

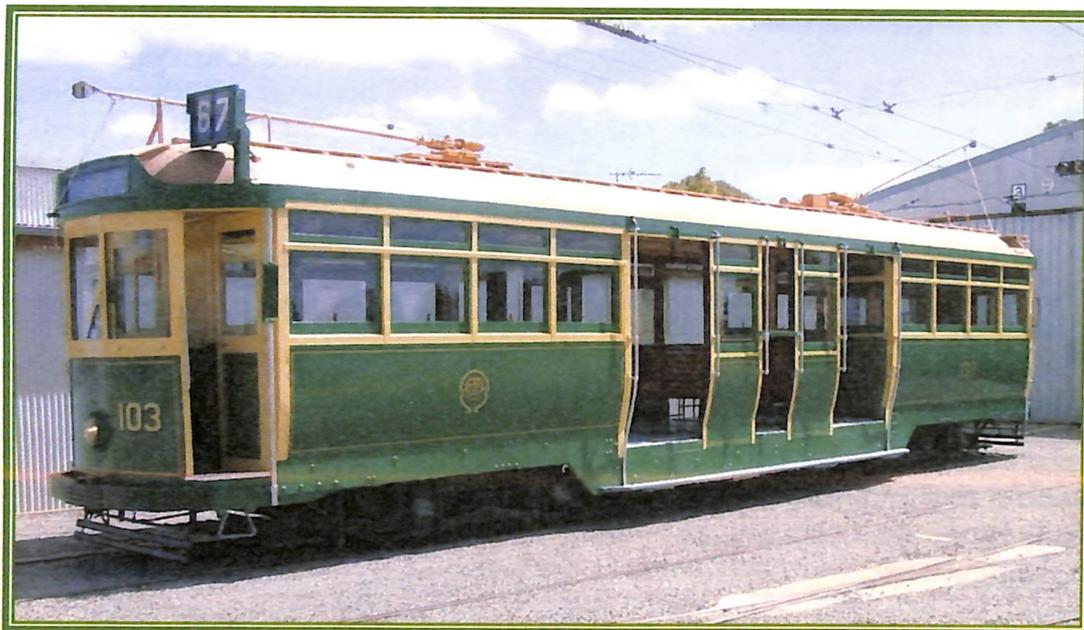


25 June 2008

The Judging Committee
COTMA Achievement Award
PO Box 61
CARLTON SOUTH VICTORIA 3053

**NOMINATION OF THE PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION OF
MELBOURNE & METROPOLITAN TRAMWAYS BOARD
L CLASS TRAM No. 103
FOR THE COTMA ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

The Committee of Management of the Melbourne Tramcar Preservation Association Inc. would like to nominate the preservation and restoration of Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board L Class tram No. 103 for the 2008 COTMA Achievement Award.



*L 103 posed in front of the Car barn at Haddon on completion of its restoration.
Photo – Anthony Smith*

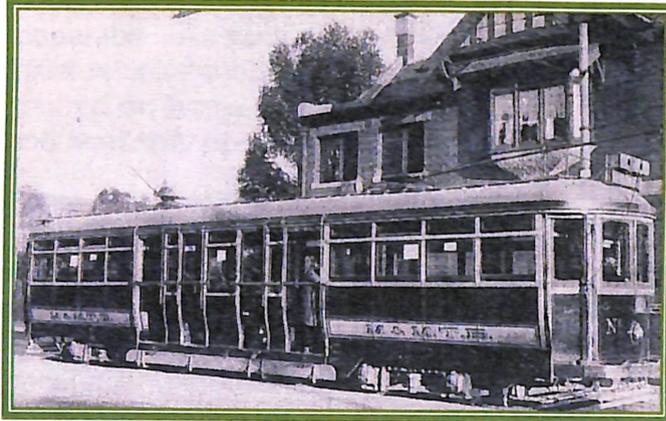
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History

L class No. 103 was one of six trams built in 1921 by James Moore & Sons Pty Ltd. The L class were ordered by the Prahran and Malvern Tramways Trust, but were delivered after the formation of the Melbourne and Metropolitan Tramways Board.



*L 106 (above) and L 105 (right) in as built condition.
Photos – Wal Jack (L 106), MMTB (L105).*

The L Class were the first four-motored trams on the main Melbourne system, second only to the Victorian Railways dropcentre cars. The body styling was very reminiscent of the earlier maximum-traction trams and also of the shared similarities to the body styling of the Adelaide dropcentre trams that were built in the same period.

