

## CONTACT US



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Group: Collins Connect

## COLLINS CONNECT WEBSITE

Check out our new website at [www.collins-connect.com](http://www.collins-connect.com)

Same website address with a new modern look and feel.

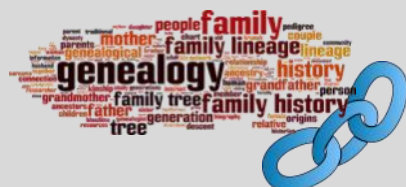
## YOUR NEWSLETTER EDITOR

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Collins Connect acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we live and pays its respect to the Elders past and present.



**COLLINS CONNECT** annual reunion was held on the 6th October 2024. With the theme of ‘Chat ‘n’ Chew’ the afternoon commenced with a new Collins Connect theme song ‘Teach your children’. The Collins family of Corrine Collins, Lauren Rafferty, Marian Collins Angel & Winston D’Silva, Elvis Collins, Alan D’Cruz and Redver Dubier introduced the signature tune that will become the new Collins Connect theme song.

The afternoon was spent with family members mingling and dining on an Indian buffet meal followed by Bingo. It was also appropriate for the attendees to fondly remember our previous attendees: Owen D’Souza and Otto Harris, both of whom were remembered with a minute silence. They were missed and remain forever in our thoughts and prayers.

Everyone who attended enjoyed the afternoon. A poll conducted on the day voted for the annual event to continue to be held in October with catering provided.



## From the editors desk:

It is with a heavy heart that we feel the sadness of the passing of our beloved Collins Connect #1 patriarch and supporter ‘**NOEL OTTO HARRIS**’. From the conception of Collins Connect, Otto has been a constant stalwart, advocate and campaigner for encouraging us to achieve our ‘Mission Statement’ and that is *“To delve further into the Collins family tree exploring the many branches to discover our ancestral origins. Introducing the younger generation to the ancestral tree, reuniting annually to socialise, share memories and acknowledge the past, present and emerging generations.”* He has shared many memories of him growing up in Madras, his family celebrations, even his recollection of many events during World War II and life in general.

Collins Connect has truly lost a beautiful gentleman and a humble heart. He will be sadly missed but forever in our thoughts and hearts. RIP

## When Madras ran on trams

By Richard O'Connor

Madras is the first metropolis of modern India. And for long, certainly in the decades leading up to Indian Independence, she has been the queen amongst metropolises in the country. I say queen because, while Calcutta was unkempt and Mumbai overcrowded and Delhi still to be developed, Madras was calm, verdant and dignified like no other.

Nothing symbolised this spirit more than the electric tramways of the city, which were the first to be set up in the country. Inaugurated in 1895 and administered by the Madras Electric Tramways, trams became the prime mode of commutation within its urban centre, gradually replacing the hand-drawn rickshaws and the horse-drawn jhutkas. When it was introduced, people were sceptical of this little brute that was given its own rails on common roads. But the public were given free rides in the initial days and people soon became fond of it.



*The Electricity Board office near the Royapettah Flyover used to be the shed where trams were parked. A ride from Royapettah to Parrys took nearly an hour and cost 2 annas. On Sundays you could buy a go-as-you-please ticket for 4 annas which is a quarter of today's rupee. The tram used to be just another person on the road. It blended with the community. I haven't tried to run and catch a tram. The tram would move very slowly, and the bell would ring constantly to alert people. In those days most people would ride a bicycle. Since the tracks were embedded in the ground, often the cycle tyres would get stuck in the rail track and it was a struggle to get the wheel out.*



T.R. Lakshmi Narayanan (The Hindu)

Trams moved at a gentle speed of 7 kilometres an hour or so, and one could, in fact, tour the city at a leisurely pace. The commute to office too was slow-paced, but was filled with lively conversation on topics ranging from law to sport to business to medicine. After all, the tram services began at the Madras Port area which was home to the top business houses, educational institutions, the Madras High Court and of course, the Custom House. There were several tram routes in the city, and the flagship route was the one that ran from Royapuram to Mylapore, with stops at Custom House, Central Station, Egmore, Mount Road GPO, Royapettah and Luz. A variation of this route was one that branched off at Mount Road towards Triplicane, Ice House and Santhome. Another line connected Central Station to Purasawalkam (Roxy) via Choolai.

