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Fares Please! Retired Transport Workers' Oral History Project

Interview with Dick Redman
Biographical Notes and Timed Summary



HMSS 0367 "Fares, Please!", Retired ACT Transport Employees Club Oral History Project

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Interviewee: Walter ("Dick") Redman

Occupation: bus conductor, driver and senior driving instructor

Year of birth: 1928

Name of Interviewer:... Barry York

Number of Minutes: Session of 26 March 2010: Track 1 is 36:37 and track 2 is 24:09. Session of 2 April 2010: Track 1 is 20:50; track 2 is 07:22 and track 3 is 24:54 (Total duration of both sessions: 113:52)

Date: 26 March and 2 April 2010

Restrictions on Use: None

Biographical summary: Dick Redman was born at Orbost, Victoria, in 1928. The family moved to the South Coast and in 1947 Dick came to Canberra and started on the buses in 1950. He was a conductor for five years, then became a driver, and a senior driving instructor. He was an instructor for 19 years. He retired in 1989.

Counter (time)	Subject matter
00:00 Track 1	Session of 26 March 2010 Introduction by interviewer; family background; father a sleeper cutter, worked on the roads during the Depression; mother reared the six boys; during the War Dick worked with his father cutting sleepers; talks about his early education; left school at 14; his brothers were in the Forces during the War.
04:59	Jobs he did after he left school; essential industries during the War; moved to Canberra with a friend in 1947 after hearing that work was available in the national capital; did bakers' apprenticeship in Queanbeyan; met wife-to-be; had a friend (Vic Keeley) in Canberra who worked on the buses who convinced him to apply for a job on the buses (Department of Interior); didn't have a car back then, mostly travelled by bus; more about applying for job with the buses.
09:52	Recalls recruitment process and first day at work (1950); two days of training as a conductor; early morning shift; Arthur Atkins (driver); cold in Winter (wife knitted him a pair of knee-socks); no heating on the old Regal buses back then; recalls phasing in of one-man buses; describes in detail his role as conductor.
14:46	Recalls rates of pay back then; discusses adequacy of income; his wife worked as a secretary/stenographer for prime ministers Chifley and Menzies; four children in family; talks in detail about bus routes back then.
19:35	Extent of business of the buses; describes daily routine of work as a conductor; recalls fares in 1950; describes 'cashing in' process; more detail about the bus routes.
25:48	Recalls the old depots and facilities; Ainslie bus sheds off Tyson Street; he resided at Ainslie and was given a shift starting at Ainslie; Cowper Street shelter; approves of preservation of



	heritage buildings; talks about buses and Canberra's extremes of climate; windscreen could be opened on old buses for fresh air in Summer.
30:18	Talks about moving on to become a driver after five years as a conductor; recalls training and testing to be a driver; Harry Knight; seniority in allocating shifts; police clearance needed; dress code, code of behaviour.
36:37 End of Track 1	End of Track 1 (Session 26 March 2010)
00:00 Track 2	Session of 26 March 2010 More about behaviour code; union membership, Transport Workers Union; Life Membership of TWU; "quite a few" industrial disputes; recalls a strike over Christmas ("a very sad Christmas for all of us with no money coming in"); "fought for our rights"; good conditions; full uniforms (including shoes and socks).
05:17	Discipline of drivers who did the wrong thing; camaraderie and cooperation among the workers in the Kingston depot; relationship between drivers/conductors and the passengers; inspectors.
10:39	School runs; good relationship with children on the bus; recalls the most popular (busiest) runs.
15:28	Women in the industry; recalls training the first woman driver in February 1977; needed separate facilities at terminuses; Beryl Gill was the first woman driver he trained; recalls other women drivers; response of men to women drivers;
19:15	Responds to question as to what he liked best about his job; talks about becoming an instructor, a position he held for 19 years; trained by police to be an instructor; humorous anecdote about a regular passenger.
24:09 End of Track 2	End of track 2 (Session of 26 March 2010)
00:00 Track 1	Track 1 (Session 2 April 2010) Mr. Redman comments on previous session, having listened to the CD of it, and makes a correction; responds to question about how many drivers he would have trained (more than a hundred); more about the training and testing of drivers; defensive driving course; safety record of buses in Canberra.
06:06	Recalls accident near Cotter River involving another driver; reflects on Canberra in the 1950s ("It was like a country town in those days"), physical lay-out, shops, suburbs, bus runs.
12:41	Talks more about bus runs and shops, Goulburn, Queanbeyan; condition of roads in 1950s; rear-engine motors used to 'suck up' the dust on gravel roads; inner area of city had sealed roads.





16:40	Driving in hot Summer in Canberra; dust a problem back then; no air-conditioning on buses back then; recalls floods in Canberra, low-lying bridges under water; bus drivers would not attempt to cross in floods.
20:50 End of Track 1	End of Track 1 (Session 2 April 2010)
00:00 Track 2	Session 2 April 2010 Recalls social and recreational life in Canberra in the 1950s; picture theatres; Albert Hall dances, bus runs from Albert Hall; dances at the Causeway, bus runs from Causeway Hall; two runs needed when 'Gone with the Wind' was screened at the Capitol Theatre.
02:59	Sporting activities in Canberra back then; no special bus runs; Acton oval the main venue (flooded for the lake); boxing (boxers mostly trained in Queanbeyan).
04:47	Talks about helping to establish the Police Boys Club at Turner; bingo at Manuka Services Club; boxing and wrestling tournaments at Duntroon;
07:22	End of Track 2 (Session 2 April 2010)
00:00 Track 3	Track 3 (Session 2 April 2010) Held a garage sale in Civic to raise funds for the Police Boys Club; Johnny Famechon; Jack Dealy; Col Hillier; reasons for being involved with Police Boys Club; Harry Luton; George Groves; Martin Stockman; stone from Queanbeyan quarry donated to the building of the Police Boys Club.
04:28	Forms of transport in Canberra back then, other than buses; feelings about how Canberra has changed over the decades; opinion as to what should happen to Kingston Depot; describes the Depot in his time there "everything was under the one roof").
08:42	Recalls the routines of work in the old depot; approximately 40 buses and 27 shifts in 1950; more about routines and responsibilities in the depot; time-tabling.
13:32	Memorable characters with whom he worked in the depot; "We all got on well together"; cards, billiards; started a social club in 1951, darts, raffles, Christmas party for drivers' children; estimates number of workers in the depot.
17:58	Changes to facilities to cater for advent of women drivers; a closing word by Mr. Redman (recalls bus runs for migrant workmen from Fairbairn hostel – the contractors paid their fares); explains how he ended up with the nickname 'Dick'.
24:54	End of Track 3 (Session 2 April 2010) END OF INTERVIEW

