ONE News 6pm television news-hour bulletin on 9 October featured a small item on the pending end of Wellington's trolleybuses. It 'starred' Go Wellington driver Peter Morgan at the wheel of 383. Peter's mother was also aboard and recalled the many happy years she had been travelling on the trolleys. Clearly Peter was also going miss driving them. I happened to be outside Kilbirnie depot as 383 passed by in Onepu Road and noticed a large film camera aboard. The cameraman is just visible through the third window behind the driver and of course was wearing the obligatory hi-viz jacket. The 2:11 news item can be viewed at:

<https://www.tvnz.co.nz/one-news/new-zealand/fond-farewell-begins-wellingtons-beloved-trolley-buses>



The BYD (Build Your Dreams) battery bus that has been featured in these pages and trialled on Wellington's roads during the winter left Kilbirnie depot on 9 October to be shipped back to China.

Radio New Zealand's 'Checkpoint' programme featured a short clip on the end of the trolleybuses – *Last Loop for Wellington's Iconic Trolleybuses* just before 6pm on 10 October. The 3:05 segment was also streamed live on YouTube and can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdlT5IMxAms>

Like the television item the night before it was what I would call a "pleasant but once over lightly" clip unfortunately with inaccuracies, particularly with respect to the claim that all the overhead would be taken down in three weeks!

Friday 13 October will be notable in our transport history as the day the very last trolleybus in Wellington received a Certificate of Fitness. 347 passed its inspection and received a six-month certificate expiring on 15 April 2018. In reality the bus will only be able to be used for eleven days service before 'the end'. What will become of it then is anyone's guess. Peter Coventry, Bus and Yard Quality Supervisor at Kilbirnie depot, marks the occasion. The trolley is wearing *The Evil Within 2* advertisement, examples of which can be seen on [page 11](#).



The last weekend before closure, 28/29 October, saw a flurry of news releases on radio <http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/national/342501/trolley-bus-supporters-hope-for-11th-hour-relieve> and online about a possible eleventh hour reprieve for the trolleybuses. Suddenly some of the new coalition government MPs had realised that a perfectly operational bus system was about to be closed with its overhead and its associated infrastructure removed. See [page 38](#).

However, an item on the 11.00am radio news on 31 October confirmed trolleybus supporters' worst fears; the new Minister of Transport, Phil Twyford announced that the government would not be intervening to save the trolleybuses because the costs would be too great and that tens of millions of dollars would be required to reverse the decision to axe them. See [page 41](#).

Meanwhile, Metlink, the public transport operating arm of the Greater Wellington Regional Council put the following message on their website: "*Ride the last trolley bus tonight. The very last run of our trolleybuses will be tonight, so get in quick to ride our trolleys one last time! Come and farewell these transportation troupers while we put them to rest, celebrating their long life, while welcoming a new era of sustainable transport. The last route using the trolleys is the number 3 from Karori to Kilbirnie, 11:50pm departure from Karori and arriving at Kilbirnie at 12:18am.*" What "sustainable transport" they meant I am not sure as the trolleybuses are being replaced by approximately forty polluting five-year-old diesels surplus to requirements from Auckland. At least Metlink rightly called them "troupers" (dependable workers). However why withdraw dependable workers with lots of life left in them and replace them with diesels. Such is this Council's wisdom!

A small group of about thirty trolleybus enthusiasts (see [page 13](#)) gathered in Willis Street at 6.00pm on Tuesday 31 October primarily to enjoy a last ride before the power was finally turned off. As it turned out news reporters from two television channels appeared and interviewed various speakers at the event. Short items appeared on the late bulletins of both broadcasters that night. The one which appeared on TV3 can be found at <http://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2017/10/wellington-s-iconic-trolley-buses-to-go.html>

I hope you enjoy what is likely to be the last comprehensive edition of UTW but perhaps it can continue though with less content.

Alan

Front Cover: The end wasn't far away and the axe was finally ready to fall on trolleybus use in public service in New Zealand. On 29 September 2017, 350 is passing the aptly named shop at the intersection of Riddiford Street and Adelaide Road in Newtown while working a diverted Route 10 service from Newtown Park to the Railway Station. Wallace Street was closed to trolleybuses during the day due to road works which resulted in diversions along Adelaide Road, Basin Reserve, Cambridge/Kent Terrace and Courtenay Place. Incidentally, *The Axe* is a furniture and furnishings shop.

The collection is operated by the Tramway Historical Society at the Ferrymead Heritage Park in Christchurch. It contains buses from every New Zealand town that operated them; Auckland, New Plymouth, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. We believe we are unique in having vehicles from every town in our own country. Our collection is modest compared to places like Sandtoft in the U.K, however, we have ten buses in various states of completeness, some being bodies only through to restored and operable vehicles.

Auckland Buses:

Farmers Trolleybus No.4:

1938 Leyland TB chassis DSC and Cousins B37D Chassis No: 17884

In 1938 the Farmers' Trading Company purchased four Leyland chassis which were bodied by Auckland firm DSC & Cousins. They were put onto Auckland's first trolleybus line which was an anti-clockwise loop in the central city. This connected Queen Street (the main shopping street) with the Farmers' department store. Central Auckland is located in a steep sided valley and the trolleybus enabled people to conveniently reach the Farmers' store situated in Hobson Street and then return them down to Queen Street afterwards. The buses were unusual with a sliding rear door and no front door at all. Even though they were owned by the department store operation was contracted to the Auckland Transport Board. Later in their working lives the ATB assumed ownership and ran these vehicles till 1967. The Farmers service was a free bus and as a consequence the buses never carried a fare paying passenger. Bus No.4 resides in our trolleybus shed and awaits refurbishment. It is currently inoperable.

Queen Street Shuttle 105:

This bus is a 1958 BUT RETB1 with Park Royal bodywork. It was only used on the dedicated central city shuttle between the Railway Station and Karangahape Road – opposite ends of the CBD. As the bus was used by short distance commuters it had reduced seating. It was in service until the system was abandoned in 1980. The bus is operable but is in the condition it came off the road and is awaiting a major body refurbishment.

Auckland 105:

1958 BUT RETB1/2 Park Royal B38D Chassis No.526099

This bus was built in 1958 to operate the central city shuttle between Karangahape Rd, Britomart and the Railway Station. The fleet of thirty-four had reduced seating to allow for more standees as this was a short route and most passengers would be aboard for a maximum of five minutes. For a good portion of their lives they provided a free service. 105 is complete but the body is very tired and will need a full refurbishment before entering service,

New Plymouth Bus:

New Plymouth No.3:

1950 Crossley Empire New Plymouth City Council B42D Chassis No. Thought to be 94313

This bus was built in 1950 and was one of four buses used to replace the route to Westown that until then had been operated by trams. It was built on a Crossley Empire chassis and along with ten buses in Wellington are believed to be the last trolleybuses built under the Crossley arquee. Bus No.3 operated until the 7th October 1967 and upon closure of the New Plymouth system the bus was obtained for Ferrymead. The body was built locally in New Plymouth and is almost identical to the ten Crossleys that operated in Wellington; the New Plymouth City Council using Wellington plans. No.3 is complete and restored but out of service at this stage. Photo: Alan Roi.



Wellington Buses:

Wellington 103:

1964 BUT RETB1 NZMB B42D Chassis No: SO9917

Wellington 103 is one of the last first generation trolleys built supposedly to replace the last trams in 1964 although the former last tram route (Newtown-Zoo to the City) was not electrified until 1985. At this stage Wellington City Transport ordered thirty-eight new trolleybuses from their preferred supplier Leyland. By this stage most British trolleybus systems were closing down and the work was given to Scammell Lorries, Leyland's specialist heavy vehicle supplier. English Electric supplied the electrical gear. The first nineteen buses (82-100) were allowed to be imported with complete bodies (MCCW) with the remaining nineteen (101-119), including our bus, were bodied by NZ Motor Bodies in Petone. Bus 103 is complete and operates regularly.

Wellington 258:

1986 VolvoB58 Coachwork International B40D Chassis No: 17064

This bus is one of the second generation trolleybuses used in Wellington, and is mounted on a Volvo B58 chassis. These buses replaced the majority of the BUT trolleys in Wellington between 1981 and 1986. 258 was a 1986 model and was one of the last four Volvo trolleybuses in service. This bus is believed to be the last Volvo on the streets of Wellington, when it was taken by the current author for a trip to Miramar to familiarise him with bus before it came to Christchurch. 258 has a few minor issues being sorted out but is being gradually prepared to operate at Ferrymead in Stagecoach livery.

Left: Former Wellington Volvo 258 photographed at Ferrymead in September 2014 by Nick Stoneman.



Christchurch Trolleybuses:

Christchurch 209:

1931 Thornycroft/English Electric. Boon And Co B38D Chassis No: 141

Built in 1931, 209 was one of six English Electric buses (207 to 212) used to open the first trolleybus route in Christchurch to North Beach. This replaced a much worn out tram route going through a lightly populated area. As English Electric did not manufacture bus chassis this was subcontracted to Thornycroft. The bus was retired in 1956 and along with bus 216 used as holiday accommodation at Oaro on the Kaikoura Coast. It is purely a body shell on wheels. It is hoped to eventually restore this bus to 1930s condition. This will be a major job but the bus is under cover in our trolleybus shed.

Christchurch 210:
1931 Thornycroft/English Electric. Boon And Co B38D Chassis No: 139



210 is also one of the abovementioned first batch. It was also retired in 1956. The body was stripped of electrics and seating and sold to North Canterbury Transport in Kaiapoi. It was intended to use the chassis as the basis of a logging jinker and the body as a staff lunchroom. However, nothing happened and in 1964 it was "rediscovered" and given to the Society. Over a long period it has been restored to full working order in its latter day 1950s livery, and was relicensed for road use after a period of forty-three years. 210 is believed to be one of the oldest working trolleybuses in world.

Left: On 13 June 2004, 210 crosses Taranaki Street during the 100 Years Electric Public Transport festival held in Wellington.
Photo: Alan Wickens.

Christchurch 216:

In 1934, the trams to Richmond ceased running and were replaced with four Ransomes Sims and Jefferies trolleybuses. These vehicles were more modern looking than the three English Electric buses despite there being only three years between them. They were also retired in 1956 and 216 joined 209 at Oaro. As with 209 it is purely a shell on wheels and is also awaiting restoration.

Dunedin Trolleybuses:

Dunedin 5:

1951 BUT RETB1 NZMB B40D Chassis No: 404351

Dunedin 5 was built in 1951 and was one of the earlier buses to enter service. It was built with a NZMB body and was one of the last trolleys to operate in the streets of Dunedin in March 1982. Upon retirement it was purchased by Mr Earl Ewers to be used on a proposed tourist circuit on part of the former Opoho route. When this scheme came to nothing the bus was donated to the Tramway Historical Society and is in store at Ferrymead. No. 5 is complete but has not run since leaving Dunedin and will require a full inspection before operating. This trolleybus is our only bus not normally available for viewing.

Dunedin 79:

1962 BUT RETB1 Dunedin City Transport B40D Chassis No: 522622

This bus is complete and has done a lot of running on the Ferrymead line; it has been withdrawn for a refurbishment and repaint. Though partly stripped, it is still mobile as there is not room to side line the bus. At the time of writing it is close to being shifted into the spray booth in the tram barns for painting. This was the last and highest numbered bus to enter service in Dunedin in 1962. Like No.5 it was in service until the end in March 1982.

VISITING THE COLLECTION AT FERRYMEAD:

Trolleybuses run on the first Sunday of each month which is advertised as 'Steam Sunday'. This is promoted as the best day to come to the Heritage Park. Our friends in the Railway run a steam locomotive and all the exhibitors do their best to be open. Normally the tramway is operated by our 1881 Kitson steam tram locomotive but unfortunately this is in need of a boiler replacement and will be out of action for a while. The trolleybus shed is also open on most Fridays and Saturdays. In addition we run trolleybuses on event weekends such as Easter Sunday and Monday, and can operate them on other occasions by request. There are costs involved and a donation is appreciated. To contact us please approach our Secretary by writing to P.O. Box 1126 Christchurch or emailing the secretary at: secretary@ferrymeadtramway.org.nz This is particularly advisable for those visiting from out of town.

