

100 Newry Street,  
 North Fitzroy. 3068.  
 21 January 1990.

Dear Keith,

I enclose draft of proposed article relating to "M" Class for your information. I look forward to your comments in due course.

While it is intended for publication in Trolley Wire, I would appreciate you keeping its contents confidential at this stage: having put in much hard work, I want its impact to be maximum.

I also enclose material found in HTT Inward Letter Book No. 4:

Cost of Repairs (labour & material) to Electrical Equipment of Different Types of Car:

From 10 October 1918 to 26 February 1919.

*(Period :-  
 4½ Months)*

	1-10 Combination	11-19 Bogie magnetic	21-24 PMTT	20, 25-32 Bogie air
Controllers:	.531d	.438d	.264d	.187d
Field Coils:	10.742d	.064d	1.137d	.101d
Armatures:	24.727d	5.083d	75.042d	1.220d
Comutators:	2.626d	.084d	2.564d	-
Total:	38.628d	5.669d	79.007d	1.508d

All figures average per car per 1000 miles.

Miles run:	55,314	146,027	18,916	145,882
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Yours faithfully,

Michael Norbury.

No. of bars in each group:	10	9	4	9
Average Miles run per bar:	5,531.4	16,225.2	4,729.0	16,209.1



## The Conundrum of the Footscray "M" Class

The seventeen cars forming the "M" class of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board, one of the several types of single truck open California combination car used in Melbourne, were numbered by the Board in two groups : ten cars in the 107-116 range, and seven cars in the 183-189 range.

When the Board tookover the undertakings of the various municipal tramways trusts on 2 February 1920, it found itself with cars bearing similar numbers. In the renumbering that this necessitated, the 106 cars (including those on order) of the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust, the largest pre-Board system, retained their numbers. The next group of numbers was allocated to cars of the Hawthorn Tramways Trust. Each Hawthorn car number had 106 added to it to arrive at the Board's unified fleet number. Thus, HTT No.8 became Board No. 114.

The other trusts were allocated numbers higher than Hawthorn. Cars from the Footscray Tramways Trust were numbered in the range 183-189.

Because of the basis of the car numbering system, the owner of any particular car immediately prior to takeover by the Board can be deduced. However, that owner is not necessarily the original owner of a car.

The fourth edition of "Destination City"<sup>1</sup> states that MMTB Nos. 107-116 were built in 1916 for the HTT by Duncan and Fraser, and MMTB Nos. 183-189 were built in 1920 by Duncan and Fraser to the order of the FTT, but were delivered after takeover by the Board.

Indeed, the Board's first Report and Statement of Accounts, for the year ended 30 June 1920, contains the following statement:

"Seven new cars originally purchased by the Footscray Tramways Trust have been temporarily transferred to the Eastern System....."<sup>2</sup>

Taking both sources together, in respect of cars Nos. 183-189, the clear inference is that these cars were ordered and paid for by the FTT prior to 2 February 1920, were built by

1. p.18.

2. p.22.

Duncan and Fraser in 1920, and delivered after takeover by the Board.

Such an inference is wrong.

On 18 May 1914 a conference of representatives of the Melbourne City Council, Richmond City Council, Hawthorn City Council, and Camberwell Town Council, the four members of the proposed Hawthorn Tramways Trust<sup>3</sup>, met to consider a report prepared by Messrs McCarty, Underwood & Co, consulting electrical engineers<sup>4</sup> in relation to that Trust.

This report<sup>5</sup> dealt with, amongst other matters, the potential traffic on the line and the number and type of cars needed to operate the line. In essence, it recommended that the proposed Trust could expect an average daily revenue of £80/-/- for the entire line<sup>6</sup> and that the Trust should purchase ten single truck combination cars and ten bogie cars<sup>7</sup> to deal with the traffic.

Subsequently, tenders were called, and by 14 April 1915, the HTT had received three tenders for single truck car bodies:

Duncan and Fraser	£550 per car
	delivery in seven months,
Chas. Rush	£557 per car
	delivery in ten months,
A. Pengelley	£585
	delivery in 20 months.

After some negotiations, Duncan and Fraser were persuaded to supply nine bodies at a price of £548/2/6 each, with delivery in six months.<sup>9</sup>

The reduction in price was achieved by substituting Queensland maple for ash. [Why the contract was for only nine bodies is a mystery. There are vague suggestions relating to a "sample" car; perhaps Duncan and Fraser already had one car built as a "demonstration" model necessitating the construction of only nine bodies]. British Westinghouse was successful in tendering for the supply of ten sets of motor equipment and magnetic brakes for single truck cars.<sup>10</sup>

The first portion of the line, from Princes Bridge to the Depot at the corner of Wallen Road and Power Street was

3. Melbourne to Burwood Tramways Act, 1914.
4. Hawthorn and Camberwell Citizen 22 May 1914.
5. A copy of the report is held in the T.M.S.V. archives.
6. p.
7. p.
8. Hawthorn Tramways Trust minute book: 14 April 1915
9.        ibid. 22 April 1915
10.       ibid. 27 April 1915

opened on Thursday, 6 April 1916. Six bogie cars<sup>11</sup> were in use that day. The single truck cars, while otherwise complete, could not be used that day as they lacked motors: these arrived in Melbourne by steamship on 3 May 1916.<sup>12</sup>

By that time, it had become apparent that traffic was much heavier than anticipated. The revenue for the first few days was as follows:

Friday, 7 April 1916	£ 73/12/9
Saturday, 8 April 1916	£101/16/2
Monday, 10 April 1916	£138/6/2

It had been expected that the first two sections of the line [i.e. from Princes Bridge to Power Street] would not pay well.<sup>13</sup> However, the average daily receipts for the first four weeks operation were £73/-/-.<sup>14</sup>

The trend continued. With the opening of the line to Auburn Road on 7 May 1916 revenue was:

Sunday, 7 May	£104
Monday, 8 May	£ 93
Tuesday, 9 May	£89 <sup>15</sup>

It was apparent that the Trust would have too few cars to serve the traffic offering when the line was open to Burwood. In May 1916,<sup>16</sup> it was estimated that the Trust would need 40 cars to operate the line.

