

Accrington Corporation Steam Tramways Co. Ltd.



121

1886-1907

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Cover Illustration: No. 21 an ex-Blackburn Corporation Thomas Green loco in Peel Street, Accrington. The loco dated from 1887 and was purchased in 1901. (LTHL collection).

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The Accrington Corporation Steam Tramways Company was a joint venture between the Corporation and a private concern, under the Accrington Corporation Tramways Act of 1882.

Construction began in 1884 with three routes radiating from the Market Place. The first ran to the Commercial Hotel in Church, via Blackburn Road, travelling past the Town Hall and the tram depot in Ellison Street. The second route terminated at the 'Load of Mischief' in Clayton-le-Moors and ran via Whalley Road. The third route ran to Baxenden Station on the boundary with Haslingden, along Abbey Street and Manchester Road. The infrastructure and depot were owned by the Corporation and leased to the company for a period of 21 years.

On the 5th April 1886 public services began on the section between Church (where a connection with the track of the Blackburn Corporation Tramways Company was made in 1887, although through running never took place) and Clayton-le-Moors, via the Market Place, with the Baxenden route opening on the 12th June. Extensions to this section were made on 27th August 1887 to the Commercial Hotel in the centre of Haslingden, and finally on to the Haslingden/Rawtenstall boundary at Lockgate and into Queens Square in Rawtenstall in November. These sections of track were owned by Haslingden and Rawtenstall Corporations respectively but leased to the company, again for a period of 21 years. The final section of the tramway from Lockgate into Queens Square, Rawtenstall had originally been sanctioned as the Rossendale Valley extension of the Manchester, Bury, Rochdale & Oldham Steam Tramway Company's

line from Rochdale through Bacup and into Rawtenstall, but the MBRO system never progressed beyond Whitworth, a few miles short of Bacup. At Queen's Square, the Accrington system connected with the Rossendale Valley Tramway Company's route into Bacup, but through running was never agreed, preventing travel on what would have been the longest continuous steam tram journey in the United Kingdom (from Whitehall in Darwen to Bacup - a distance of some 21 miles).

The initial rolling stock consisted of 9 (Nos. 1-9), Thomas Green tram locos and a trailer fleet of 10 (Nos. 1-10) enclosed bogie double-deckers from Falcon, supplemented by more locos and trailers over the next few years. No record of the livery is known.

In 1907, that part of the system within its boundary was purchased by Accrington Corporation for the sum of £2,227, although the Company continued to operate the steam trams whilst electrification of the system proceeded. The last section to be electrified was that to Baxenden, which opened on 1st January 1908 and, although it is not known when the last steam tram actually ran on the Accrington system, it was probably on (or just before) 31st December 1907.

Eight of the locos and seven of the trailer cars subsequently saw service on the Baxenden to Lockgate section, which was owned by Haslingden Corporation, who operated a steam service until the track between these two points was electrified later in 1908.

Tram Fleet List 1886-1907

Steam Locos

This listing is in the format - Year into Stock; Fleet No; Manufacturer.