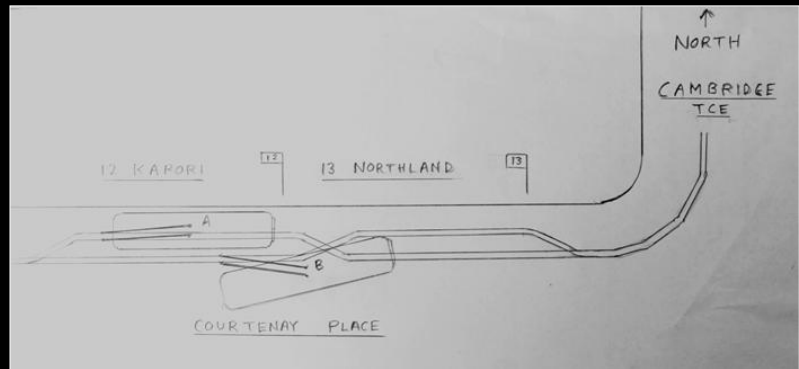


Left: Preserved New Plymouth Crossley 3 and Wellington City Transport 101 photographed at Ferrymead early in October 2017.
Photo: Alan Roi.

MORE TROLLEYBUS ANECDOTES

Ronald Mayes

It was 1962, and we upper 6th formers had walked from Wellington College to Courtenay Place and were waiting in the 12 Karori trolleybus (A in the diagram) for its departure homewards. Courtenay Place was the terminus for this and the 13 Northland service and the buses would depart eastwards, turn left into Cambridge Terrace and left again into Wakefield Street. The Northland bus was timed to depart some time after the Karori one and travel via Molesworth Street and Tinakori Road while the Karori route was via the short cut up Bowen Street. An unusual but practical arrangement for the overhead wires with leading and trailing turnouts and a crossover enabled buses to overtake each other. The Karori bus would activate the first turnout and stop in its allocated place and often the Northland one would arrive later, overtake it and park in its position, its poles out of the way of the Karori bus when it was to depart. On this occasion our driver, not known to have the sharpest of minds, had correctly taken the inside wires but seemed concerned when the Northland bus (B) went past and parked in its usual place, its poles also, having taken the crossover, on the left. He got out of the bus, studied the wires and all the poles and proceeded to take his poles off the inner wires and place them on the outer ones. Everyone watched his actions, but said not a word when he got back into his seat and prepared to depart. As he overtook the Northland bus the inevitable happened and poles flew in all directions, everyone in the bus cheered and our confused driver had to get out again and place both buses' poles back under the correct wires. The Northland bus' driver just shrugged his shoulders and carried on reading his Evening Post.



Around 1960 I was riding in a trolleybus from Karori. Downtown (I am sure the No. 12 route ran via Featherston Street then, but I may be wrong.) Inching forward in heavy traffic, our driver frequently had to stop. Once, when the traffic cleared, he attempted to start off but the bus wouldn't move – he soon found that it had stalled on a very short isolated section. Not a problem, he asked for help from the few male passengers on board and they soon had it pushed beyond that isolated section. Now, Health and Safety rules would probably preclude that being done and it would mean waiting for the tow truck to come to its rescue.

On visits to Wellington in the years after the introduction of the Designline buses we enjoyed travels around various routes. On one occasion I encountered a lady driver. She was of "a certain age", complete with blue-rinse perm and bifocal specs and probably a little older than me. She was fairly short and could only reach the nearest third of the large steering wheel but handled that big bus through the congested streets with amazing skill. A car stopped on a bus stop didn't bother her; she just gave a gentle toot of the horn and waved to its driver as he took off. Her handling of the bus was so good I travelled much further along the route than I intended and when I eventually got off I thanked her for the excellent, smooth ride. The smile she gave me melted my heart! We encountered her on one or two later occasions, but the last time I saw her she was driving a "not in service" trolleybus away from the railway station. I still refer to her as my "Wellington girlfriend."

Later, staying at Karori West, I took an early evening trolleybus to town (I still have the ticket – No. 1!) Driving it was a young man who would have been at home driving powerful sports or racing cars. I was the only passenger for much of the trip. He used all of the bus's power to accelerate away from stops, kept up as much speed as was possible and steering very smoothly, but slowed carefully for all of the corners on the route – there was no risk of dewirement. In town he would still drive very briskly, braking at the last moment firmly but smoothly to a stop, very close behind another bus. Another enjoyable trip and I praised his skills and thanked him for a fun-filled trip.

Right: 368, en route to Lyall Bay, photographed on 16 October 2013 travelling east along Karori Road and approaching Marsden Village. Photo: Alan Wickens.



Left: The first trolleybus to call at Pleasant Point! Former Dunedin City Transport 77 at Pleasant Point Railway (near Timaru, South Island) on 16 May 1982. Ian Little was in the process of moving the bus from Dunedin to his museum at Foxton. 77 was amongst the final batch of RETB1 B.U.T. Leyland-built trolleybuses delivered to Dunedin. It went into service in 1962 and lasted until closure in 1982. The photograph was taken by the Pleasant Point Museum's Archivist, **Mark Denne**.

MORE ROUTE 10 DIVERSIONS – 27/28 SEPTEMBER 2017



Due to road works in Wallace Street on 26/27/28 September 2017, Route 10 services to/from Newtown Park were again routed via Courtenay Place, Kent/Cambridge Terraces, Basin Reserve and Adelaide Road.

On the morning of 27 September, 332 was photographed at work in Courtenay Place.

Left: Approaching Courtenay Central, driver Greg Green has no-one to stop for.

Right: 332 seen at the eastern end of Courtenay Place on its return trip from Newtown Park to the Railway Station.



Left: One final view of 332 at the eastern end of Courtenay Place with Greg making yet another run out to Newtown Park. An unidentified trolley follows and is on the left wire and returning to Kilbirnie depot, not in service. Incidentally, a long wait in Courtenay Place for the balancing half-hourly service revealed that the driver had traversed the normal route via Taranaki, Wallace and John Streets contrary to instructions!



**367 TO/FROM
NEWTOWN PARK
ON 28 SEPTEMBER**

Left: Having just travelled part way around Basin Reserve, 367 has turned left out of Rugby Street into Adelaide Road to continue towards Newtown and its Newtown Park destination. This overhead is normally the domain of Routes 1 and 3 (when worked by trolleybuses!) but for several days toward the end of September the half-hourly Route 10 also came this way.



Right: 367 returns to the city centre but instead of turning left into John Street at this location has continued straight ahead from Riddiford Street into Adelaide Road. Route 11, which also uses John Street as its route back to the city was dieselised as half of the road in a part of Wallace Street was blocked off to traffic.



Left: Finally, an off-side view of 367 as it leaves Courtenay Place and has started to cross Taranaki Street towards Manners Street on its way back to the Railway Station. The overhead in the upper right hand corner of the photograph is the normal route of the 10 and 11. One final diversion for Route 10 services occurred on 30 October. See page 40.

NEW BUSES FOR WELLINGTON

Optare has secured its biggest ever Australasian export order. It has signed a NZ\$40m (£21m) deal to supply 114 buses to Tranzit Group, one of New Zealand's largest public transport operators. The agreement will see the manufacturer provide 114 Metrocity buses to the New Zealand capital, Wellington, and the surrounding region. The first of these buses are due to be delivered in March 2018 and the entire order is set to be fulfilled by July 2018. President of Optare, Graham Belgum, said: "This is a significant step for Optare as part of our international export strategy and signals the exciting growth opportunities available to us in Australasia. Further, it recognises our continued innovation in lightweight products that use fuel efficient and environmentally friendly technologies." MD of Tranzit Group, Paul Snelgrove, said: "A team of us travelled the world to find the ideal lightweight solution (12-tonne GVM) for New Zealand roads. We were impressed with the lightweight design of the Metrocity combined with the excellent passenger capacities it offers. The design's reputation for excellent performance with regards to fuel efficiency particularly appealed to us. "In addition, the Metrocity provided us both a small and medium sized vehicle option 10.1m and 10.8m respectively, with identical body and running gear. The 10.1m Metrocity, with a shorter wheelbase is ideal for travelling through some of Wellington's narrow streets and hilly terrain. Overall, we were impressed with Optare's approach and willingness to work in partnership; it was a no-brainer decision for us."

Bus and Coach Buyer – 27 September 2017



Left: In this picture it's not so much a case of new buses, rather "hand-me-downs" from the NZ Bus Onehunga depot in Auckland, with the operating name of *metrolink*. During October groups of around ten buses were driven to the Capital over the four weekends. Sitting in the sun outside Kilbirnie depot on 2 October are two seven-year-old Scania's with Designline bodies; 2165 and 2161. In the background 360 has just returned to the depot and has passed "the enemy".

A total of forty-one buses were expected at Kilbirnie from Auckland.

Right: On the same day another group of Scania trolleybus replacements soak up the sun outside Kilbirnie depot





Left: 341 climbs along Waitoa Road towards Hataitai tunnel with a late morning service from Miramar to the Railway Station on 2 October. A glimpse of Cook Strait can be seen in the distance. It was disappointing to see so many diesel operated workings not only on Route 2 but also on the other wired routes. No doubt this was a sign of the times.

Right: Despite what was said above, 332 was another trolleybus that was spotted on Route 2 and in this view catches the early afternoon sunshine in Lambton Quay on 2 October. This was the lowest numbered trolleybus still regularly working during the final month.



Left: The highest numbered trolleybus still at work was 387, and is seen in this photograph leaving Customhouse Quay and moving into Willis Street with a lunchtime service to Island Bay on 2 October. The small print on the banner says *Life Changes We'll be There*. Life does change but the trolleybuses **won't** be there, they've been well and truly stitched up.

Right: Further to last month's *Mobile Billboards* column, 335 has also had the *Blade Runner 2049* ad makeover, joining sisters 351 and 352. It has just departed the Interchange bound for Miramar on 2 October.



Mobile Billboard corner

WHERE NEW ADVERTISING ON TROLLEYBUSES IS SHOWCASED



Left: Surprisingly new ads continued to appear despite their limited life. The latest seen on 2 October was on the side of 349 laying over at the Interchange and advertising a new PS4 game *The Evil Within 2*.



Right: Similarly adorned is 380 seen here at the Interchange boarding passengers heading in the direction of Newtown Park on 6 October.



Left: Yet **another** Flick power company ad, in fact the eighth! This has been quite a promotion especially as all the advertisements are individual. 366 enjoys a few minutes rest at the Interchange before heading out of the city on another duty on 6 October.



Right: Also recorded at the Interchange on 6 October is this rear view of 384 and 379 'cosying up to one another' as reader and bus operator **Tom Dowling** put it. Tom adds, "I was actually the driver of 384, not that this matters. I think I could have gotten the pole heads about a 100mm closer if I'd really tried." Tom also has a YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd4GpqEZG6K4fWMMp0bNJSQ?view_as=subscriber They show trolleybus operations from a driver's perspective. If you like drivers' eye view videos you will enjoy them.



Left: Until 10 October I hadn't seen 344 on the road, however on my monthly visit to Kilbirnie I discovered it in the depot wearing one of the *Evil Within 2* advertisements. I was unable to establish if it was still a 'runner'.



What readers have been telling me...



"Thanks Alan, another great read. Perhaps there is still time yet for the trolleybuses to be saved – if the drawings Andrew gave you are to be believed, they aren't going to start breaking up the 'core' of the network in the city until much later this year. I certainly hope they can be saved – if not, someone needs to give the GWRC a Brickbat Award for Supreme Stupidity and Insensibility, for destroying Wellington's clean, green trolleybuses because they don't fit in with their plans and replacing them with dirty diesels and only slightly-less-dirty hybrids. And on the subject of hybrids, I cannot say I'm too keen on Wrightspeed 362 either, with its ugly roof-mounted housing and turbine. To think this is the future...?" Alastair Cross.

"One can only hope sanity will somehow prevail. Once the trolleybuses are parked and management begins to dismantle the overhead it will never come back. This Chinese battery bus system is not proven and no-one knows how long it will last and how dependable it will be. Toronto scrapped a good trolleybus system in favour of natural gas buses which proved to be a disaster. Hopefully between public interest and joint political parties the trolleybuses can be saved. Best of luck. Tom Shepherd

"Probably your best issue yet Alan. So sad it's the close of the system. Looks like everything is well planned as far as removal is concerned. Interesting the way they are dismantling it to ensure it can't be easily re-instated." Garry Ford.

