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Cover Illustration: Grimsby and Immingham bought a number of cars from the Gateshead system when that closed in 1951. One of these was Gateshead car No. 10 that became No. 26 in the Grimsby and Immingham fleet. This car is now preserved at Beamish Open Air Museum. (Tony Waddington).

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In 1904 the Humber Commercial Railway and Dock Act authorised the construction of a vast docks complex at Immingham, on the south bank of the River Humber, by the Great Central Railway (GCR). Dock operation was labour intensive and the Company needed some form of transportation to bring in the workforce from neighbouring towns, principally the fishing port of Grimsby. In addition the GCR had also constructed a large locomotive depot at Immingham, which also required the workforce to be transported to the site.

Whilst construction of the docks took place the GCR ran a steam-hauled workmens' service on the Grimsby & District Light Railway track, which had been built from Grimsby as a contractors line, this service commencing on 3 January 1910. The GCR, however, had a large electricity generating plant at the docks and considered that an electric tramway would be more economical and would also facilitate connection with the Grimsby and Cleethorpes on-street system.

The electric tramway opened from Grimsby to Immingham, on the edge of the Docks complex on 15 May 1912 and was extended to Immingham Docks on 17 November 1913.

The tramway was built as a conventional street tramway between Corporation Bridge and Cleveland Bridge, Grimsby and for a short stretch at Immingham. The remainder ran on reserved track alongside the steam-operated goods line. The Eastern Jetty section at the Docks was the only double-tracked section of the line. The remainder

was single-track with passing loops. The standard-gauge tramway was 7.75 miles in length.

Although the Grimsby terminus at Corporation Bridge was only a few yards from the municipal tram tracks in Victoria Street the intervening bridge was not rebuilt until 1928, and by then Grimsby's trams were giving way to trolleybuses and the connecting tramway was never built. The Company did, however, operate a local tram service on its street section between Corporation Bridge and Cleveland Bridge, for two years from 1928 until 1930.

The Tramway initially opened with eight single-deck bogie trams supplied by Brush Electrical Engineering Co. Ltd of Loughborough. Nos. 1-4 were Britain's longest trams at 54ft 2in long. These were mounted on Brush Standard 4ft 6in wheelbase trucks with Dick Kerr DK9 50hp motors on the inner axles. Dick Kerr DB1 K4 controllers fitted with rheostatic and magnetic braking. The cars could take 72 passengers on reversible wooden seats and remained so until the end. They had a central luggage and goods compartment and handled milk, produce, and small consignments. The other four cars (Nos. 5-8) were 38ft 10in long, and were intended for a proposed line into the centre of Grimsby. These could take 48 seated passengers and were powered by smaller DK10B 35hp motors. The line was never built, and these four trams were withdrawn in 1931-33 by the LNER. One (No. 5) was converted into a works car and survived until 1954.

Eight more similar cars were built in two batches in 1913 and 1915. The second batch appears to have been built or completed by the GCR but were similar to the existing Brush trams. During the 1920s, all of the trams were modified to include steel body panels, underfloor toolboxes, and platform doors. The head lamps were also moved from the end of the roof to a position immediately above the windscreen. The 1915 batch of four trams are believed to have incorporated most of these features from new. Later modifications included carbon-shoe collectors in 1940 to avoid sparks during black-outs, and heaters in 1957/58. At least four of the Brush trams received new ends after collisions in fog. Two were withdrawn in 1951 after a collision, and two more were withdrawn in 1952. The remaining eight Brush trams survived until closure in 1961.

Pyewipe sheds, taking their name from the local marshes near the Grimsby Borough boundary, serviced all the trams. They did not house the cars, which unusually spent all their life outdoors, only entering the workshop when repairs were needed. The workshop had the capacity to hold three trams on two tracks. It also housed a machine shop, paint shop, and store. Until 1940 cars were periodically sent to Dukinfield carriage works for major repair. The second-hand Gateshead cars were overhauled at York before entering service.

Under GCR ownership the trams carried a reddish-brown carriage livery, when the GCR became part of the London and North Eastern Railway in 1923 the LNER's varnished teak carriage livery with lining out became standard (until 1938 when the lining out

was dropped). When the LNER became part of British Railways in 1948 a green livery similar to that used for electric multiple units was adopted.

After the Second World War, Grimsby Corporation promoted a 200 acre industrial estate west of the town and near the Grimsby and Immingham tramway. In the absence of any direct road, workers at the new factories also relied on the trams. To handle the extra passenger traffic three single-deck bogie trams were acquired from Newcastle Corporation Transport in 1948 (the only cars on the line to have upholstered seats) and a further nineteen were bought in 1951 from the Gateshead & District Tramways Company, which had just ceased operation (one was destroyed during delivery when a crane toppled onto it and only eighteen entered service).

The tramway was unique amongst British tramways in operating a service 24 hours a day for much of its existence. Normal daytime service was every 20 or 30 minutes with reduced frequency at night and extras at peak times. The Bell Punch ticket system remained in use until the closure of the line.

The in-town street section was closed from 1 July 1956 when Grimsby Corporation exercised their right to buy the line in order to abandon it, and the trams then terminated at the edge of Grimsby with a connecting bus service. Closure of the remaining tramway was proposed in 1958, and a bus service commenced on 28 February 1959, worked jointly over an indirect route by Grimsby Corporation and the Lincolnshire Road Car Company. The tram service was retained although in a much

curtailed form during peak periods only, pending completion of a direct road to the industrial estate and the docks. Even though the road had still not been built, the tramway was again proposed for closure in 1960, and the service was finally withdrawn on 1 July 1961.

Tram Fleet List 1911 - 1961

This listing is in the format - Fleet No; Type; Trucks; Builder; Seating.

1911

1-4; Single-deck bogie; Brush Standard; Brush; 72

5-8; Single-deck bogie; Brush Standard; Brush; 48

No. 5 was converted to a works car on withdrawal and remained in use until 1954.
Withdrawn 1931-1933 (Nos. 5-8), 1961 (Nos. 1-4).

1913

9-12; Single-deck bogie; Brush Standard; Brush; 72

Withdrawn 1961.



Grimsby & Immingham cars No. 4 and No. 15 at Immingham. Two of the original bogie cars, No. 4 dating from 1911 and No. 15 from 1915. No. 4 was the last tram to operate on 1st July 1961. They were 54' long and seated 72 on wooden seats. (John Kaye).



Grimsby & Immingham No. 12 new in 1913 seen at the Grimsby terminus at Cleveland Bridge in 1958. (John Kaye).

1915

13-16; Single-deck bogie; Brush Standard; GCR; 72

Withdrawn 1961.

1948

6-8; Single-deck bogie; ? ; Hurst Nelson; ?

Nos. 6-8 ex-Newcastle-upon-Tyne Corporation (Nos. 29, 42, 77, new 1901).
Withdrawn 1953 (Nos. 6-8).

1951

17-33; Single-deck bogie; Brill 39E Maximum Traction; G&DT; 48

Nos. 17-33 ex-Gateshead & District Tramways (Nos. 1, 3-11, 16-18, 20, 56-60).
Withdrawn 1961 (17-33).



Grimsby & Immingham No. 27 was ex-Gateshead No. 16 and was one of fourteen from the 1-20 batch acquired in 1951. It was a 48-seat car built by Gateshead on Brill 39E Maximum Traction trucks and was scrapped in 1961. (John Kaye).

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Additional information, corrections and photographs are always welcome.
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