In 1934 all of the L Class trams received modifications to their dropcentres to conform with the standard W2 Class tram layout. Included in this modification was the addition of a false floor to the dropcentre section to equalise the step heights both into the tram and into the saloon.



*L 103 in Flinders Lane, turning into William Street,
4 December 1967. Photo courtesy Glen G Mills*

Over the years various other modifications were carried out, the most noticeable being modifications to the construction of the driver's cabins, and the installation of lined ceilings.



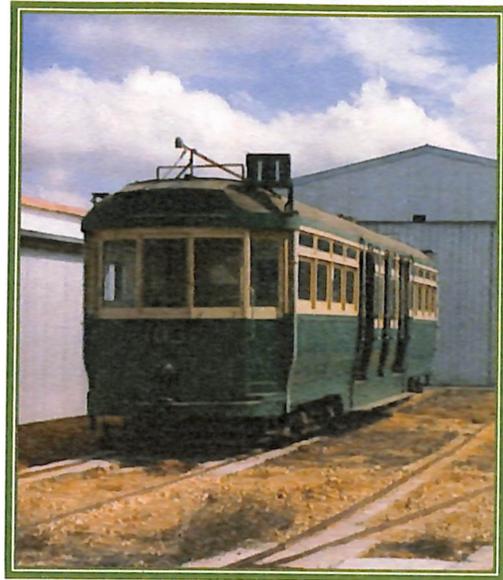
It was in this final form that L class No. 103 was acquired by the then Haddon Tramway Workshops on 26 May 1982 after having run a total of 1,793,116 Miles in service in Melbourne.

*L 103 in Peel Street North Melbourne.
Photo – Anthony Smith*

Preservation and Restoration

When acquired from Melbourne the GE247 motors and the DH 16 compressor from L class No. 103 were retained by the MMTB as spares for W class trams in its fleet, rendering it inoperable. As such, the priority for the initial refurbishment of trams at Haddon centred on trams which were complete and nominally operable.

Some early work was carried out on L 103, scraping off old paint and filling and priming the surfaces for eventual painting. Most of this work was carried out as fill-in work while work was being undertaken on other trams and on other projects at the Museum.



*L 103 after arrival at Haddon.
Photo – Anthony Smith*



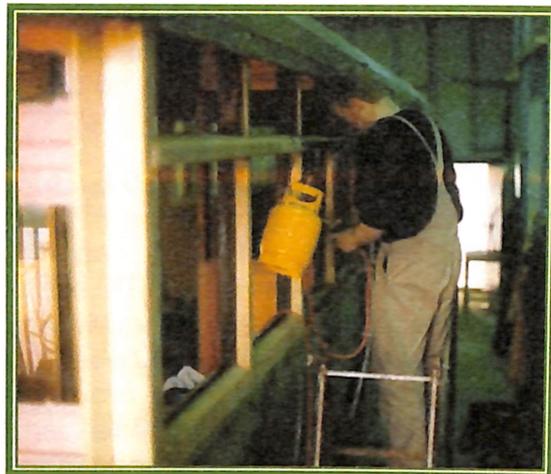
Sister car L 105 awaiting dismantling at Haddon. Photo – Anthony Smith

An important part of works that contributed to L 103's restoration involved the careful dismantling of the body of sister car L 105 to provide usable components to assist in the restoration of L 103. Other mechanical components from L 105 assisted in the eventual restoration of VR 41.

On completion of W4 670 and W2 407, the decision was made to tackle L 103 as the next major project, and it entered the workshop in early 1995 for bodywork to commence.

Works on L 103 were still impacted by other construction works at the Museum site, so its progression was a lot slower than the previous two trams. Initially work concentrated on completing the scraping and filling of the exterior, and repairs to windows and doors.

*Richard Gipps burns and scrapes the old paint from the exterior of L 103.
Photo – Anthony Smith*



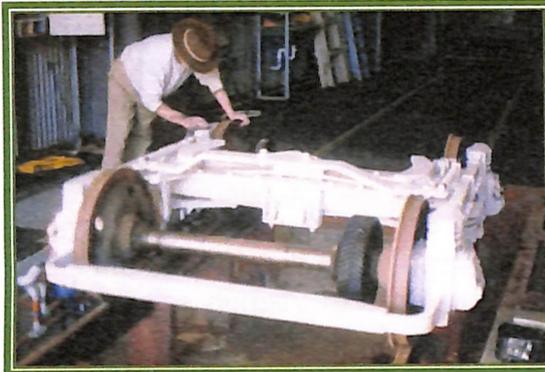
As the GE247 motors were still unobtainable in the late 1990's the Museum set about modifying L 103's Brill 77E trucks to accommodate MV101 motors from W2 class tram 222.