"Many thanks indeed for continuing to produce each month the excellent editions of "Under the Wires" plus the special edition for the Omnibus Society's farewell tour. It is a fantastic record of Wellington's trolleybus operation both now and in the past. How you find the time to produce it is amazing. I have enough difficulty finding the time to read it!" John Zebedee.

"Thank you Alan, when I first read your covering e-mail I thought it might set the tone of the 44-page edition of UTW that followed. Surprising it was not to be, bearing in mind it's 21 operating days to go, the general mood remained cheerful in the face of adversity except for the information on decommissioning the overhead wiring and political justification for withdrawing the trolleybus fleet. The present day to day photos with the wonderful nostalgic selection keep the balance as always. The powers that be could save the situation at the eleventh hour and would be a master stroke of common sense in this environmentally friendly world we live in. Wellington will join the rank of locations that once operated trolleybuses, people will only remember the dewirements ("when the poles came off") as they do here. It is annoying because it highlights a flaw that is not regular event but like you said is fascinating to witness. I applaud you for taking a break this month, it would be tempting to walk the streets at every opportunity until the end of October just for that special shot! In the UK our government has thrown a lot of money at bus operators with the Green Bus Fund to encourage alternative propulsion in battery electric, hybrid or as in Nottingham bio-gas. No one knows the length of the working life of these vehicles. No matter how technical they are, emissions are still present at various levels especially hybrid buses. Trolleybuses and light rail only have emissions at the power generation source unless you have hydro-electric power such as you have in New Zealand. I've got to enter the caption competition, too good to miss. Driver – "You know the trolleys are coming off?" Passenger – "What will that mean to us?" Driver – "Higher fares and smoky air but what do I know!" You have kept us informed of the whole trolleybus scene at every stage and I am sure you will continue until the last snip of wire." Phil Waters.

"Thanks for another splendid issue! I'm hoping your new government will see the light and undo this terrible decision." William Blust.

"I cross my fingers to keep the little chance to survive. This year, we started to operate sixteen new battery trolleybuses and are very satisfied. Would be nice to see it in Wellington!"

Jiří Kohout, Head of the Transportation Department, Czechoslovakia.

As always, congratulations on another excellent issue of UTW. The highlights for me are; Page 3-The proposal to build a light rail line from the railway station to the airport and the cost of building this. If this line was to follow the present route covered by the Airport Flyer, isn't most of this already underneath trolleybus overhead? Soon this will be pulled down, with the possibility that trolleybuses might be replaced by a vehicle that will need tracks, with all the cost and disruption that will ensue, as well putting up more overhead wiring! Re the battery-electric buses operating in Nashville; in the October, 2017 issue of Buses I read that Los Angeles tried five BYD electric buses for a period of just under 12 months. Limited range and poor hill climbing ability saw BYD purchase them back. I have seen Angus McIntyre's video, and I agree that it is well worth a look. Page 4- The top photo on that page. Pages 5 and 6 – All of the photos. Page 7- The photo of 331 and 332; it seems almost insane to withdraw trolleybuses that have been in service for not even 10 years. Pages 10 and 11- I agree 100% with the sentiments of Phil Waters and Alan Smith about UTW. I also liked the cartoon at the bottom of the latter page. Page 12- Bikes On Buses; that E-Can insures all bikes carried up to the tune of \$1,000. Page 16- The bottom two lines. In some cities, when trolleybuses replaced diesel buses, ridership levels increased, as well as the price of properties en route. Page 18- The final paragraph of the section headed Conclusion. Pages 19 and 20- A look back at Volvo's 234-237, particularly the one of 236 and its broken pole. Pages 21 and 22- Diversions on Route 10. I wonder if any other city is home to a cricket ground located inside a roundabout? Page 23- The photo of 340 performing a rare turn. Page 24- The photo of 377. Pages 25 and 26- More Colourful Crossleys, particularly the one of 1 on Dufferin Street and of 6 in Kilbirnie yard; the letters "in" appear to be missing in "Wellington City Transport". Page 27- This reader certainly goes "ape" over Wellington's trolleybuses! Also, the Kowhai blossom alongside 369. Page 31- 50 Years Ago- Derby 237 is the only survivor of a batch of eight (236-43) fitted with Charles Roe bodywork. If I am not mistaken, 237 is fitted with automatic acceleration equipment which was salvaged from 236. These were my favourite trolleybuses to have operated in my home town, and in my opinion 237 still looks quite modern, but then maybe I am biased! It is a shame that they served the town for just seven years. These were the last batch of trolleybuses built in the U.K. with only rear open platform bodywork. I remember them as being quite fast with excellent acceleration, compared with other trolleybuses in the Derby fleet. In the mid 1960s, Derby was home to the longest trolleybus route in the U.K.; this was a combination of cross town services 11, 22, 31 and 41. At this point I would like to say thanks to my mother, who encouraged my interest in trolleybuses,



and to this day remains a trolleybus fan. Page 32- The photo of 335. Page 33-Developments In Linz. The word that springs to mind when looking at this vehicle is Wow! – at a quarter of the price of a comparable tram. Page 34- The panoramic views alongside 383 and 349 – is Wellington’s trolleybus system the most scenic in the world? Page 35- Regarding the closure of the Dunedin system; could I respectfully state that the days of the week shown are wrong? March 29th/30th/31st in 1982 were on a Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, not a Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Page 38-338 passing the Leyland Olympian. Page 40- Trolleybus Anecdotes, particularly the one about the de-wiring when turning left into Willis Street, as well the picture of the switching resistor button. Finally, in the past I have commented about the coincidences between the Bradford and Wellington systems (the two longest running right hand drive systems, as well as opening on June 20th, in 1911 and 1949, respectively). Here are two more; both closed in the Spring (unless there is an eleventh hour u-turn in Wellington); also Bradford opened on a Tuesday, and Wellington will close on a Tuesday. Tom Douce.

“Very many thanks for your interesting e-mail together with the latest UTW. Excellent as ever and I found the article by Mike Flinn very interesting and pertinent. Again, love all the excellent photos. Let’s keep everything crossed for common sense to prevail!” Peter Blears.

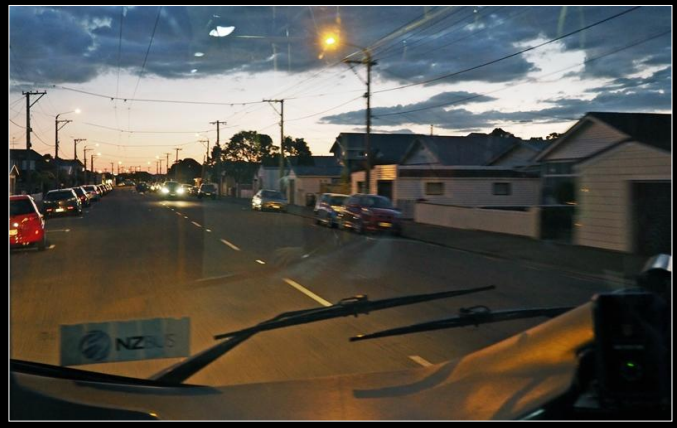
“Thank you for the latest copy of your magazine. I especially liked the pictures of the buses travelling on Hataitai/Wadestown where I had a permanent shift in the late 1950s. I also used to do a call back with a trolley on Northland on Friday nights. I transferred to Cable Street depot very early because I had trouble driving crash box buses. There were no bad trolleys. I loved driving them.” Evan Collett.

“My thanks to Tom Douce for expanding on his encounter with the lady passenger in Wellington – what a pity he was prevented from finding out why she didn’t know more (or anything, possibly) about the imminent demise of the trolleybuses. Tom’s experience in Basle is familiar to me when I am in urban areas photographing trains – and often exacerbated if the observer knows enough to realise that I still prefer my film camera – and there must be many more instances when people see us but don’t come forward to enquire what we are doing. Still, at least the chap in Arnhem was a bit more enlightened about it all. I also read Andrew Henbest’s article on hybrid buses in Brighton with interest (and was impressed with his statistics), especially as living not much further away in Havant I have spent a day now and then riding on Brighton’s buses, being mainly double-deckers, facilitated by the recently-discovered (by me) and very attractively priced Plusbus ticket. Andrew’s observations in Brighton are similar to what I have noted in London, even though the routes there are on flatter terrain than many in Brighton. For some years I regularly had to make a cross-London journey, and preferring the bus to the Underground used to do so on route 59. At one point they re-equipped the route with new hybrid buses, and from then on I was always aware that the bus would leave a stop or traffic lights silently on electric power, but this only lasted for a few yards until the diesel engine sprang into life, with all the attendant noise and vibration. Then at the next stop or traffic lights the engine would appear to stall, only for the whole process to start again when the bus moved off. Over time three thoughts occurred to me about this – as Andrew suggested whether the savings (if any) were worth the effort and additional vehicle expense, whether it was annoying for the driver to have the engine stopping and starting constantly – and whether it might be a good idea to go into the starter motor production business. Many thanks as always for UTW, and I am looking forward to seeing what direction the magazine takes from now on.” David Welsher.



Left and below: As mentioned on page 3, on the final evening of trolleybus operation, following a get together in Willis Street, a group boarded 341 for a ride out to Miramar terminus in Darlington Road. After posing for photographs and as daylight faded the band of enthusiasts rode the bus back to the Miramar shops where a drink (and no doubt a wake) was called for at the Roxy theatre and I’m sure much conversation about electric traction. Perhaps 341 should be nicknamed ‘Matilda’ as it carried the theatre ad until the end. Photo: Michael McKeon.

The UTW ‘special’, currently in preparation, will cover the last day that trolleybuses ran in Wellington’s streets.





Farewell trolley buses, you will forever ride on in our hearts.

Before smartphones, before the internet, even before man walked on the moon, trolley buses as we know them officially joined Wellington's public transport system.

Over sixty faithful years and many journeys later, on October 31st 2017, our now iconic friends will be making their last trips for the residents of Wellington.

To make this transition as smooth as possible there will be no change to the current timetable. Starting this week, we will begin taking down the overhead wires. It just became too expensive to maintain and upgrade. However, there is a silver lining to this otherwise sad news. Replacing old faithful from mid-2018 will be a new-generation bus fleet,

including New Zealand's first fully electric double-decker buses. It is important to Metlink that Greater Wellington has a better, more reliable public transport service while ensuring the spirit of sustainability lives on by helping to lower our overall emissions. New technology aside, we are truly grateful to the trolley buses for carrying us into the 21st century and will remember them as a pioneer of sustainable urban transport.

So here's to the legendary trolley buses and their wonderful drivers. You've captured the hearts of Wellingtonians and taken us on thousands of joyful journeys.

To find out more, go to metlink.org.nz

metlink

This full-page GWRC 'tribute' appeared in the Dominion Post newspaper on 4 October 2017. You be the judge, but I found the whole thing to be rather cynical 'spin' especially as a particular group of councillors wanted rid of the trolleybuses come what may. And the artwork they chose was nothing short of peculiar. Henry Brittain believes "the poster is actually a take on a photo of B.U.T. 88 on the way to Roseneath. 88 was the prototype for a remodel of the buses but did not proceed when the Ansaldo's became available." Why create a number that was carried by a Crossley and why Route 20, not a trolleybus route? Why show an old B.U.T. as one of their "iconic friends" rather than a Designline? Surely that would have been more relevant? The whole thing seems to be a case of the GWRC crying crocodile tears when in fact they will be glad to see the back of the trolleybuses at the end of October. There was more of this spin to come three days later on 7 October – see page 24.