By 14 July 1916, at least six single truck cars were operating.<sup>17</sup> Tenders were called for the supply of additional cars, and on 24 July 1916, the Tender and Works Sub-Committee of the HTT decided to recommend acceptance of Duncan and Fraser's tender for eight bogie car bodies and seven combination car bodies.<sup>18</sup> The price per combination car body was £595.<sup>19</sup> By 1 September 1916, all ancillary tenders for the new cars had been let.<sup>20</sup>

← ? cost of  
of car.

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<sup>11</sup>.Hawthorn and Camberwell Citizen 7 April 1916

<sup>12</sup>. ibid. 5 May 1916

<sup>13</sup>. ibid.14 April 1916

<sup>14</sup>. ibid.5 May 1916

<sup>15</sup>. ibid.12 May 1916

<sup>16</sup>. ibid.12 May 1916

<sup>17</sup>. ibid.17 July 1916

<sup>18</sup>.Hawthorn Tramways Trust Tender and Works Sub-Committee  
minute book: 24 July 1916.

<sup>19</sup>. ibid.13 July 1916

<sup>20</sup>.Hawthorn and Camberwell Citizen: 1 September 1916



The new car bodies were complete by 18 May 1917. Industrial action had delayed the supply of material for the extension to the car shed necessary to house the new cars. The new bodies were therefore stored in Adelaide until such time as the extensions to the car shed were complete.<sup>21</sup>

By the end of June, materials had again become available for the extension to the car shed<sup>22</sup> the first of the new bogie cars was in service by 6 July 1917.<sup>23</sup>

Two more such cars were in service by the first week in December 1917, but the remaining bogie car bodies and all the single truck bodies were stored in Adelaide awaiting the completion of the car shed<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, owing to war time disruptions, the HTT had no idea when the electrical equipment for the remaining bodies would arrive.<sup>25</sup> In December 1917, the HTT requested that the Footscray Tramways Trust increase its order for electrical equipment by a further seven sets.<sup>26</sup>

For reasons totally unrelated to a shortage of cars, the HTT was soon to find itself critically short of funds<sup>27</sup>. A statement showing the commitments of the HTT and the funds available as at 1 October 1918 showed two things:

1. Provision of £1,100 for motor equipment from the U.S.
2. There was a shortfall in the funds available to meet commitments of some £5,136.<sup>28</sup>

The HTT took action to put itself in funds. In late September, it offered for sale to the Footscray Tramways Trust seven unused single truck car bodies for £615 each.<sup>29</sup> A report from its engineer suggested to the FTT that the bodies offered by the HTT were vastly superior to anything offered by the PMTT.<sup>30</sup> The two Trusts decided to negotiate a

21. *ibid.* ? 1917

22. *ibid.* 29 June 1917

23. *ibid.* 6 July 1917

24. *ibid.* 7 December 1917

25. *Argus*: 1 January 1918

26. Footscray Tramways Trust minute book p.128 13 December 1917

27. The track of the HTT was in very poor order. Two independent engineering reports, one prepared by Mr. Henderson of the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust, and the other by Mr. Robertson of the Melbourne, Brunswick and Coburg Tramways Trust indicated that extensive and costly repairs were essential.

28. HTT Inward Letter Book No.4: Statement dated 12 September 1918.

29. FTT Minute Book p.243 3 October 1918

30. *ibid.* p.247 10 October 1918

purchase price. The HTT refused to reduce its original offer of £615 per car body, but did agree to "alter name on the cars and do painting necessary".<sup>31</sup> By late October, the Trusts had agreed to the sale of the bodies at £615 each, cash within seven days, bodies to remain at HTT's depot at risk of FTT, no charge for storage. The FTT decided to reimburse the HTT a portion of the cost of insuring the cars while they remained at Hawthorn.<sup>32</sup>

The car bodies remained at Hawthorn until September 1919. On 11 September that year, the FTT took delivery of two of the bodies. On 18 September, the last of the bodies was delivered, the remainder having been delivered in the interim.<sup>33</sup> The bodies were shifted by Thos. Warr & Co.<sup>34</sup>

However, that was not the end of the matter. FTT claimed that certain parts were missing from the cars. This was denied by HTT. Correspondence ensued right up to the absorption of both Trusts by the MMTB.

Cr. Johnston, a member of the FTT, to a public meeting of the Footscray and District Tramways League said in respect of the Trust's trams:

"Mr. Sewell, of Cross Street, made the undergear, the wheels and axles (the first made in the state) were made at Thompsons Castlemaine."<sup>35</sup>

The conundrum is solved.

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<sup>31</sup>. *ibid.* p.250 17 October 1918

<sup>32</sup>. HTT Finance and Traffic Minute Book 25 October 1918, FTT Minute Book p.259 31 October 1918.

<sup>33</sup>. FTT Minute Book p.389 11 September 1919, p.393 18 September 1919.

<sup>34</sup>. *ibid.* p.396 2 October 1919.

<sup>35</sup>. Footscray Advertiser 22 November 1919.