L 103 from the time of its arrival had sat on the trucks from sister car L 105, leaving L 103's trucks free for working on. Initially the truck frames were completely dismantled, cleaned, worn components rebuilt, and then reassembled using the wheelsets from 222.



*The truck frames from L 103 after being sandblasted and primed.
Photo – Anthony Smith*

The task of fitting the MV101 motors required some additional engineering work to be carried out on the truck frames to allow them to fit, but eventually all four motors were reunited with their respective wheelsets.



*John Withers cleans the truck frames after fitting of the wheelsets for the MV101 motors.
Photo – Anthony Smith*



*Anthony Smith and Kym Smith carrying out non-live testing of the 77E trucks for L 103 after fitting of the MV101 motors.
Photo – Jacqui Smith*

A DH16 compressor was also sourced during this time for eventual fitting to the tram, being purchased from Bendigo.

In late 2001, works commenced on VR 41, again relegating L 103 to the back burner, though some small tasks continued on the bodywork, as well as the completion of the trucks.



*Kym Smith making final adjustments and lubricating the trucks for L 103 prior to their reinstallation.
Photo – Anthony Smith*

15 September 2002 saw a unique step forward on the project in a very unusual way. To mark the 50th birthday of Anthony Smith, General Manager of the MTPA, a crew of volunteers from Bendigo Tramways travelled to Haddon with the equipment needed to lift L 103 and install the refurbished trucks and compressor under the tram. What else can you give a General Manager who already had (at that stage) six trams and 17 Valiants as a birthday present?



The Bendigo crew removing the temporary trucks from under L 103 prior to reinstalling the overhauled trucks.

Photo – Anthony Smith

The whole event was kept secret from Anthony until the bus load of willing and able drove through the gate.

Within the space of a few hours L 103 had been lifted, the trucks exchanged, compressor installed, and the tram lowered onto its original and now refurbished trucks.

With the work completed the band of help then settled in to enjoy a barbeque to fully celebrate Anthony's birthday.

Work over the following few weeks in connecting motor leads, connecting the compressor, checking and ensuring all wiring was safe, connecting brake rigging, and reinstalling trolley poles allowed L 103 to become mobile again on 24 November 2002.

With works continuing on VR 41 during 2003 and the first half of 2004, it wasn't until the second half of 2004 that L 103 became the primary restoration project again.



Anthony Smith sealing and painting the roof of L 103. Photo – Jacqui Smith



Jacqui Smith undercoating the side panels of L 103. Photo – Anthony Smith

With the mechanical work now completed, work concentrated on completing the scraping and filling of the external surfaces, followed by priming, undercoating, and gloss coating the exterior.

In parallel with works on the main car body exterior, work was undertaken on the windows and interior trim to return these to a serviceable and finished condition.

During 2005 and 2006 work continued on the exterior and interior of the tram until late 2006 when the gold pinstriping, numbers and MMTB crests were applied.

L 103 after completion of the pinstriping and numbers. The cab front numbers were later replaced with the correct height numbers.

Photo – Kym Smith

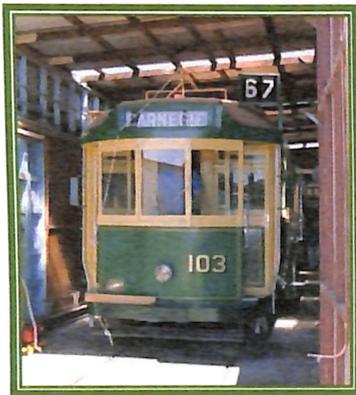


Other site projects took precedence during 2007, but finishing works continued such as the reinstallation of seating, fitting of handrails and hand straps, polishing of brass components, and refitting of windows and doors.

The final task to be completed was the installation of bell cords, completing the restoration project in March 2008.



Cindy Tassie varnishing the timber louvres from L 103. Photo – Anthony Smith



Anthony Smith drives L 103 from the workshop on completion of its restoration.