The first step in dismantling Wellington's trolley bus wires begins next week

From the Greater Wellington Regional Council Metlink website - Posted on 3 October 2017 by Clayton Anderson

The first step in dismantling Wellington's trolley bus wires begins next week. Work will start on a disused section in the city centre on 10 October as part of a 12-month contract to remove 82 kilometres of overhead wires. Work on dismantling the rest of the network will begin on 1 November after power to the trolleys is switched off on 31 October. Greater Wellington Regional Council Chief Executive Greg Campbell says the trolleys have served the city well over the decades, but it's time to look to new environmentally-friendly technology that can be used throughout the entire city and region. "Next year, the region will get a new fleet of low-emission diesels, as well as 10 electric double-deckers – and in the next few years we'll add another 22 electric double-deckers. Over time, more and more electric buses will come into service until we eventually achieve our goal of being the first region in the country to have an all-electric fleet." Wellington Cable Car Ltd awarded the wire removal contract in May to specialist firm Broadspectrum on behalf of Greater Wellington. Wellington City Council owns Wellington Cable Car Ltd. Greater Wellington and the NZ Transport Agency will share the cost of removal work. Wellington Cable Car Chief Executive Officer Simon Fleisher says the week-long first stage will enable Broadspectrum to fine-tune its equipment, processes and safety procedures before the work begins in earnest. The disused emergency section runs along Featherston Street, Hunter Street, Victoria Street, Jervois Quay, Wakefield Street, lower Taranaki Street and Whitmore Street. "Residents along trolley routes should expect some limited machinery noise, but only for one night because Broadspectrum crews anticipate removing about 200 metres of line each evening. Residents may also be asked to temporarily park their cars elsewhere so crews can get access to overhead wires and poles. Broadspectrum will do letter drops so there will be plenty of warning, and Broadspectrum will also have information online and through its contact centre." Crews will concentrate on central city areas in January and February before moving outwards to suburban terminals. He says the overhead network should still be regarded as "live" after 31 October, because other factors could result in the wires being electrically dangerous. "All safe distances and overhead restraint requirements should be retained until the network is fully removed." The overhead network needs to be removed sooner rather than later because it needs regular maintenance, can be a hazard to overheight vehicles, and can complicate other construction and maintenance work in the city centre. Extra buses will cover for the trolleys until the region's new fleet starts service next July. Mr Campbell says the new fleet will result in an immediate drop in harmful emission levels – 38 per cent in Wellington and 86 per cent in the Hutt Valley, where older buses operate. "Most of the region's new fleet will meet the Euro VI standard – the most stringent in the world – and this will give us one of the cleanest fleets in the world." He says bus services will continue as usual along routes once serviced by the trolleys.

Trolley decommissioning begins

From the Greater Wellington Regional Council Metlink website - Posted on 3 October 2017 by Clayton Anderson

In just a few weeks the last trolleybus will retire, as the era of the Wellington icon comes to an end. Greater Wellington's Chairperson for the Sustainable Transport Committee, Councillor Barbara Donaldson says she will be sad to see the trolley buses go but she is looking forward to Metlink's new modern buses providing improved services from mid next year. "The trolleybuses have been part of the fabric of Wellington for over sixty years and are as Wellington as the Beehive and Cable Car. It's going to be sad to not see them travelling our streets anymore but Wellington is growing and Metlink has to grow with it, by creating a new better service for public transport users and investing in the future, not holding onto the past." Greater Wellington Regional Council voted in 2014 to stop funding the trolleys as part of a plan to modernise the region's bus fleet. New diesel and electric buses will begin service in July 2018 – at the same time as new bus operator contracts and an overhauled Wellington city network come into effect. Greater Wellington's eventual goal is an all-electric fleet. Power to the network will be shut off at the end of services on 31 October (around 11pm). "Wellingtonians should see no change to services as the trolleybuses are replaced with diesel buses by November 1. The bus services will continue along the same route as the trolleys on the same timetable," says Cr Donaldson. "The interim buses are relatively new – between four and eight years old – and most meet the Euro 5 emission standard. The world's most stringent standard is Euro 6."

Below: Old and new(ish) in Courtenay Place on 4 October 2017. A 1919 1200cc Hupmobile ambles past whilst not far behind 339 drifts towards the camera with an inbound 1 from Island Bay. 339 was new into service in 2008 and is only nine years old. It will be replaced by a diesel bus. The city is dumping sixty fully electric trolleybuses and in their place over the next few years we are promised thirty-two electric double-deckers. I predict the Hupmobile will be around a lot longer than the double-deckers. Such is progress.



Wellington's electric trolleybus wires to start coming down in a week

The dismantling of Wellington's 82 kilometres of electric trolley bus wires will start in a week, with the last of the trolleys to be retired by the end of the month. NZ Bus announced in April last year it had signed a \$43 million deal to fit a "significant number" of its 1100 buses in Auckland and Wellington – including the capital's 60 trolleys – with Wrightspeed motors, which operate mostly on rechargeable electric batteries. The trolleys were due to be retired in June, but were given a stay of execution until October 31 as uncertainty remained over the progress of the Wrightspeed technology. A rollout date for the Wrightspeeds is still to be confirmed, but it is hoped they will be in the capital by July, with diesel buses from Auckland to replace them in the meantime. The \$11m decommissioning project, to be carried out by specialist firm Broadspectrum, will begin on October 10 with the removal of wires on an unused emergency section through the Wellington CBD, which runs along Featherston St, Hunter St, Victoria St, Jervois Quay, Wakefield St, lower Taranaki St and Whitmore St. Greater Wellington regional councillors tested out the first Wrightspeed electric hybrid prototype at NZ Bus' Newlands depot last week. Wellington Cable Car chief executive Simon Fleisher said the remainder of the work would begin on November 1, after power to the trolleys was turned off. Residents along trolley routes could expect some machinery noise, and might be asked to move their cars so crews could access wires and poles, Fleisher said. However, with about 200 metres of wire to be removed at a time, disruptions should affect residents in each area for only one night. The overhead network should still be regarded as "live" after October 31, as the wires could still be dangerous, he said. The trolleys have been retired in stages, with about 40 still running on the network.

- Stuff 4 October 2017



Left: 332 is the only one of the two fully vinylled trolleybuses to make it into October 2017. Sister 331, which wears the paua shell pattern livery has been sidelined out of service at Kilbirnie for some months. However, on 4 October it was left for some hours outside Victoria University's Law Faculty at the Old Government Building in Lambton Quay, doors open and no driver in sight, reader **Alex Ellis** took the opportunity to take a few photographs. 332 is of course unique in that it has fewer seats than all of the others in the 331-387 fleet. Fortunately, the problem wasn't terminal as 332 was seen back at work two days later.

Right: 332 has a row of single seats either side whereas the rest of the fleet has twin seats on the left as you enter and walk down the bus. Less than 100m from where 332 was parked is the start of the Emergency Track referred to in the article at the top of the page. By the end of October it will have disappeared, like the trolleybuses.





A TROLLEYBUS TRIO IN ADELAIDE ROAD on 4 October

Above: 357 passing Wakefield Park and heading towards Berhampore.

Left: 364 leaves the suburb of Island Bay and is passing the former Berhampore trolleybus turning circle. Hooks can still be seen on the poles where span wires holding up the overhead used to be attached.

Below: 371 will soon be at the small Berhampore shopping centre where it will turn off Adelaide Road.





Above: 357 (wearing one of the many *Flick* power company advertisements) has just turned left from Riddiford Street and now climbs John Street and heads away from Newtown towards Mt Cook as it returns to the Railway Station with an early afternoon service from Newtown Park. For the benefit of readers outside New Zealand, Countdown is a supermarket chain.

Below: 384 runs down John Street towards Riddiford Street also with an early afternoon duty to Newtown Park. It has just passed through the switch linking these wires to the John Street loop. City bound buses travel a short distance up Hutchison Road, seen to the left of the bus, where the overhead can be viewed just past the parked trucks. 384's poles are about to pass through an isolator. Both photographs were taken on 3 October 2017.



Trolleybus Terminal Trip - 3rd October 2017

David Castle

The weather forecast for Wellington was 18 degrees and fine. With only a few weeks to the closure of the Wellington trolleybus network and no babysitting requests in hand I had no option but to go trolleybusing. My plan was to visit all eight trolley bus terminals in a single day. The visits were to be made by trolleybus between the hours of 9am to 3pm. I planned to begin by travelling on a route 2 service to Miramar, departing the Lambton terminal at 0905. I chose Miramar over Seatoun because the former service bypasses the traffic congestion at Basin Reserve and at Newtown. At 0900 my heart sank when I saw 2483 and 768 arrive at stop D with services from Miramar. Was one of these to be my bus? Unfortunately 2483 was! 2483 departed Stop A at 0905 for Miramar. I always find the journey from the Station to Courtenay Place tedious and this was no exception. Several vehicles in front was a trolleybus to Lyall Bay but I could not get a photograph or record the number. First a large rubbish truck and then an Airport Flyer blocked the view. After Courtenay Place the ride became more enjoyable. We arrived at Miramar at 0942 and departed on the return journey to the Station at 0952. I disembarked in Caledonia Street next to the Miramar/Seatoun junction at 0959. I crossed the road to wait for a route 11 bus to Seatoun. A silver diesel bus, 755, on a training run went past. If this was a replacement bus from Auckland it looked small, was like a bread tin and had none of the character of a trolleybus. I became very excited when 355 approached at 1006. I observed the poles going to the left at the junction. Without bothering to check the destination display I boarded 355 to travel to Seatoun. At the Caledonia/Hobart Street intersection we began a left hand turn towards Miramar. My brain had not registered why the poles moved as they did! Not to worry, as I could now ride a trolleybus to Miramar. On board were an older couple from Mosgiel who had come to Wellington to ride the trolleys. They mentioned the Dunedin trolleybuses. The driver of 355 said that the route 11 was dieselised due to road works so I decided to return to Kilbirnie and catch a Lyall Bay bus. We departed Miramar at 1020 and arrived at Kilbirnie at 1031. I crossed Rongotai Road to the southbound stop. At 1040 332 arrived on its way to Lyall Bay. It was driven by a very friendly lady driver who clearly enjoyed driving buses, including trolleys. We arrived at Lyall Bay at 1050 where there were three diesels as well as 332. The driver said that 332 was late but I did not enquire why four buses were at the terminal. I mentioned that I had travelled to Lyall Bay in years gone past by tram and she mentioned that Lyall Bay was once route 12. The driver took some photos of her bus and then we swapped cameras for some more shots. Lyall Bay is in my opinion the most photogenic terminal in Wellington regardless of the weather. 332 was going out of service and returning to Kilbirnie depot. The driver offered to let me stay on board and travel around the Kilbirnie loop which I did not know existed. We departed Lyall Bay at 1053. While stopped at a set of traffic lights the driver gave me her phone and asked me to take some photos of her driving. I went part way around loop and disembarked at the shops at 1105. I crossed Rongotai Road to the city bound stops with the aim of getting to Newtown as quickly as possible. I had checked my schedule and knew that it would be very tight to catch a half-hourly service to Newton Park Zoo. I decided to catch the first route 3 or route 11 bus, regardless of motive power. At 1112 I caught ADL 4254 on a route 3 service. I got off at the bottom of Constable Street at 1116 and ran around the corner to the southbound stop in Riddiford Street. There were two buses at the stop, the second a route 10. Holding my arm out as I ran I managed to board 364 at 1118. I was very careful as I ran because some years ago I destroyed a camera when I tripped while running to photograph a trolleybus. We arrived at Newtown Park Zoo at 1121 and departed at 1124. I disembarked in Riddiford Street just past Constable Street at 1125 and immediately started running towards Rintoul Street to catch a route 1 service to Island Bay. As I got close to the intersection I could see 339 waiting to turn right at the lights. I re-doubled my effort and raced around the corner into Rintoul Street. As I did so the bus accelerated around the corner. Fortunately several passengers were waiting at the Rintoul Street stop so I was able to catch the bus. On the way to Island Bay I observed the famous Island Bay cycleway, with a single car seemingly parked in the middle of the road. It does not seem to be obvious to motorists that buses turn at Island Bay. The bus had to wait part way around the circle while several cars went past. Also children exiting a playground stood very close to the turning bus. I departed Island Bay at 1142 and arrived in Manners Street at 1205. I walked up Cuba Mall and along Dixon Street to a stop in Victoria Street. I checked the information panel which listed one route 9 (Aro Valley) and several route 7 (Kingston) services. The Aro Valley service runs only every half-hour so I decided that the 9 was to be my priority. I had time to walk to McDonalds on the Manners St/Victoria St corner for a comfort stop. 'Maccas' may come in for criticism from time to time but to me the yellow *M* signifies a convenient (pun not intended) comfort stop. At 1224 I boarded 366 and travelled to Aro Street, arriving at 1229. After making a three-point turn the bus departed at 1240. I got off 366 at the Aro Street/Willis Street corner, and walked to the Brooklyn Road stop close by Webb Street. 386 duly arrived at 1259 (due 1254) on a route 7 service. I sat on the left hand side because I always enjoy the views of the ocean and southern horizon while travelling along the Kingston ridge. Arrival at Kingston was 1313 and departure at 1324. I now had one terminal to reach, Karori, so I travelled to the north end of Lambton Quay to await a bus for the last leg of my trip. After four diesels had arrived and departed, and given that I was tired and thirsty, I gave up and walked to the station where I just had time to buy my first coffee of the day before catching the 1435 electric train home. The lack of trolley buses to Karori was very frustrating given that earlier in the day I had seen plenty of route 3 trolleybuses. It was as if in the mid-afternoon there was a switch to diesels. There were no dewirements or other overhead problems. In summary I visited Miramar, Lyall Bay, Newtown Park, Island Bay, Aro Street and Kingston by trolleybus. That is six out of the eight terminals. I also visited Miramar by diesel bus. I have demonstrated that provided no silly mistakes are made it would be possible to visit all trolleybus terminals between 9 am and 3 pm. Unfortunately, I have probably left it much too late to arrive at all of the terminals by trolleybus. As I stood in Lambton Quay and Riddiford Streets watching the endless stream of trolleybuses, with their classic curved bodies and poles on the wires, I found it sad that it was all coming to an end. In fact I could not believe it. Noisy silver bread tins will not be the same. It was a most enjoyable day out and I am glad that I made the effort.





