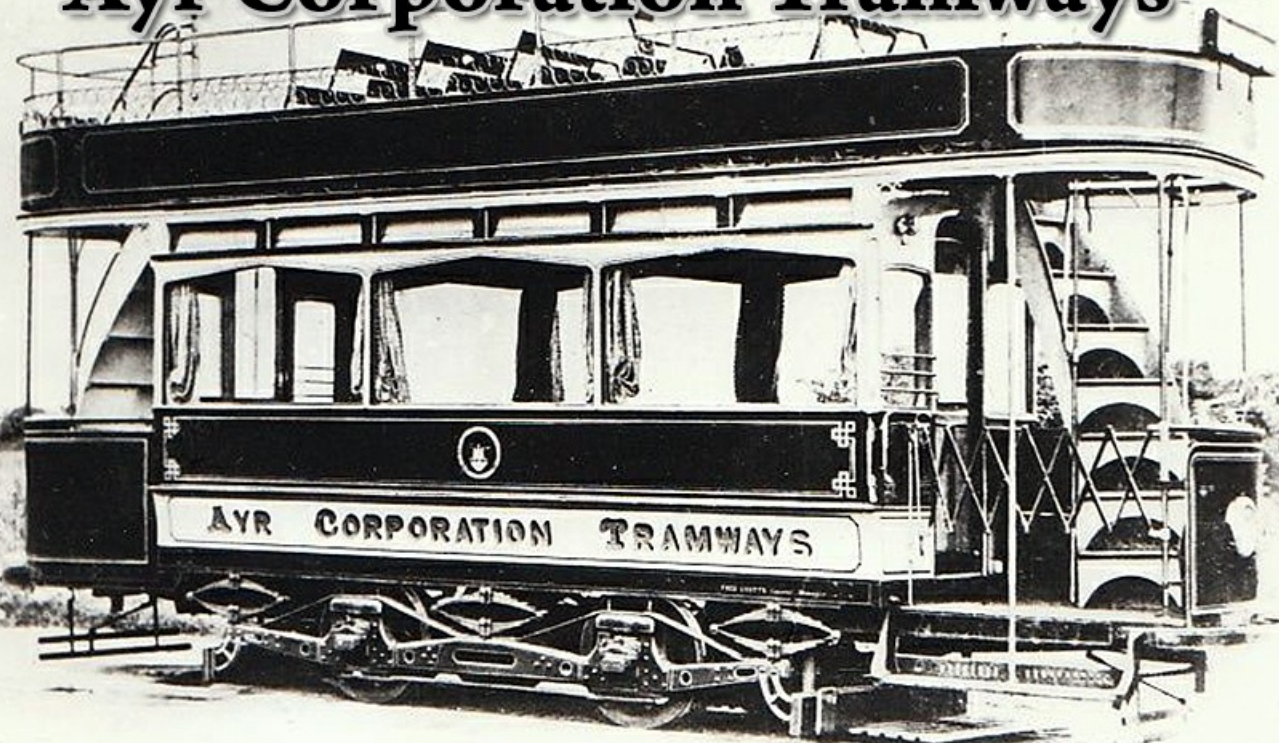


Ayr Corporation Tramways



1901 - 1931

Contents

Ayr Corporation Tramways - Fleet History 1901-1931	Page 3
Ayr Corporation Tramways - Tram Fleet List 1901-1931	Page 6

Cover Illustration: One of the 11-16 batch of cars delivered in 1902 when new. (South Ayrshire Libraries).

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Proposals for a horse tramway system in Ayr were first mooted in October 1883 when the Ayr & District Tramways Company was formed with the intention of constructing a 3ft 6ins system of over 7 miles in length, consisting of a through route between Prestwick and the Burns Monument and a circular town service from the Town Hall via Sandgate, Racecourse Road, Racecourse View, Chapelpark Road, Monument Road, Carrick Road and High Street. The system was envisaged to be single-track with passing loops. The Ayr Tramways Bill was presented to Parliament in March 1884 and approved, but in the event nothing materialised and the proposal was abandoned.

When notice of another application to construct a tramway within the burgh was put forward the Town Council was spurred into action and in 1899 the Ayr Burgh Act authorised the construction of Ayr Corporation's tramway.

Constructed to the standard gauge of 4ft 8½ins the system covered 6.4 miles and opened on the 26th September 1901. The first section ran as a single-track with passing loops from Prestwick Cross, just north of the town, southwards along Ayr Road to the burgh boundary then on to Newton Park (the Corporation depot was sited here on Bellesleyhill Road) and through the town centre, where the track doubled for around 1 mile, to a temporary terminus at St. Leonard's Church on Monument Road.