*Pedestrians had no fear of getting run over and could boldly cross the road in the face of an approaching tram. I have never heard of a tram running over a pedestrian or causing a serious accident. The tram never overtook another vehicle. It remained content to move on its "predestined grooves". And since it generated enough noise in motion, it announced its presence by clanging bells instead of honking a horn. Perhaps the most passenger-friendly feature of the tram was the low floor height that made it easily accessible to the old and the young, man woman or child. Truly, a gentleman on Madras roads!*

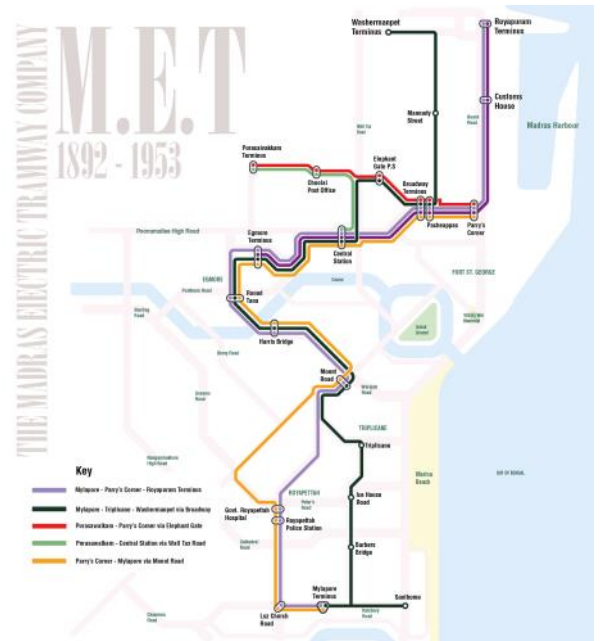
K. Balaseri (Madras Musings)

Trams came in two sizes, one 35 feet in length, and the other 50 feet with a capacity to carry 60 passengers. Some passengers sat on wooden benches which faced each other, while others stood on the aisle between the two. Though Indians enjoyed travelling by tram, the service was generally not patronized by Europeans. At its height, the Madras Electric Tramways operated 97 cars on 24 kilometres of track and carried over one lakh passengers a day. Looking at old black & white photos of these trams in the city, they do come across as quaint, though rudimentary. Almost every tram sported an advertisement board on its hood, and it was common to see names such as Woodward's Gripe Water or Zandu Balm or Lodhra Ladie's Tonic.

With the introduction of public buses in the late 1920s which increased the speed of travel from one point to another, the trams were becoming a bit burdensome on city roads. Furthermore, the promoters were not able to break even, and were unable to restructure the enterprise without cutting jobs. Negotiations with the worker's union were not fruitful, and the tramways were forced to shut down a few years after Independence. About 1650 workers lost their jobs. Now, over 70 years since Madras bid a sudden farewell to the tramways in 1953, people still look back to those days with nostalgia.

*When I was five years old, I often used to take the tramway route from Luz to Parry's Corner. The maximum fare was just two annas. The tram used to pass through the Cooum river, which unlike today, used to be clean, scenic and functional. People used to take a bath in the water body during the wee hours, the vegetable and flower vendors used to pile their produce in small boats called the parisal and sell it. In 1953, when the tram services were discontinued, it came as a huge disappointment. Though I missed the breezy rides, as I grew up, I realised how much I had fallen in love with the city I'd seen through the tram windows.*

**Indian Express)**



**Venugopalan Sundarajan (The New**

Ah, those bygone days, when life was slow-paced, gentle, joyous and peaceful! Trams have truly epitomised a way of life, at once harmonious and charming, and sad to say, now long gone.



Have a guess where this ? Trams On Esplanade Road British Era Madras 1945 .



# Collins Connect Christmas Carols



With popular demand, Collins Connect Christmas Carols is back with bigger plans and more entertainment. Who can forget the smell of Christmas cakes, kul kuls and OT which will be on sale. The carols are opened to family and friends as that's what Christmas is all about. Collins Connect aims to resonate the sense, spirit and the Christmas traditions that were handed down from generation to generation. Whilst most of these traditions seem to be dying with the new generation of families, here in Melbourne, Australia Collins Connect aspires to reinforce some of these traditions.

If you are in Melbourne, why not come along. Bring your family and friends in what will be an enjoyable start to the festive season.

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## Gordon Borthwick



**Collins Connect** would like to wish Gordon Borthwick, a Happy 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday.

Gordon celebrated this great milestone on the 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 with family: wife Maureen, sons Dean and Paul and daughters Sallyann and Paula, grandchildren, relatives and friends.

Gordon has been a stalwart of the Anglo-Indian community and his immediate and extended family; ever ready to lend a hand and support anyone in need. He has been and continues to be a family man who lives his life with integrity and compassion. Gordon's motto is living

life to the full and seizing every opportunity to create a legacy that will stand the test of time.

Gordon is the grandson of Adelaide Collins and the son of Elizabeth Glayds (nee Fernandez) and Harold Malcom Borthwick.



Anyone celebrating a special birthday, anniversary or special occasions, and would like a special mention, please feel free to drop us a line at [collinsconnect.2018@gmail.com](mailto:collinsconnect.2018@gmail.com). We would love to hear from you.

As a family group, we welcome all families to be involved whether its ideas, suggestions and most of all participation. Why not reach out to a team member or drop us a line?

EDITOR—Karen Collins

**Want to help?**

CO-EDITOR—Corrine Collins

If you would like to contribute to the Collins Connect newsletters, we encourage you to get in contact with any team member.