Left: It's school holiday time and there's a small crowd ready at Newtown Park to join the 1.22pm service back to the city on 5 October. No doubt the group had just visited the nearby Zoo.

Below: On the same day, 374 turns at Miramar ready to board a couple of passengers before heading off back to the Railway Station.



Left: Earlier in the day on 5 October, 373 is approaching Stop B at the Interchange with a morning working to Kingston.

Right: It's okay, I was standing on a island in the middle of Riddiford Street, Newtown for this photograph! 369 is the subject and is returning from Newtown Park to the city late morning on 6 October. The intersection behind the bus is where trolleybus routes 3 and 11 connect. Alas, many Lyall Bay/Karori Park services at the time of this photograph were dieselised and all Seatoun duties were similarly treated – at least at the time of the day I was visiting.

Below: Yet another trolleybus comes off Route 3. 385 has just run out to Lyall Bay and now returns to Kilbirnie, not in service. It is pictured late morning on 6 October 2017 travelling along Queens Drive beside Wellington Harbour.

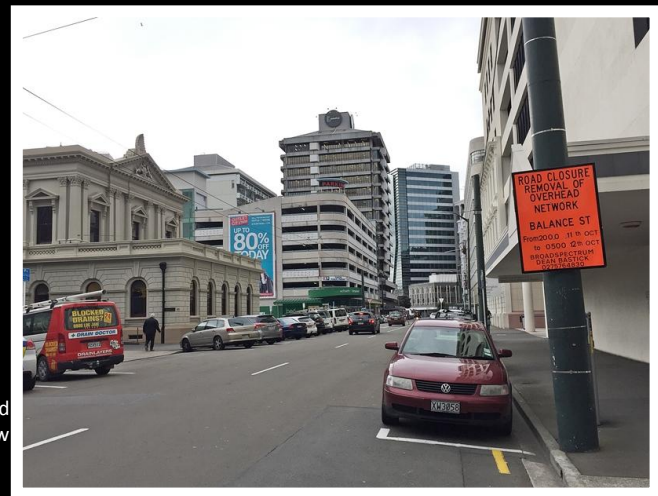


Right: A short walk from the location of the last photograph is Lyall Bay terminus and on the same day 374 was recorded making its turn. This was a case of yet another trolleybus returning to the nearby depot at Kilbirnie leaving yet one more diesel to operate on the route. Disappointing, but with only eighteen days left before the big "switch off" not surprising.

Below: The highest numbered trolleybus in the fleet, 387, sweeps around the corner from Riddiford Street into Rintoul Street with an early afternoon Island Bay service on 6 October. Unfortunately the camera didn't record the destination.



Right: A sign was erected in Ballance Street regarding the road being closed overnight on 11/12 October for the removal of the overhead. This is the view looking towards Featherston Street on 6 October. See more on page 29.



It's the end of an era

We've been using trolley buses to get around since 1949

In November 2017, the era of trolley buses will come to an end to make way for a new fleet of buses, including latest-technology electric buses.

The overhead wire network that has allowed our trolley buses to run for 68 years is coming down. This work will take place in several stages over the next year - starting in the central city and moving outwards to the rest of the network.

Most of the work will take place at night and sections of the road may be closed from time to time. We will give residents and businesses plenty of notice when work is taking place in their area.

Find out more
Phone: Broadspectrum on 0800 876 559
Email: enquiries22@broadspectrum.com

Left: Two of these large signs were erected in Wakefield Street; one near the Michael Fowler Centre and the other near the rear of the Reading Cinema complex. There will be two versions; this one being used along the route of the Emergency Track which was removed during the second half of October, and a different one which Broadspectrum advises will be put up in the suburbs starting at the beginning of November. The photograph for the boards was supplied by me. This example shows 350 in Aro Street. Below is the original photograph I took on 13 September 2013.



Salzburg - work begins lengthening trolleybus route 3



Left and below: At the beginning of October 2017, work started lengthening Route 3 at Itzling. The new part of this busy line will run in a one way loop from Kirchenstraße via Landstraße (using a new railway underpass) to Vogelweiderstrasse, with a link to regional buses, and back via Bahnhofstrasse to Kirchenstrasse. The length of the new part of the line is about 600m. During the day every second trolleybus will work to Landstrasse while in the peak periods every trolleybus will reach the new terminal. On 4 October 408 was photographed by **Gunter Mackinger** at Itzling Kirchenstrasse on route 3 on its way to the city.



Left: Even the small streets in the city are no problem for the Hess/Kiepe double articulated trolleybus on loan from Lucerne. Had the situation been somewhat different in Wellington, perhaps similar buses could have run on our streets too, but alas it is not to be.

Photos: Gunter Mackinger.

Thank You Driver

Thank You Driver

To find out more and stay in touch, visit and like [facebook.com/thanksdriver](https://www.facebook.com/thanksdriver)

Wellington Regional Council has changed its public bus provider.
But they didn't protect our jobs and pay rates.
Now drivers face losing an average of \$200 a week each.

You can help stop this.
 Show your support at: together.org.nz/thankyou-driver

Wellington bus drivers are facing an upheaval in their employment with Go Wellington losing a significant number of routes to Transit who are offering different conditions. Cards like these are being distributed on buses (left on seats) for passengers to consider and hopefully respond to. UTW readers may wish to visit the site and consider showing their support for the drivers.

(It's a pity the photograph of the bus couldn't have been a trolleybus, but it does reflect the fact that during October the chances of catching a diesel bus to Karori Park were much higher than enjoying the more relaxing ride given by a trolleybus.)

FROM METLINK'S WEBSITE

Their tribute to the trolleybuses

It's the end of an era, but the wheels keep turning

Goodbye, faithful friend. It's been over sixty years of amazing service, and they've well and truly earned their retirement, but the city will keep moving. During October the trolleybuses will be replaced, with the last trolley bus being removed from service at the end of the month. Bus services will run as usual and current bus timetables will be unaffected.



All on board for quiet, energy-efficient bus journeys

It's important to Metlink to provide reliable and enjoyable public transport for all Wellingtonians and also lower our region's emissions. Where possible, replacement buses will be relatively new – between four and eight years old – and most meet the Euro 5 emission standard. The world's most stringent standard is Euro 6. Over time we hope to reach our goal of being the first region in New Zealand to have an all-electric fleet, including New Zealand's first fully electric double-decker buses.

82km overhead cables are coming down

During this time a specialist company will be removing overhead wires, starting work in the city centre, then moving out to the suburbs. For safety's sake all wires should be regarded as live. It will take a year to successfully remove 82 kilometres of the old wire. This work will take place at night. Wellington City Council will give residents and businesses plenty of notice when work to remove the wires will take place in their area. [For more information go to wcc.org.nz](http://wcc.org.nz) (external link)

Pioneer of sustainable transport

New technology aside, we are truly grateful to the trolleybuses for carrying us into the 21st century and will remember them as a pioneer of sustainable urban transport. So, here's to the legendary trolley buses and their wonderful drivers. You've captured the hearts of Wellingtonians and taken us on thousands of joyful journeys.



Our frequently asked questions should fill in the gaps

Why are the trolleys ending?

There are three main reasons. One is the high cost of upgrading the infrastructure that powers the trolleys – that is, the substations, underground power supply and overhead wires. The second is advances in electric and diesel bus technology. Today's electric buses don't need complicated, high-maintenance overhead wires: they have their own on-board battery chargers or top up their batteries at charging stations. This is where the future lies. A new fleet of buses for the whole region is arriving next year. It will include low-emission diesels, plus some electric buses, which will be steadily added to until the fleet is entirely electric. The third reason is that the overhead wires necessarily force the trolleys to run on a small and rigid set of routes. That makes it hard to change – or expand – where the trolleys can go. And next year, the city's bus routes are to undergo significant changes – which would have been very difficult, if not impossible, while the trolleys were still in service.

Who owns, runs and pays for the network?

Wellington City Council subsidiary Wellington Cable Car Ltd owns and maintains the overhead wire electrical distribution network.

Wellington Electricity Ltd owns the substations and supplies power to the network.

NZ Bus owns and operates the trolleys and pays Wellington Electricity Ltd for the power to run the trolleys.

Greater Wellington Regional Council pays NZ Bus to operate the trolleys, and pays Wellington Cable Car Ltd to operate and maintain the overhead wire network.

Why are the wires coming down?

They are coming down because they are no longer needed and have no other use; they would otherwise require maintenance; they can be a hazard to overweight vehicles; and they sometimes complicate construction in the city centre.

Can you give a brief history of the network?

It came into being in 1949 after the phasing out of the tram network. At its height, 110 trolleys were in service, compared with about half that number today. Wadestown, Northland, Roseneath and Oriental Bay were once part of the network. In its current layout, the network covers the central city and terminates in the suburbs of Island Bay, Seatoun, Mirimar, Kingston, Aro Valley, Lyall Bay and Karori.

Who is paying for removal of the overhead network?

Greater Wellington Regional Council and the New Zealand Transport Agency are sharing the cost.

Who is doing the work?

Broadspectrum, formerly known as Transfield Services, won the contract to do the work. It is owned by Spanish company Ferrovial. Broadspectrum will employ about 24 staff and contractors at the height of the project.

Will all the supporting poles come down?

No, only about 300 of the 3,500 poles will be removed. The rest will stay because they support street lights, traffic signs, electrical power supplies and telecommunications systems belonging to Chorus, Vodafone, and Citylink.

How long will the work take?

About 12 months. It started in early October with the removal of a disused emergency section running along Featherston St, Hunter St, Victoria St, Jervois Quay, Wakefield St, lower Taranaki St and Whitmore Street. In November, crews will deal with wires in Victoria Street, in the CBD, and Cobham Drive (State Highway 1), near the airport. Work on the rest of the CBD will begin in January before extending outwards to suburban terminals.

What disruption can the public expect?

Most work will happen during the evening, although some will take place during off-peak daytime hours. As much as possible, roads will be reduced to one lane, rather than closed. Some closures or diversions may be unavoidable, depending on road layout and complexity of the work. Some intersections may have to close overnight. Examples include Manners St and Willis St; Taranaki Street and Courtenay Place; and Adelaide Road, John Street and Riddiford Street in Newtown. Residents may be asked to move their cars or park elsewhere so crews can get to wires and poles.

There will be some machinery and vehicle noise (which Wellington City Council will monitor). Most residents should have to put up with it for only a single night, because Broadspectrum's specialised cutting equipment will enable it to remove up to 200 metres of wire each night – meaning the work site will quickly move on. Steps will be taken to keep noise to a minimum, such as muting vehicle-reversing beepers and using quiet radio communications.

What if I need to carry out physical works near the overhead wires?