The initial fleet consisted of 10 (Nos. 1-10) Hurst Nelson built open-top

double-deck cars liveried in dark chocolate and primrose, which were supplemented in 1902 by an additional 6 (Nos. 11-16) similar cars from Hurst Nelson, following the opening on 29th May 1902 of a single-track section from the temporary terminus to the village of Alloway (the birthplace of Robert Burns).

On the 18th August 1913 the final section of track serving Ayr racecourse opened, the double-track branch served the new estates at Hawkhill and Craigie and ran eastwards from the town centre via George Street and Whitletts Road, where the new racecourse had been sited.

With the onset of the First World War in 1914 there was increasing difficulty in obtaining materials, although the maintenance of the cars and infrastructure was kept at a high level and as a consequence, when the War ended, the cars were still in good condition, although some track relaying was found to be necessary and the overhead poles were in need of replacement due to corrosion. Work on remedying this began in earnest but by the mid-1920's the tramway system was showing signs of deteriorating. The condition of the cars was also of great concern, especially the state of the electrical equipment and it was thought that at least 12 cars would need to be re-conditioned to provide a service on the main route alone and some pruning of services would be likely.

In 1929 Ayr Corporation applied for a Parliamentary Order to permit them

to operate motor buses within the burgh, along existing tram routes and to other points within a five-mile radius. Due to the concerted opposition of local bus operators, the application was refused and Ayr was denied permission to operate its own buses.

At a meeting of the Tramways Committee on the 22nd May 1930 it was decided to authorise the relaying of part of the track on the main route and the reconditioning of 6 cars, which duly started to re-appear in February 1931.

However in November 1931 the Town Council received an offer from the Scottish Motor Traction Company for the purchase of the system. On the 11th December 1931 the Town Council voted to accept a revised offer and this was confirmed on the 14th December 1931 by a meeting of the full Council. The date of the takeover was to be the 1st January 1932.

On the 31st December 1931, and without ceremony, the last service car (No. 23) from Burns Monument was handed over and driven into the depot by driver Robert Gibb who had driven the first car in the 1901 opening procession only for it to be discovered that car No. 9 from Prestwick Cross had not yet arrived, which, when it finally entered the depot yard, proved to be the very last Ayr Corporation car of all. The following day the services were operated by the motorbuses of the Scottish Motor Traction Company, bringing to an end Ayr Corporation's involvement in public transport.