1885; 1-9; Green

1886; 10-14; Green

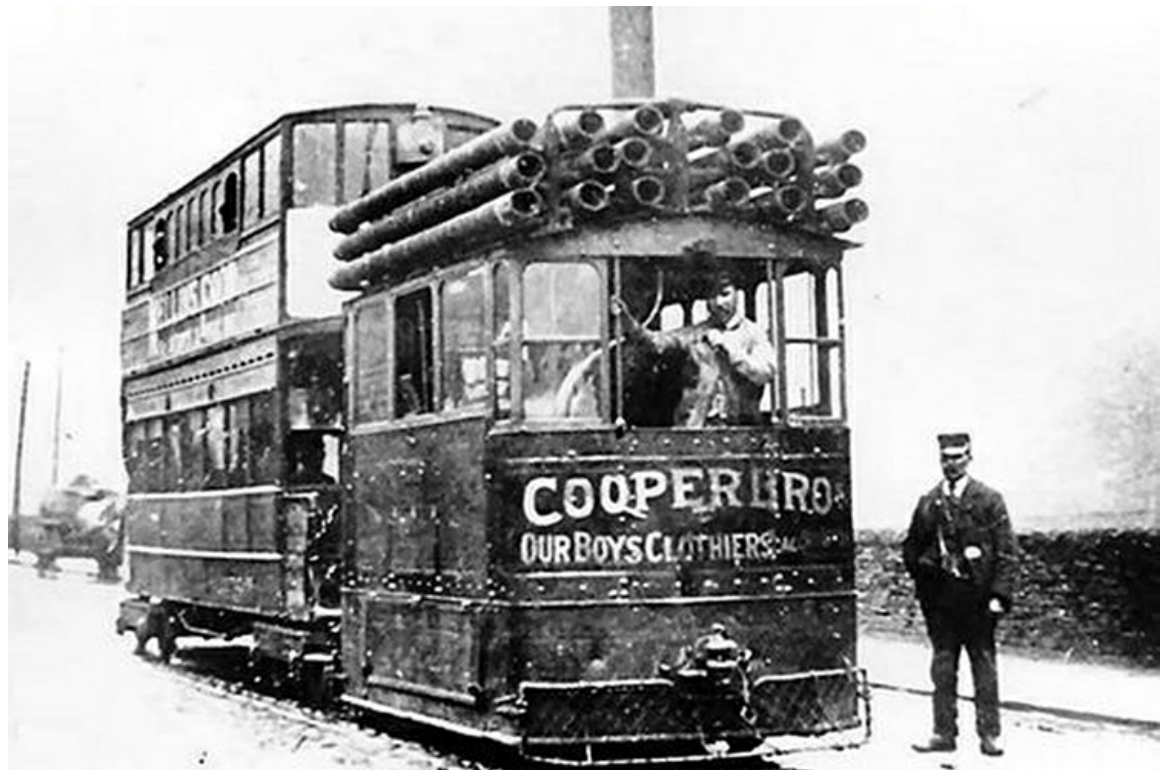
1890; 15-16; Green

1894; 17; Green

1898; 18/6; Green

1901; 19-22; Green

Nos. 19-22 ex-Blackburn Corporation (fleet numbers unknown but No .4 has been established by photographic evidence - Blackburn had 14 (Nos. 1-14), new 1887-1888).



Thomas Green loco No. 6 of 1898 and an unidentified trailer car c. 1906. (LTHL collection).

Trailer Cars

This listing is in the format - Year into Stock; Fleet No; Type; Manufacturer; Seating

1886; 1-10; Double-deck enclosed bogie; Falcon; 30/30

1887; 11-14; Double-deck enclosed bogie; Ashbury; 30/30

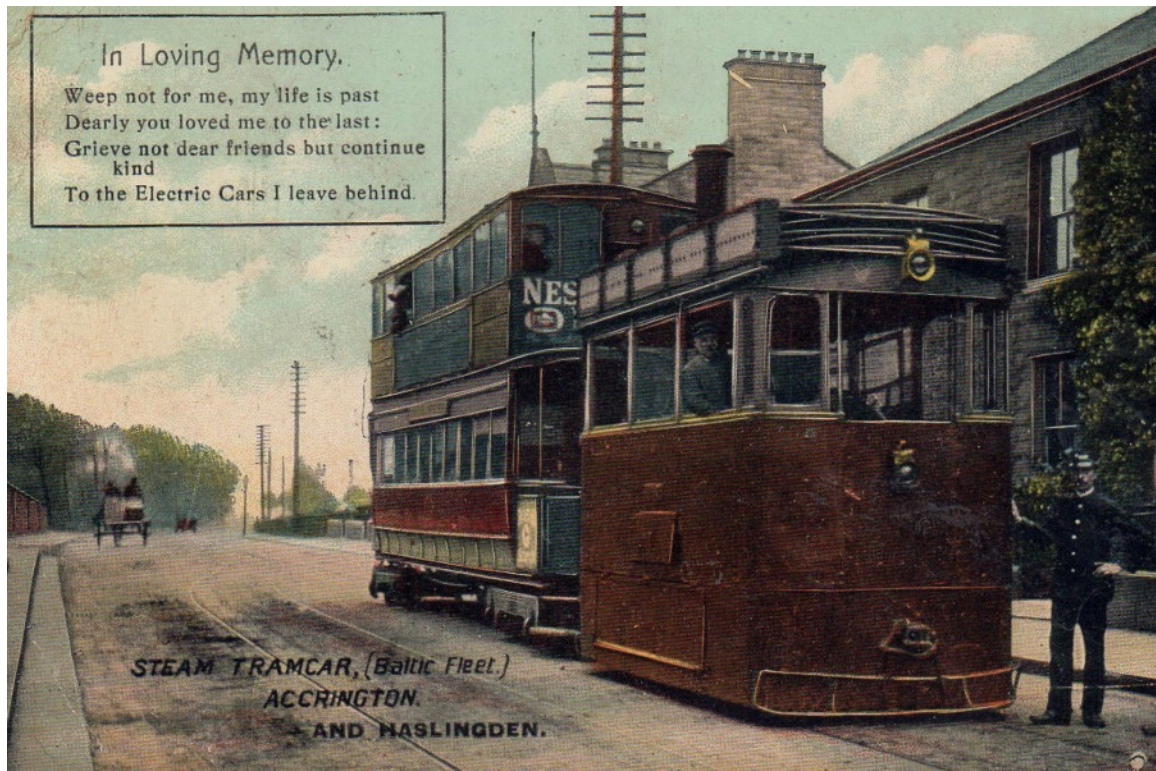
1891; 15-17; Double-deck enclosed bogie; Lancaster; 30/30

1901; 18?-20?; Double-deck enclosed bogie?; Ashbury/Falcon?; 30/30?

Unknown trailers were ex-Blackburn (a single double-deck enclosed bogie trailer, seating 30/30, built by Ashbury (one of 12 such trailers built in 1887 or 1888; fleet number unknown), and ex-Burnley (probably 2 Falcon trailers; Nos. ?, new ?, total quantity uncertain).



The inscription on this 1907 postcard says it all. The steam tram fleet awaiting towing to the scrapyards. (LTHL collection).



This tinted postcard of 1907, originally published without the stamp in the top left corner, may give an indication of the tramway livery, possibly red and cream, of which no details are recorded. (LTHL collection).

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Additional information, corrections and photographs are always welcome.
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