You must get permission beforehand from Wellington Cable Car Limited. Minimum approach distances (NZ Electricity Code of Practice 34:2001) still apply despite the fact the overhead wires are no longer live.



Same timetable, different bus.

By now many of you will know the trolley buses are heading into retirement and a new generation bus fleet, including New Zealand's first fully-electric double decker buses will be replacing them in mid-2018. So, what does that mean for you?

Firstly, other buses will replace our trolley buses so your service will be unaffected. Secondly, we'll be taking down overhead wires at night to minimise disruption - as always, please be careful and treat the wires as live. Thanks for your patience and cooperation during this transition period as we work towards a better public transport network for Greater Wellington.

To find out more, go to metlink.org.nz



Yet another full-page Metlink (GWRC) message about the trolleybuses appeared in the Dominion Post newspaper, this time three days after the first one seen on page 14. This message included the removal of the overhead wires. However, we are assured that the GWRC is working "towards a better public transport network." Funny, I and many others quite liked the one we had.



Above: 353 passes the Supreme Court in Lambton Quay on 9 October, having just left the Interchange on its thirty-six minute journey to Island Bay. To the left of the bus is the dead-end wire that is the start of the Emergency Track that was scheduled for removal in Ballance Street two days later.

Right: This letter to the editor of the Dominion Post appeared on 10 October. It refers to the 'propaganda' advertisement placed by GWRC in the 4 October edition (reproduced on page 14.)

Meanwhile...

Prague is re-introducing trolleybuses after a break of 45 years

Prague is preparing to build nearly a kilometre-long trolleybus track leading to Prosek. The project is planned to begin this September. Electric buses would start driving through the route this autumn. The buses will not be a reminder of public transportation in the 70s, but they will be operating on a similar principle. The overhead wires will be charging energy to the engine. The re-introduction of trolleybuses as a part of the public transportation system is a key step in fulfilling the long-term emission reducing strategy in the city. The plan was developed after the Paris Agreement on climate change, under which around two hundred countries in the world agreed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. * "In our case, it means that we will only be using electric modes of public transportation," says Jan Šurovský, technical director of DPP.

*GWRC please take note.



Left: The last Certificate of Fitness issued to a trolleybus in public service was affixed to 347 on 13 October 2017. Photo: Peter Coventry.

Weasel words

The full-page advertisement *Farewell trolley buses* (Oct 4) is at the minimum disingenuous. In fact, it's propaganda designed to mislead ratepayers and the travelling public that their "investment" of \$11 million to remove the overhead wires is sound. Strong on imagery and weasel words, it is devoid of fact.

The investment in upgrading the substations which would have rendered the removal of the lines and the clean energy buses unnecessary has been grossly overstated.

The advertisement refers to "fully electric". In fact, the battery buses will run on dirty diesel for about 60 per cent of the time.

The trolleys are positioned in the photograph to appear quaint, passe. Trolleys are recognised in other cities of the world as very 21st century. The diesel-dependent battery buses and the decision to remove the lines in preparation for replacement of the trolley buses are described by Russell Tregonning, a leading surgeon and medical school teacher, as "environmental vandalism".

I am unconvinced and unmoved by the vague, emotive words and imagery of the advertisement and by the economic vandalism of the local politicians responsible for the "farewell" to the trolley buses.

SALLY EVERS
Berhampore



REMEMBERING AOTEA QUAY TERMINUS

Route 16 to Aotea Quay, a short run of about 1km from the city centre opened in May 1950 and closed fifteen years later in 1965. The terminus at Aotea Quay had an unusual wye reversing arrangement. In the larger picture (believed to be from 1950) a couple of Crossleys in their original silver livery are pictured whilst in the smaller view the Crossley trolleybuses had been repainted red.

Photographers unknown.



It's 50 years since New Plymouth's trolleybuses drove into history

ANDREW OWEN

You can still ride on one of New Plymouth's old trolleybuses – although you'll need to use several other forms of transport to get to it and it won't take you very far. Saturday marks exactly half a century since the day the city said goodbye to its electric bus service, which had run for 17 years along a line of power cables that stretched from Devon St to Westown and the hospital. Three Crossley trolleybuses were serving the route by the time it was axed on October 7, 1967 – and one of those buses is now owned by the Tramway Historical Society of Christchurch. This weekend that old Number 3 is being put to work at the city's Ferrymead Heritage Park museum and will be taking passengers up and down its 1 kilometre line. "It's not run for nearly 20 years," said Dave Hinman, the society's secretary, a man who has had a life-long love affair with history and transport. "It last ran in 1999 in Wellington and it came back here afterwards. It's been in storage for a couple of years." A few days ago members rolled the bus out of their shed, where it rested alongside examples of the trams and trolleybuses that people in five cities, including Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, once relied upon. "It needed a bit of work when we first got it out," Hinman says. "It would not go." Electricians had a look, cleared the contacts and now, with a flat tyre repaired, and a good clean-up, Number 3 is as smart as the day it entered service in October 1950. "It'll look pretty good," Hinman says with pride. The trolleybus was cutting edge technology when it replaced New Plymouth's tram network 67 years ago. But within two decades it had been overtaken by diesel. When the decision was made to close the route, the Wellington Tramway Museum and the Tramway Historical Society got in touch with the New Plymouth City Council and made arrangements to take away some of the electric cabling so they could keep the memory of the trolleybuses alive. The rest was sold off for scrap. "To cut a long story short, the Wellington Tramway Museum got the job of actually dismantling the single route which ran from Westown to the city," Hinman explains. "That gave them the overhead wire they wanted and we helped. So we got the overhead wire that we wanted." As far as I know they just gave us the buses because they were of no further use to them." Two of the buses went into museums in Wellington area. Fifty years after New Plymouth, Wellington is this month scrapping its trolleybuses. By the end of October all 82km of cabling will be removed from the capital* and its 60 trolleys will be fitted with Wrightspeed motors, which operate mostly on rechargeable electric batteries. But the older technology will live on in museums and through the dedication of volunteers like Hinman and his grandson, Charlie Pryor, who at the age of six is among the new generation of enthusiasts. Perhaps it's something that gets you when you're young. "As a small child I remember the trams in Christchurch and they were old," Hinman recalls. "There was something about them." In Christchurch we were lucky enough to obtain one old tram, which had been a horse drawn tram. There was a bit of track left that hadn't been covered over or ripped up. "In the sixties the business association got behind the idea of running the horse tram 10 years after the tramway system closed. And that's how I got involved. "I was vaguely interested but pretty young at the time and there's this group of young people actually doing something about it. I joined up after that and I've been here ever since." Hinman is also involved in Christchurch's tourist tramway and says he enjoys the challenge of working with other like-minded people on projects that bring people enjoyment. "My hobby became my job," he says.

Source: Taranaki Daily News – 6 October 2017

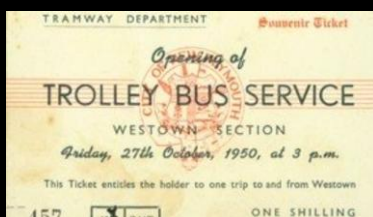


Photo: Dave Hinman

The last day of trolley bus operation in New Plymouth - October 7, 1967.



* the report is not correct in stating that all cabling (overhead) will be removed by the end of October. It will take about nine months. Also, the objective might be to have surplus to requirements trolleybuses converted to Wrightspeed power but as is well known this is still to be established on the trial trolleybus, 362.



Left: During the weekend 7/8 October the sole operating Crossley trolleybus in New Zealand was given an outing by the Tramway Historical Society on the kilometre track at Ferrymead Museum. Fourteen Crossleys came to NZ, ten to Wellington introduced in 1949/50 and four to New Plymouth which went into service in 1950. Two Crossleys, both ex-New Plymouth survive in preservation, 3 at Ferrymead and 1 in non-operating condition at Paekakariki owned by the Omnibus Society.

Right: With the backdrop of the Port Hills, beautifully restored New Plymouth 3 poses in the Christchurch sunshine at Ferrymead. Driver Alan Roi is at the wheel.

Photos: Alastair Cross



THEN AND NOW in Lambton Quay



Graham Stewart informs us that "It is seventy years this year since I first started taking tramway photographs - while still attending Grammar School in Auckland." Somewhat after that event Graham took this photograph of a silver B.U.T. and tram 173 passing each other outside the Old Government Building in Lambton Quay. The old wooden building still stands proudly facing Parliament Buildings but is now the home of Victoria University's Law Faculty. On 10 October 2017 I took this photograph of 351 at the same location. Note that the chimneys have been added in more recent times and tree growth over the years has softened the scene. The two photographs were taken at the same time of day; in fact only five minutes separates them.



Left: On 9 October, with fifteen days of work left, trolleybuses soldiered on despite their imminent doom. Highest numbered in the fleet, 387, was photographed in Lambton Quay passing the intersection with Panama Street and working a Lyall Bay duty. Trolleybuses once turned left at this location instead of continuing along Lambton Quay.



Right: During the weekend 7/8 October a further tranche of nine surplus NZ Bus metrOlink Scania diesels were driven from Auckland to Kilbirnie. On 9 October 357, en route to Lyall Bay passes the line-up of buses left on the parking area outside the depot.



Left: A last look at the start of the Emergency Track in Ballance Street where it meets Lambton Quay. 379 glides past the intersection on 10 October. The next day the overhead was removed.

Right: 357 was photographed at the north end of Lambton Quay on 10 October on a Route 2 working to the Railway Station. The bus is about to travel through the cross over special work at this location with the driver getting a prompt on the roadway ahead of him.



Left: Moving about 50 metres south from the previous location and 364 runs into a shaft of sunlight as it heads for the Railway Station near the end of a morning run from Island Bay on 10 October. 364 was withdrawn from service on 27 October and is now stored at Karori depot.



Below: This may well be the last photograph taken of 364 on the move. It was photographed turning right into Bowen Street, on battery power, and heading in the direction of Karori mid morning on 27 October. Photo: David Castle.



Right: Over in Onepu Road, just prior to my monthly depot visit at Kilbirnie on 10 October, 339 heads south towards Lyall Bay and passes the Cockburn Street Chapel.



Left: A few moments later 386 arrived back at Kilbirnie. It was at the end of the driver's shift as the trolleybus travelled back from Lyall Bay terminus out of service, and then ran around the Kilbirnie shops to be facing in the correct direction to enter the depot through switch 470 through which it is passing.

KILBIRNIE VISIT - 10 OCTOBER 2017

Thirty-four trolleybuses were in Kilbirnie depot at the time of my official visit on 10 October 2017
301, 302, 303, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 348, 354, 356, 360, 361, 363, 364, 365, 367, 369, 370, 372, 375, 376, 377, 383, 384 and 386.



Left: 301 still stands where it was put following the August farewell trip. However, there is some hope that 301 may have a new home soon at The Trolleybus Museum at Foxton, and that one of the other two prototypes (302/3) may travel south to Ferrymead. No decision has yet been made but it will be good news indeed if these trolleybuses survive.

Right: 363 hasn't seen service for some time and judging by its pole ropes is not likely to see the light of day before the end of trolleybus use on 31 October. As mentioned above, thirty-four of the trolleybus fleet were seen inside Kilbirnie depot however this does not indicate that they are all out of service. A number were lined up ready to head out for afternoon duties.





Left: A pairing at the Interchange. 378 and 379 enjoy some spring sunshine and each other's company on 12 October.



Right: The very first part of the overhead decommissioning began overnight on 11/12 October. The overhead from Lambton Quay, outside the Supreme Court, to the end of Ballance Street was removed. A dead end wire ran from the left of the current main route and then turned left. This 12 October view shows no trace that the Emergency Track ever existed here.



Left: Ballance Street overhead-free on 12 October. Just the occasional span wire remains to be removed. 374 passes in Lambton Quay en route to Kingston.



Right: At the end of day one of the decommissioning Ballance Street had been cleared of overhead and the end was tied off at the intersection with Featherston Street. This is the view looking south. Compare this to the photo on page 27.

Below: In Aro Street with 371. Having just turned left into Aro Street from Willis Street 371 stops briefly as the last passenger alights. About ten minutes later 371 returns heading back to the Railway Station past rows of old wooden homes that line the street.