Photo – Jacqui Smith

L 103 has been returned to its late 1950's/early 1960's appearance featuring green window pillars, gold pinstriping, numbers to the sides of the headlights, and numbers and logos on the saloon panels.

The restoration works are a credit to all involved, and thanks are due to the restoration team who included (in alphabetical order) Daniel Edwards, Richard Gipps, Arthur Ireland, Frank Schroeders, Anthony Smith, Jacqui Smith, Kym Smith, Cindy Tassie, Craig Tooke, and John Withers.

L 103 is unique in that of the four remaining L Class Trams it is the first to be restored to operating condition from an unserviceable condition, the first to be restored to an authentic livery, and the first to be restored by solely by a voluntary organisation.

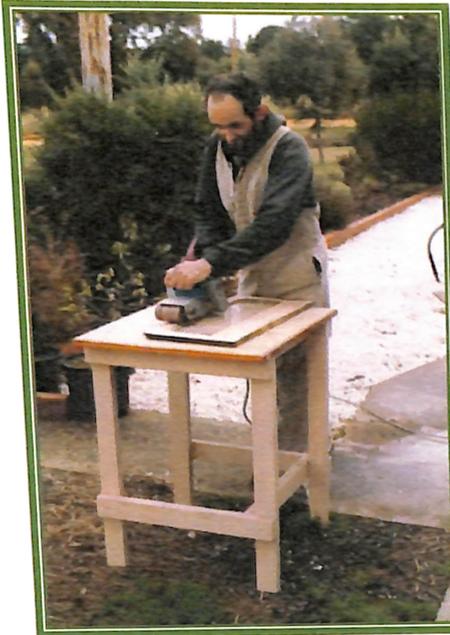
All funding for works on L 103 was sourced solely through donations of members and friends, and all work on the tram was carried out by members and volunteers.

The majority of L 103 is original components restored for reuse. Where the original components have been unserviceable, in the first instance they have been sourced from the salvaged body of components of sister car L 105, in the second instance like components have been sourced from other trams, in the third instance components have been sourced from similar era trams, and in the fourth instance new replacement components have been used.



Restored and re-varnished dropcentre seat and controller covers for L 103. Photo – Anthony Smith

By carrying out the refurbishment in such a fashion has resulted in the integrity of the tram being maintained to its highest level, and maintaining the tram in essentially as original a form as possible.



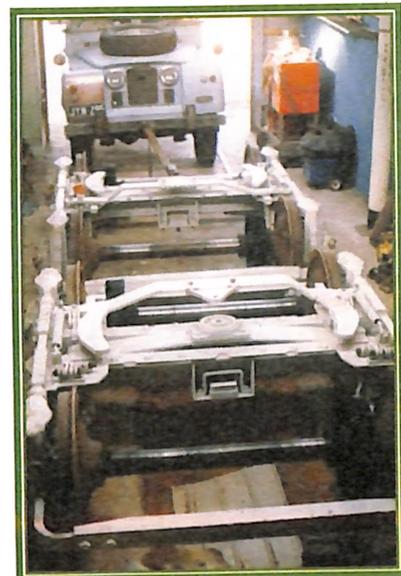
*Arthur Ireland sands down a hopper window from L 103.
Photo – Anthony Smith*



*Anthony Smith installing the freshly varnished dropcentre seats in L 103.
Photo – Jacqui Smith*



Arthur Ireland sanding down a saloon door from L 103. Photo – Anthony Smith



*John Withers' 'infamous' Land Rover pushes the trucks for L 103 into the Truck Shop for fitting of motors.
Photo – Anthony Smith*

Before the 'Haddon' touch...



Upper Photo – VR 41 and L 103 await their restorations, November 1991.
Photo courtesy Bob Pearce.

After the 'Haddon' touch...



VR 41 and L 103 on the Carbarn fan at Haddon, April 2008.
Photo – Anthony Smith

L 103 now holds a significant place in the Museum's collection, and in addition is a valuable contribution to the tram preservation movement in Victoria as well as to the MTPA's collection where it becomes the fourth of seven trams to be fully restored to operating condition; a significant milestone recognising that over half of the collection has now been restored.



*L 103 sits proudly at the Upper Terminus at Haddon.
Photo – Anthony Smith*

***Submitted by Kym Smith on behalf of the Committee of Management
of the Melbourne Tramcar Preservation Association.***