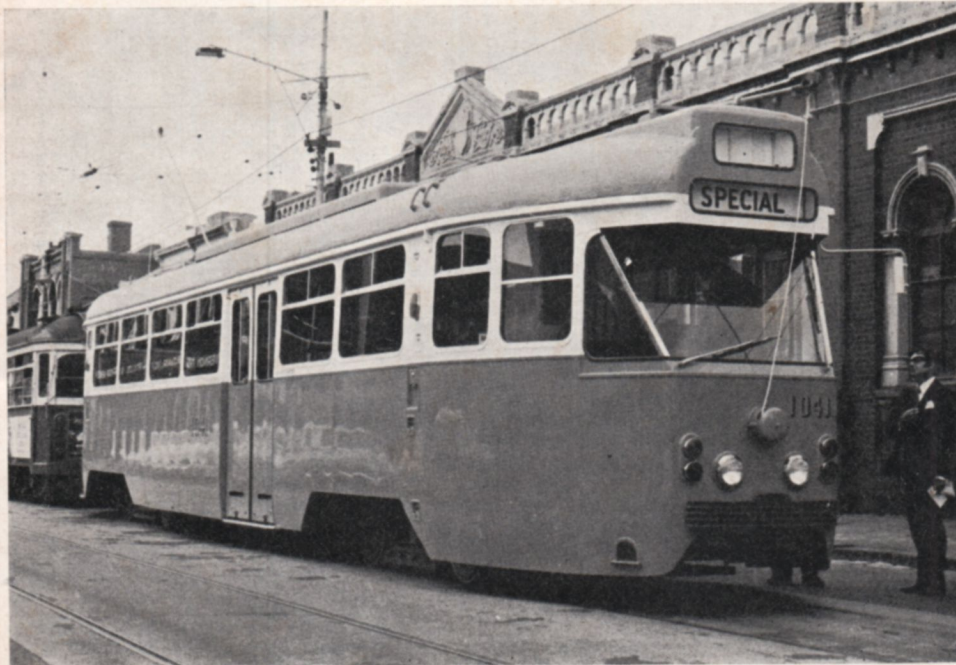


# ELECTRIC TRACTION

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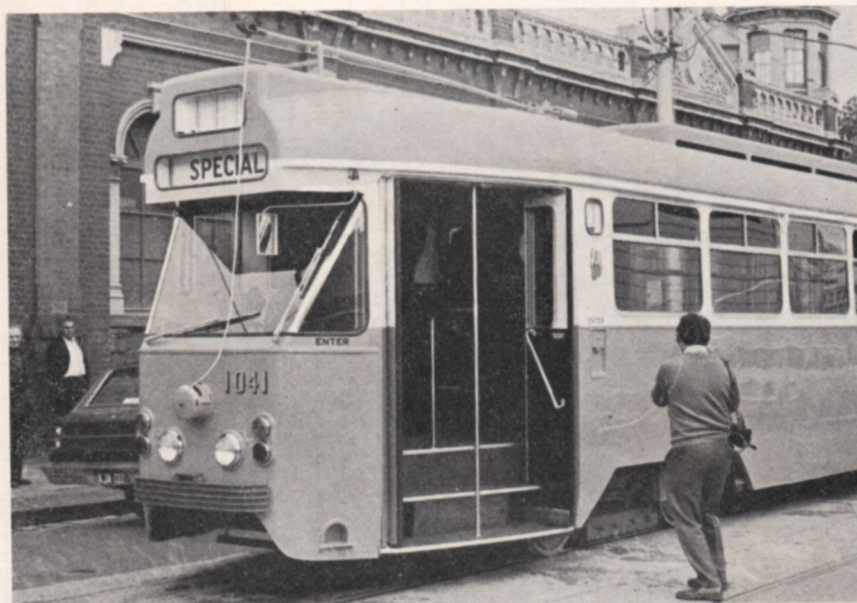
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## MELBOURNE'S NEW TRAM FAILS ON FIRST RUN

By John Prideaux



Another view of Melbourne's new tram, No. 1041, in Gertrude Street, Fitzroy, showing some of the end detail. Note the trolley retriever, the swivelling mirror and the P.C.C.-type trucks.

—L. N. Millar.

The Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board was extremely embarrassed on Thursday, 19th April, when the prototype tramcar, No. 1041, broke down on the way to pick up a number of V.I.P.s for its official first run. The car broke down in Gertrude Street, Fitzroy, leaving the V.I.P.s stranded on the corner of Gertrude and Nicholson Streets, where they were to have been picked up and taken to Parliament House. After the M. & M.T.B. Chairman, Mr. Kirby, informed the Premier, Mr. Hamer, and the Transport Minister, Mr. Wilcox, that the car had broken down and would not be avail-

able, the gentlemen walked the short distance to Parliament House.

It became known that during shunting soon after setting out, a dewirement occurred which appears to have blown a circuit. There was subsequently some loss of power and loss of dynamic braking, which left drum brakes only, for service braking. Unfortunately 1041 stalled on the corner of Smith and Gertrude Streets (famous in cable days) and "W7" class car No. 1035 was used to bank it up the hill.

After the departure of the politicians, 1041 seems to have made its own way back to Preston, but some reports in-

dicating that it was towed from Clifton Hill to save further use of the drum brakes.

The tram was taken back to Preston Workshops for attention and at the time of publication had not yet made its first official appearance.

Some of the events leading up to this day are recorded below.

At an advanced stage of completion, the (pre-production) prototype tram was lowered on to P.C.C. trucks on 13th April. These St. Louis B3 trucks, which came from the (now) stored 980, were fitted recently with a low voltage generator driven from the main longitudinal drive shaft. Similarly another small generator is fitted to the same truck for powering speedometers. These instruments are graduated to 90 m.p.h. and a speed recording graph is included at one control end.

Instrumentation operates on 24 volts, this being chosen to utilize a range of stock items for that voltage available for import. Due to the late delivery of some of these items, the assembly programme was rather more hectic than anticipated.

Exterior rear view mirrors have 24 inch arms and electric pulse remote adjustment, which moves the mirror glass slightly in its back housing. The long arm is out of gauge, however, and the off-side mirror requires to be swung in and clipped close to the bodyside clear of passing tramcars.

Workshop electrician colleagues report that during the early hours of Monday, 16th April (and following much weekend work and testing) the car was operated in Gilbert Road, West Preston by the Workshops Manager and other technicians. That same morning, while "clocking-on" for work, I observed fleet number 1041 labelled on the car sides. Later this number was applied to the dashes in smaller characters, lined up off-centre because of the centrally positioned trolley retrievers.

Hobart trolley bus No. 235 originally carried the pair of retrievers on 1041, and they were lent to the Board by the Tasmanian Transport Museum Society. Standard ropes were found to be too short and required joining to make use of the retrievers.

Overnight on the 17th/18th April, more testing was performed in Gilbert Road.

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A Press debut, with M. & M.T.B. member Mr. Snell in attendance, was arranged for the afternoon of 18th April. It was discovered that one of the trolley retrievers was not tensioning correctly, and so was quickly dismantled and re-fitted. However, this did not cure the problem and it required further attention during the afternoon.

The car was driven out into the workshops sidings for test running in front of the cameras, a Preson Depot crew of driver and conductress being present for familiarization with the vehicle.

My impression of the car's performance was most favourable — the smooth running was very striking, and it seemed that the standing quarter mile might be achieved in less than 18 seconds. Braking appeared to be firm to severe, particularly when "dead man" brakes are actuated.

Other items of interest about 1041, which is 56 feet long and weighs almost 19 tons, follow:

Power operated folding doors were supplied by Duwag.

Motorised route number and destination boxes are of Italian design, using cards that flip over like those at Sydney and Melbourne International Airports. The front route number displays have three figures, but those on the sides have two only.

There is no provision at present to display all the destination signs on a regular roll, nor is there provision for auxiliary boards or run discs. "T.O.A." dynamic microphones have been installed.

"Mistral" fans in the ceiling at the car front supply fresh air, heated if necessary, and rear exhaust ceiling fans remove stale air. This pattern is reversed when the car shunts.

Three automotive-sized batteries are contained in one lower side compartment, which opens like a luggage locker on tourist coaches.

Sand hoppers are topped up from outside the car via lockable hatches behind the front doors.

The one item to hand concerning the Commonwealth Engineering contract cars is that they will be equipped with ASEA motors.

On 19th April, the plywood mock-up half length tram was broken up in the Paint Shop.