Right: 346 wearing the *Ninjago* movie ad was photographed in Kilbirnie Crescent with an outbound 2 to Miramar on 12 October. It is about to turn right into Bay Road to arrive at Kilbirnie shopping centre.



Below: Another view in Kilbirnie Crescent on the same day with 353 city-bound on Route 2 at the intersection with Duncan Terrace and passing the Kilbirnie Aquatic Centre.



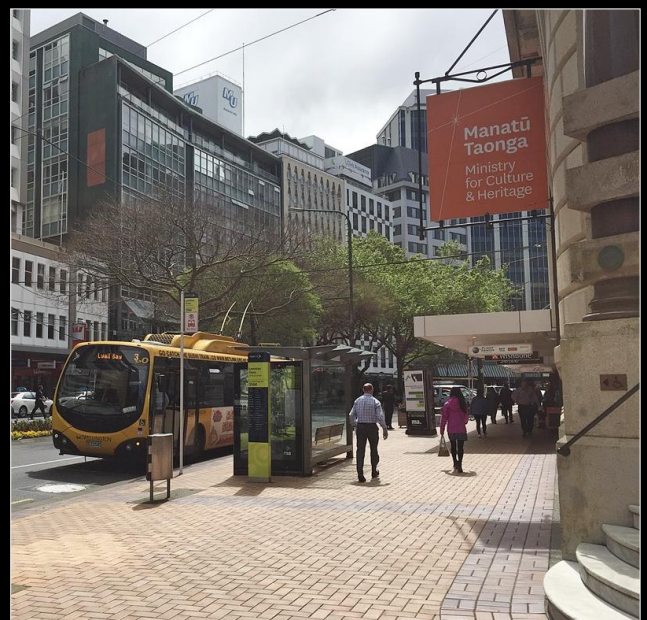
Below: 387 passing through Kilbirnie shopping centre in Rongotai Road with a late morning 3 to Karori Park on 12 October 2017.



Below: Moving to Newtown and a view of 377 returning to the city from Newtown Park. The trolleybus has just turned out of Mansfield Street (out of sight to the left of the white block of flats) and is travelling along Riddiford Street towards the shopping centre in Newtown.



Right: Finally on 12 October a view of 381 in Lambton Quay by Stout Street on its way to Lyall Bay. It had stopped by the Ministry for Culture & Heritage. Ironically, despite the GWRC using words to describe trolleybuses as 'iconic', 'pioneer' and 'legendary' in the blurb of their whole page advertisements, the buses have been part of Wellington's culture and heritage for sixty eight years yet at the time of writing NOTHING has been planned to mark their passing!



PORTRAIT OF A DESIGNLINE



The driver of 386 has his eye firmly on the photographer crouched at the kerbside in Lambton Quay as he works his trolleybus along Lambton Quay on 9 October with a morning service to Karori Park. The rain had stopped but the puddle added an extra dimension.

THE LAST DAY OF VOLVO OPERATION – 16 November 2009

Eight years ago the last four Volvo trolleybuses, once part of a fleet of sixty-eight vehicles, ran their last duties in Wellington. Now the Designlines have also finished operation. There was no fanfare or celebration or marking of the event back on 16 November 2009. In fact, apart from the one enthusiast I was with that morning, we didn't see anyone else paying special attention to them. This feature marks the passing of the Volvos, or more to the point the last four; 227, 233, 258 and 268.



Left: It's 7.22am on the final day and 268 leaves Kilbirnie depot to start its first duty.



Above: Meanwhile at 7.28am All-white liveried 227 (the only one of the final four not to survive into preservation) is prepared for the road by its driver.



Left: Just over fifteen minutes later at 7.45 227 travels along Queens Drive in Lyall Bay not in service. It left the terminus for Karori Park at 7.52am.



Above right: 268 was encountered in Wallace Street, Mt Cook at 8.17am travelling towards Newtown Park.



Left: Having photographed 268 at Newtown Park, it was back to Kilbirnie depot in time to see all-white liveried 233 enter the depot after its last duty at 9.08am.

**Did any other readers photograph this last day?
If so, I would be pleased include some further
views in a subsequent edition.**



Left: Meanwhile, 268 had arrived at Island Bay and was about to depart at 10.25am on the last Volvo operated service from this southern terminus to the Railway Station.

Right: We now jump across to Karori Park for the last two departures ever by Volvo trolleybuses. At 10.55am 258 departed for Karori Park, leaving 227 to ready itself before the final Volvo duty left from the terminus.



Left: 227 departed on time from Karori Park terminus at 11.05am bound for Lyall Bay. Unfortunately, things didn't turn out as expected and 227 suffered a fault near the city and had to be towed back to the depot. An ignominious end to a twenty-six year long career.

Right: 268 was next photographed emerging from the eastern portal of Hataitai tunnel at 11.30am as it worked back to Kilbirnie not in service following its last duty. Nine minutes later it entered Kilbirnie depot, its career in Wellington over.



Left: As things turned out 258 ended up being the last service carrying passengers. On arrival in Onepu Road outside Kilbirnie depot at 11.50am remaining passengers were asked to disembark and continue their journey to Lyall Bay on the Designline waiting behind. I wonder if these people realised the significance of the little piece of history they were making – probably not. There were no obvious enthusiasts aboard.



Right: Finally at 12.04pm, 227 arrived at the depot towed by the Shiftman truck. If it were to have a personality it would probably be red faced ending its career in such a manner. However, 227 became the very last Volvo to be seen on Wellington's roads the day the Volvos ended. 227 was scrapped soon after, 233 went to the Omnibus Society, 258 is in the care of the Transport Historical Society at Ferrymead and 268 is at the Foxtan Trolleybus Museum. At the time of writing none are currently in working order.



Trolley buses

I simply can't believe the utter stupidity driving the abolition of trolley buses in favour of hybrids.

Has anyone ever explained clearly just what the term 'hybrid' means in practical terms?

Where are the costings of the overall proposal published so ratepayers could see just how much the total cost is likely to be?

A prudent administration would have studied ways in which the present system could be sustained to everyone's advantage.

I notice a sum of \$11 million being quoted for the dismantling of the present overhead reticulation. How does that sum compare with the cost of upgrading the existing substations?

What consideration was given to replacing the existing trolley fleet with new like with like, using the existing setup?

Where are published figures comparing the cost of 'hybrids' with new, modern, and more efficient trolley buses?

A large delegation of parliamentary seat-warmers signed up to the COP21 Climate Conference conclusions in 2016. This was obviously tongue in cheek, evidenced by purchase of carbon credits from other countries. Which will cost taxpayers \$14.2 billion over 10 years.

We are yet to see just one carless day, as a way of reducing emissions, let alone any rewards for those of us doing our bit to reduce emissions of our own volition.

PETER GROVE
Taika [abridged]

Left: Another letter to the Dominion Post - 16 October 2017.

Right: Peter Grove's letter refers to the \$11 million cost of removing the overhead. Ten days after the publication of his letter this was the scene in Wakefield Street on 26 October looking towards the intersection with Taranaki Street. An "End of an Era" board remains on the traction pole and a couple of span wires with a 'Slow' sign ahead of where switch 403 once was are all that's left to remind us that trolleybuses ever came this way.



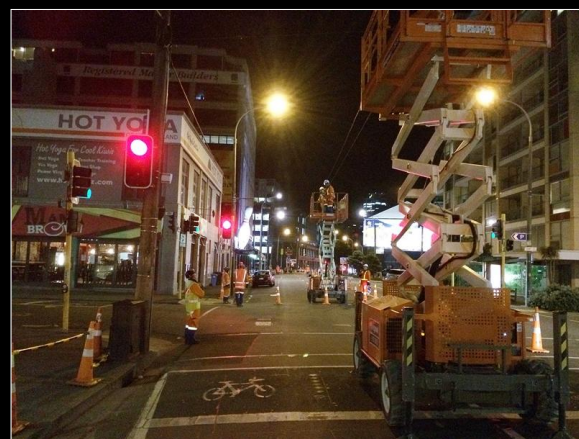
Left: Further along Wakefield St on the same day, segments remain hanging at a drunken angle at the intersection with Chaffers Street. In the background is a New World supermarket built on land that was once Wakefield Street depot. The building covered in scaffolding is the former Travelodge Hotel that looked down on the depot for many a year.



Left: Did trolleybuses ever come this way? Yes they did but all evidence of them has now been completely removed. This view taken on 26 October at the corner of Cuba Street is looking along Wakefield Street towards Victoria Street. The Wellington Town Hall dominates the background. Until late 2010, trolleybuses (and other buses) regularly travelled this way. Now, just the 24 to Mt Victoria is seen along here.

Right: The overhead is removed in Wakefield Street during one of the night-time operations. In mid-October.

Photo: Courtesy Dean Bastick, Broadpectrum.



Right: With new kerbing being installed in Queens Drive, Lyall Bay a complete lane had to be coned off for "safety reasons" meaning that trolleybuses were at full stretch passing the area in question. 387 was photographed by Mike Mellor on 27 October shortly after starting its journey to Karori Park. The next pages show other movements on the final Friday of operations.



CAME THE LAST FRIDAY OF OPERATION – 27 OCTOBER 2017

Right and below: The very last Friday of trolleybus operation dawned fine and clear. It was just another ordinary day of work for drivers. Those rostered for the surviving trolleybus workings had mostly left Kilbirnie depot and hit the road. However, **Peter Coventry** recorded highest numbered 387 emerging from the depot as the last morning departure about 7.30am and heading off along Onepu Road to start its shift.



Below: Over in Island Bay, 341 still wearing its outdated *Matilda* ad (the show finished on 22 October) slows for custom having just departed the terminus.



Left: It's 11.55 and 355 has been turned at Island Bay ready for its departure at 12.05. The driver is approaching the empty bus stop for his short break where he will change the destination. I boarded this service back to the city and discovered yet another driver who loves operating trolleybuses and was going to miss them come November 1.

Right: A friendly wave to a colleague as 355 passes 367 in Adelaide Road.





Left: 387 seen earlier on page 35 makes an appearance in Manners Street on an outbound service to Lyall Bay. Driver Greg Green is at the wheel of ex-Auckland ADL 4131. This diesel substitution was being used on a Newtown Park (Route 10) service.



Right: 332 arrives at the Interchange, just a minute down, at 12.57 at the end of its short run from Aro Street. The overhead in Aro Street is scheduled for early removal in the decommissioning programme.



Left: 346 was the sole recipient of the *Ninjago* movie advertisement. At 4.13pm it was photographed departing the Interchange in superb lighting conditions starting its forty-four minute journey to Miramar.



Right: Looking in the other direction, it is 4.14pm and 352 is exactly on time as it approaches the camera and completes its journey from Island Bay that began at 3.33pm.



Left: 357 and 2219 pass in Manners Street. Scania 2219 is one of forty ex-Auckland diesel buses sent to Wellington to fill the gap at the end of the trolleybus service. If 357 could speak I wonder what it would be saying. The face of the woman on the side of 357 says it all! Note that 2219 is working what would once have always been a trolleybus duty.

Right: A few places in the CBD still had areas of sunlight shining on them, such as here in Manners Street with 386 approaching the camera at 5.23pm with an 11 from Seatoun. Road works in Broadway involving the replacement of a water main has meant dieselisation of the 11 during the off-peak. Despite this photograph being well outside that time this was one of the few trolleybuses still operating on the route that evening.



Left: Lost in the crowd. Courtenay Place was beginning to come alive with after work drinkers. 386 is busy taking other workers home; all stops between here and Island Bay.



Right: 339 is seen again, this time in Lambton Quay near the intersection with Hunter Street and working one of the less common Route 2 duties to Kilbirnie, one of five such workings in the afternoon peak timetable.



Left: Even less common are the two Route 3 departures from the Interchange for Kilbirnie on Route 3. The first leaves at 5.20pm with the other at 6.56pm. 369 stands in the layover area awaiting departure time while an Island Bay service waits behind. Meanwhile in the distance the last service of the day from Aro Street (arrival time 6.55pm) has just arrived at Stop D.

Right: Mike Mellor was out photographing trolleybuses on 27 October and was at Lyall Bay when he saw 353 and 387 standing at the terminus. Look carefully and you will see what caught his eye; 353 was showing a departure for Kingston on Route 7! The driver quickly realised the mistake and Mike notes that by the first stop from the terminus it had been changed by to Karori Park and Route 3.



