

CHRISTCHURCH BRILL No. 178

Construction date: 1921 (built by Boon & Co. Christchurch)

Service location: Christchurch, New Zealand

Service dates: 24 Apr 1922 – July 1953

CHC Tram fleet: from January 1995



History of No. 178

178 was one of 25 trams of this type (numbers 172-196) with all but two being built by Boon & Co. The trams were Christchurch's most modern tram and the most advanced in New Zealand. They were originally operated by a motorman and a conductor and were known as 'Brills' or 'P.C. cars'. Between 1932-1936 the Brills were converted to one man trams (driver only operation) due to the need to cut operating costs from competition with other modes of transport and the impact of the Great Depression. Other changes in the 30s and 40s included driver-operated folding doors and steps, 'dead man' controller handles, forward-facing padded seats and pram hooks to free up passenger spaces on overloaded trams.

The Brill routes closed progressively from October 1952 to July 1953. The trams were originally stored complete pending attempts to sell them to other operators, but in 1954 the trams were stripped and the bodies offered for sale. 178 was sold for £80 to A D Cormack of Geraldine on 18 June 1954.

In 1964 Mr & Mrs Frank Gilmour offered to gift 178 to the Tramway Historical Society: the tram body was inside a holiday home they had purchased at Milford Huts, Temuka and was still in a good condition. 178 was relocated to Ferrymead in 1967. Restoration work commenced in 1968 and was completed by May 1970. Its official opening inaugurated electric tram service at Ferrymead Historical Park where it operated until 1986 before being overhauled. In 1995 the tram was leased to the newly formed Christchurch Tramway Limited.

178 was the first electric tram in Australasia to be restored to operating condition from a body only, using replica or replacement equipment. Because of its unique control equipment it was also a very complicated restoration task for the inexperienced volunteers involved. 178 has been the hardest worked trams on the city circuit, celebrating 100,000 trips around the circuit in 2007 and is a favourite with many frequent visitors.

Technical Specifications

Length: 12.5m

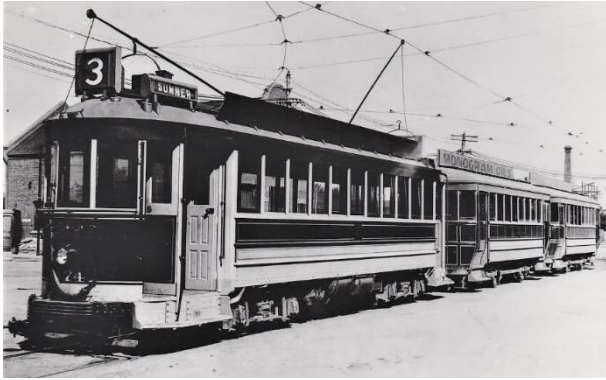
Tare weight: 17.16 tonnes

Powered by: 600v DC. 4x 40hp (30kw) GE 247 motors. Also now has 24v system for lights, comms.

Controllers: Sprague-General Electric P.C.5 Pneumatic Camshaft Control

Trucks (bogies): Brill 77E1 with 26.5in wheels (modified ex Melbourne broad gauge).

Capacity: 53 seated and 24 standing passengers (originally 39 in CTB service)



Brills as new – 1922



178 outside the Chief Post Office – 1950



178 inside holiday bach - Temuka 1964



178 after extraction by THS volunteers – Dec 1965



At Ferrymead tram line opening – 9 May 1970



Early days in public service at Ferrymead



178 in the city (late 1930s livery) – 1995



Armistice Day 2018 – near Bridge of Remembrance