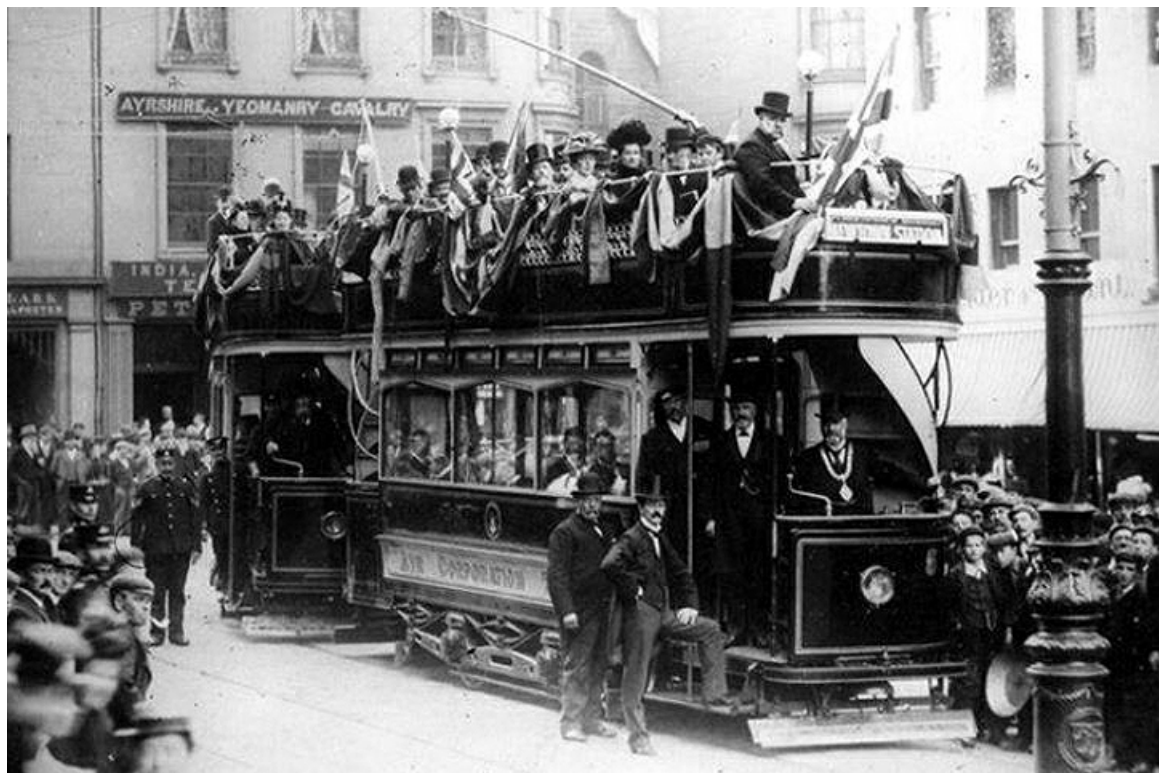
Tram Fleet List 1901-1931

This listing is in the format - Year into stock; Fleet No; Type; Trucks; Body; Seating.

1901

1-10 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel Hurst Nelson cantilever Hurst Nelson 35/22

Withdrawn 1931 (1-10).



The opening day procession 26th September 1901, with Hurst Nelson car No. 5, carrying the official party, leading. (LTHL collection).

1902

11-16 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel Hurst Nelson cantilever Hurst Nelson 37/22

Nos. 11, 12 fitted with Hurst Nelson 21E trucks in 1928, purchased from Kilmarlock Corporation.

No. 14 fitted with Hurst Nelson 21E truck, which may have been from No. 19, in 1931.

Withdrawn 1931 (11-16).

1904

17	Water car	Brill 21E	Hurst Nelson -
18	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Hurst Nelson cantilever	Hurst Nelson 37/22

No. 18 had been exhibited at the 1902 Tramways Exhibition in London.

Withdrawn 1931 (17, 18).



Ayr Corporation car No. 13, one of the second batch of Hurst Nelson cars purchased in 1902. (LTHL collection).

1907

19-20 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel Hurst Nelson 21E Hurst Nelson 35/22

Nos. 19, 20 fitted with Hurst Nelson canopy top-covers in 1925, increasing seating to 36/22; vestibuled by 1931; No. 19 fitted with Brill 79E2 truck in 1931.

Withdrawn 1931 (19-20).

1913

21-22 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel Hurst Nelson 21E Hurst Nelson 39/22

Nos. 21, 22 fitted with Hurst Nelson canopy top-covers in 1920, increasing seating to 40/22; vestibuled by 1926; fitted with Brill 79E2 trucks in 1931.

Withdrawn 1931 (21-22).



Car No. 21 passing the Wallace Tower in 1923. It was originally open-top but was top-covered in 1920 and was vestibuled in 1926. (South Ayrshire Libraries).

1915

23-24 Double-deck top-covered 4-wheel Hurst Nelson 21E Hurst Nelson 40/22

Nos. 23-24 vestibuled in 1926; No. 24 fitted with Brill 79E2 trucks in 1931.

Withdrawn 1931 (23-24).

1922

25-28 Single-deck saloon Peckham cantilever Brush 26

Nos. 25-28 via Manchester Corporation (ex-Oldham, Ashton & Hyde Electric Tramway (from Nos. 10-17; new 1899). Converted by Ayr to front entrance/exit for one-man operation.

Nos. 27, 28 vestibuled in 1923.

Withdrawn 1931 (25-28).



Car No. 28 was purchased from Manchester Corporation in 1922 and converted to one-man operation. It was a former Oldham, Ashton & Hyde Electric Tramway Company car built in 1899 by Brush. (South Ayrshire Libraries).

1928

29-30 Double-deck top-covered 4-wheel EE Peckham P22 English Electric 42/30

Nos. 29-30 ex-Dumbarton Burgh & County Tramways Co (Nos. 31-32 respectively; new 1921).

No. 30 vestibuled in 1930.

Withdrawn 1931 (29-30).

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Additional information, corrections and photographs are always welcome.
Our general email address is: lth.library@gmail.com

In producing this booklet reference has been made to the following publications: The Tramways of Ayr; Brash; NB Traction; 1983; The Directory of British Tramways; Turner; Patrick Stephens Ltd; 1996.

Photographs courtesy South Ayrshire Libraries (formerly Kyle and Carrick Libraries and Museums).

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