LATE BID FOR TROLLEYS

Stuff - 30 October 2017

An 11th hour bid to save Wellington's trolleybuses is set to come down to the wire. With at least two of New Zealand's three Government partners having previously stated they want to save the trolleys, some Greater Wellington Regional councillors have felt emboldened to make the bid to at least hold off on their decommissioning - set to begin this week. Labour did not campaign to either save or get rid of Wellington's trolley buses, but a spokesman said Transport Minister Phil Twyford has asked for some quick-turnaround advice from officials on the issue and hoped to have something to say soon. The long process of pulling down the overhead wires begins late on Tuesday night but, earlier that same day, the regional council's sustainable transport committee has a meeting where a group of councillors will try to delay the work. "We have got two if not three political parties in Government wanting to save [them]. We should delay pulling down the wires or doing anything irreversible till the Government has had a chance to look at it." Council rules meant the decision to pull the wires down could not be reversed on Tuesday, but the works could be delayed and revisited later - possibly with an eye to keeping some key routes serviced by trolleys. In June, NZ First transport spokesman Denis O'Rourke reportedly said his party would retain Wellington's trolley bus service. Green Party transport spokeswoman - and now Associate Transport Minister - Julie Anne Genter confirmed the Greens' preference was to keep the trolley buses till full-electric buses were ready. She confirmed she had contributed to Twyford's questions to officials and hoped to have those answers back early this week. She was hamstrung in what she could say because, while she was confirmed as Associate Transport Minister, her exact responsibilities would not be confirmed till later in the week. Tramways Union secretary Kevin O'Sullivan said someone in central government needed to take urgent action to at least put a hold on the removal of the wires. "I appreciate it is only the first days on the job, but there is an urgency." He supplied Stuff a copy of an email he sent to Twyford and Genter last week in which he addressed the "urgent and pressing" matter of the decommissioning of the trolley wires. "Should the existing all electric trolley bus system be retained and upgraded it is imperative that pressure be brought to bear on the Wellington Regional Council (despite the overhead network being owned and operated by Wellington City Council) to defer the decommissioning so that at the very least a genuine all encompassing cost-benefit analysis can be undertaken," the email said. "Previous analyses lacked integrity as they were composed to fit the failed market drive competitive tendering model of the previous National government. "We trust you will give this matter your utmost and urgent consideration due to the limited time available before this irreplaceable asset is lost." Wellington City Green councillor Iona Pannett said she completely supported any attempt to save the trolley buses: "Electric is the way forward."



Left: The last day of trolleybus use in Wellington dawned fine and clear. I travelled to Kilbirnie with the intention of seeing the very last bus emerge from the depot but was foiled by its much earlier than expected departure. However, Supervisor **Peter Coventry** was on hand to record the moment, along with a couple of other interested depot staff, as once again 387 eased out of the depot just before 7am. 387 then travelled to Seatoun where the first duty of the day began with departure at 7.20. I am not aware of its full day's work but do know that it then worked four further return trips between Seatoun and the Railway Station as seen below (part of the daily shift card).

Below: 387 emerges into the bright morning sunshine on the eastern side of Seatoun tunnel on its first trip of the day to Seatoun (the 8.10 departure from the city) on the final day of trolleybus operation.



Sign On	0650
Obtain Trolley & Depart Kilbirnie Depot at 0705 NOT IN SERVICE to	
Route: 0011 - V:02 - D:02 - Trip:0810 - D:053	
Seatoun Park - Hector Street	0720
Wellington Station (Stop D)	0800
Route: 0011 - V:01 - D:01 - Trip:0815 - D:055	
Wellington Station (Stop B)	0810
Seatoun Park - Hector Street	0852
Route: 0011 - V:02 - D:02 - Trip:0828 - D:053	
Seatoun Park - Hector Street	0854
Wellington Station (Stop D)	0942
Route: 0011 - V:01 - D:01 - Trip:0837 - D:055	
Wellington Station (Stop B)	1000
Seatoun Park - Hector Street	1040
Route: 0011 - V:02 - D:02 - Trip:0842 - D:053	
Seatoun Park - Hector Street	1043
Wellington Station (Stop D)	1128
Change over to Shift No. W1139 at 11:28 Wellington Station	

CAME THE LAST MONDAY OF OPERATION – 30 OCTOBER 2017



Left and below: A pairing just outside the Interchange. 357 (poles stowed) had become disabled just metres from its destination with one report saying that smoke was seen billowing from its rear end. As it blocked the approach to the Interchange other trolleys had to pass around it. However, 358 inbound from Kingston somehow got its poles caught up in the overhead and broke the left rope necessitating the expertise of Broadspectrum staff.



Left: The usual shiftman tow truck was unavailable to return 357 to Kilbirnie depot so a Supreme Towing vehicle was called to assist. The woman's face in the advertisement has a look of embarrassment about it.



Right: A final glimpse of 357. It is seen under tow and turning from Featherston Street into Bunny Street. Wellington's grand railway station building completes the scene. This was to be its final trip through. An ignominious end to its nine-year life.



Left: Meanwhile, back at the Interchange depot staff were on site making repairs to the left side rope of 358.



Left: 380 is pictured in Chamberlain Road, Karori. It had just turned off Karori Road, the main route, on its way back to the depot for a shift change.



Right: Monday 30 October saw the final trolleybus diversions affecting Route 10. During the off-peak, services were diverted via Courtenay Place, Basin Reserve and Adelaide Road where buses rejoined their route at Newtown. 332 was photographed in Courtenay Place with 368 bring up the rear travelling to Island Bay.



Left: Would Queen Victoria have been amused by the withdrawal of trolleybus services in favour of a mainly new fleet of diesel buses? If she'd have known about climate change I very much doubt it, but I digress. Sneaking into the left edge of the photograph is 386 heading south towards Newtown Park along Kent Terrace and on the right is 332 returning from said terminus to the Railway Station. Two Route 10 trolleybuses are pictured off their normal patch.

Right: As the traffic lights change to green 386 gets left behind as a fire engine pulls ahead in Lambton Quay at the intersection with Bowen and Whitmore Streets.



Right: Finally, back to where we started with 360 and 371 passing one another at the entrance to the Interchange.



New government won't intervene on Wellington's trolleybuses

Transport Minister Phil Twyford has ruled out intervening to save Wellington's trolley buses because the cost would be too great. The trolley buses are set to be withdrawn today, but drivers threatened with redundancy, public transport campaigners, health advocates and some Wellington City councillors had pinned their hopes on the new government to save the network. Mr Twyford said he spoke to officials yesterday and concluded it would cost too much to reverse the decision. Tens of millions of dollars would have to be spent on cancelling contracts with companies which had hired staff and equipment to decommission the wires, and restoring decommissioned buses. But Mr Twyford said he wanted issues like this dealt with better in future and promised a government policy statement requiring passenger transport systems to be developed with climate change to the fore. Trolley buses have rattled around Wellington since the 1920s, antennae clinging on and sometimes falling off overhead electricity cables. Wellington's regional council decided three years ago to kill them off, due to the \$6 million higher cost per year than the same number of diesel buses and extra investment needed to bring the electrical distribution system up to standard. They were supposed to be phased out four months ago and converted into hybrid diesel-electric buses, but had a temporary stay of execution as a working prototype had yet to hit the road. The council has signed a contract with Masterton-based company Transit - which will take over some routes next year - to introduce 10 double-decker electric buses next July, followed by another 10 in 2020 and a further 12 in July 2021. Congestion Free Wellington - an umbrella group of transport and health advocacy groups - said 32 electric buses out of a total fleet of 400 was "unambitious". Mr Twyford said it would have been ideal if there had been a full fleet of electric buses to take over. "But that is not the case, that is not going to happen, and it is going to take some time I think to transition to a low carbon option for Wellington public transport. "But in the meantime the costs would be prohibitive to reverse the decommissioning process that is already underway and we do not think that is justified." Mr Twyford said the future of the capital's public transport was low carbon and Wellington and other centres would be getting that message from the government.

Radio New Zealand News – 31 October 2017.

Trolleys death knell

Any hopes of an 11th-hour reprieve for Wellington's electric trolley buses have been dashed, in what has been described as a "sad day" for the capital. The trolleybus wires will start to be removed on Wednesday as planned, after new Transport Minister Phil Twyford said he had no plans to intervene and rescue the iconic vehicles. The recent change of Government had raised hopes of a stay of execution for the trolleys, given two of the three coalition partners now in power - the Greens and NZ First - had previously stated they should not be scrapped. At a Greater Wellington Regional Council meeting on Tuesday, councillor Sue Kedgley had planned to push for a vote on whether to ask the Government for support in retaining the trolleys on some routes. However, Twyford's announcement put a stop to that. He told *RNZ* it would cost too much to reverse the council's 2014 decision to discontinue the trolleys, as tens of millions would have to be spent on cancelling contracts with companies that had hired staff and equipment to decommission the wires, and restore decommissioned buses. Kedgley did not hold back in her criticism of Twyford's decision to seal the trolleys' fate. "This is a very sad day for Wellington," she said. "This is an extremely short-sighted decision the minister has made." The capital's remaining 40 trolley buses will be taken off the roads and refitted with hybrid Wrightspeed motors, which operate mostly on rechargeable electric batteries, topped up by a small conventionally-powered motor. Twenty buses have already been removed from service. The technology is still being developed and it is hoped the Wrightspeed-powered buses will be operating in the capital by July. Diesel buses, sourced from Auckland, are replacing them in the meantime. "I predicted this would happen and we would be left with diesel buses in the interim period, and I was laughed at," Kedgley said. "We are moving back at a million miles an hour." Councillor Daran Ponter, deputy chairman of GWRC's sustainable transport committee, shared Kedgley's frustration, saying it was a "sad day in Wellington's history". "I'm not proud of this, but I am accepting of it, as long as we can make some real moves to an electric future and see Wellington become New Zealand's first electric public transport city." Ponter proposed an alternative recommendation to Kedgley's, passed by council, which called for officers to request Twyford confirm his stance on supporting the provision of electric-powered public transport. The council will also request trolley bus operator NZ Bus provide an update on the progress of the Wrightspeed technology. Councillors were shown the first prototype of a Wrightspeed motor at NZ Bus' Newlands depot earlier this year, but haven't heard anything more for "three to four months". NZ Bus chief executive Zane Fulljames said recently that the motors were about two weeks behind schedule, but were still expected to be rolled out in July 2018. Councillor Roger Blakeley also expressed his frustration at the trolleys' demise. "It's very disappointing the Government has not been able to take a stronger stand." An unused emergency section of trolley bus wires was taken down earlier this month, with the rest to be taken down from Wednesday. A group of Wellingtonians opposed to the capital's return to diesel buses protested in Willis St on Tuesday night. More than 40 hands were raised when Roland Sapsford, a trolley bus and climate change advocate, asked protesters who would tell Twyford that Wellington's public transport mattered too. "If Auckland gets light rail, Wellington deserves more than a cloud of diesel," he said. "The new Government has said that climate change is the nuclear issue of our time, and this is their opportunity to do something good for Wellington. "Now the Government has the opportunity to show the leadership it promised." One protester, Lyall Bay resident Yvonne Weeber, said she wanted to see a cleaner, more sustainable transport option implemented immediately. "I think we're going back into dirty diesel, and it's not going to be very pleasant. It's a really bad move of the regional council."

- Stuff 1 November 2017

AND SO THE STORY HAS NOW REACHED THE FINAL OPERATING DAY. A SPECIAL EDITION OF UTW WILL BE PUBLISHED TO COMMEMORATE THE OCCASION. SADLY, GO WELLINGTON AND METLINK CHOSE NOT TO MARK THE EVENT IN ANY OFFICIAL WAY.

Only the following vehicles were sighted on the final day of operation. The list isn't conclusive but considering I was in the city for almost 12 hours I feel it fairly reflects the situation: **332, 339, 341, 346, 350, 351, 352, 354, 358, 359, 360, 367, 368, 371, 373, 376, 377, 378, 379, 381, 383, 384, 386 and 387.**

POLES APART



346's poles go in two different directions at switch 413 at the Interchange on 12 October 2017. The driver was clearly on the ball and checking his progress as he has stopped in time before a dewirement.