

# **Birmingham Corporation Transport**

## **The Trams 1904-1953**



*Including Birmingham & District Tramways Co. Ltd. Birmingham Central Tramways Co. Ltd.  
Birmingham & Aston Tramways Co. Ltd. City of Birmingham Tramways Co. Ltd.  
Birmingham & Midland Tramways Co. Ltd. 1872-1911*

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Cover Illustration: Trams 667 and 670 at the junction of Holly Lane with Tyburn Road close to the Dunlop factory in 1953. (D. J. Norton).

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**Birmingham Tramways and Omnibus Co. Ltd.  
(Birmingham & District Tramways Co. Ltd.)  
1872-1885**

In 1872, the Birmingham and District Tramways Co. Ltd., opened a mainly single-track horse tramway under the authority of the Birmingham and Staffordshire Tramways Act of 1870. Constructed to a gauge of 4ft 8½ins, it ran between the Birmingham boundary at Hockley Brook to West Bromwich, via Handsworth. At Carter's Green, to the north of West Bromwich, the tramway branched, with one line serving Hill Top, near Wednesbury, whilst the other branch forked west to Dudley Port, via Great Bridge. The tramway was further served by a number of feeder horse buses.

The initial fleet consisted of twelve open-top double deck cars (Nos. 1-12) by Metropolitan in a crimson and cream livery, housed in a depot at Carter's Green.

On the 11 September 1873, Birmingham Corporation began construction of a line from Monmouth Street (later Colmore Row) in the city centre (although Birmingham did not become a city until 1889, for convenience it is always referred to as such) to meet the Birmingham and District line at Hockley Brook. This line travelled via Great Hampton Street and Hockley Hill and

on completion was leased to the Company, who purchased another 10 (?) tramcars to work the service.

The line was not a great success and as early as 1873 economy measures saw the closure of the Dudley Port branch, although the following year, on the 23 November 1874, a shorter branch to Villa Cross via Villa Road was opened. The following year, however, matters had not improved and the Hill Top route was curtailed at Carter's Green.

On the 24 May 1876, a new Company, the Birmingham Tramways and Omnibus Company was formed to purchase the tramway. On the 17 June 1876, Birmingham Corporation leased the newly constructed southern extension to the Company. It ran south from the city centre, along Colmore Road, Anne Street, Paradise Street, Suffolk Street and Bristol Road for a distance of 2½ miles to the city boundary, with a short extension in Bournbrook.

In 1885, the Company's lease on the Corporation owned sections expired and on 1 January 1886, the Company's rolling stock and tracks outside the city of Birmingham were purchased by the Birmingham Central Tramways Company, who also took over the lease of the Corporation-owned tracks within the city.

**Birmingham Tramways and Omnibus Co. Ltd.  
(Birmingham & District Tramways Co. Ltd.)  
Tram Fleet List 1872-1885**

Little record of the rolling stock survives; all known details currently to hand are outlined below. This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet No; Type; Builder; Seating.

**1872**

<b>1-12</b>	<b>Double-deck open-top 4-wheel</b>	<b>Metropolitan</b>	<b>??/??</b>
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These cars are recorded as passing to the Birmingham Tramways and Omnibus Company in 1876.

**1873**

<b>13-22?</b>	<b>Double-deck open-top 4-wheel</b>	<b>Metropolitan (or Starbuck)</b>	<b>??/??</b>
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Most of these cars are recorded as passing to the Birmingham Tramways and Omnibus Company in 1876.

**1876-77?**

**??-?? Single-deck? Brown, Marshall & Co ??**

Number of cars unknown (possibly 6?), possibly single-deck.

**1878**

**??-?? Single-deck toastrack Starbuck ??**

There were two cars in total.

**1880**

**??-?? Double-deck open-top 4-wheel Falcon ??/??**

There were four cars in total. They were of the 'Eades' reversible patent design.

**Notes:** Board of Trade returns show that the number of cars (owned by the Birmingham Tramways and Omnibus Company) after 1876 that were in stock at any one time never exceeded 18. This is the number of cars that were purchased by the Birmingham Central Tramways Co. Ltd., in 1885.

## **Birmingham Central Tramways Co. Ltd. 1884-1896**

Formed in December 1882 as the Birmingham Suburban Tramways Company, the first route to be opened was the horse tram route from Old Square to Nechells Park Road via Great Lister Street, which commenced operations on the 11 November 1884, by which time the Company had been re-formed as the Birmingham Central Tramways Co. Ltd. Authorised by the Birmingham and Suburban Tramways Order of 1882 the line was constructed to the narrow gauge of 3ft 6ins and the early livery is reported to be sage and dark green.

On the 25 November 1884, the first steam route (to Perry Barr) was opened, followed shortly afterwards by routes to Moseley (29 December 1884), Sparkbrook (11 May 1885 - extended to College Road in June 1900), Lozells (1 October 1885), Saltley (24 November 1885), Small Heath (16 January 1886), Moseley via Balsall Heath (19 July 1886 - extended to Kings Heath on the 1 February 1887) and to Wheeler Street (25 October 1886).

The initial rolling stock consisted of ten (Nos. 1-10) Falcon 4-wheel horse cars for the Nechells route, 14 (Nos. 1-14) Kitson tram locos and 13 (Nos. 11-23) Falcon trailer cars, all delivered in 1884.

In 1886, the Company purchased the portion of the track of the Birmingham Tramways and Omnibus Co. Ltd., which lay outside the city boundary, along with 18 horse cars. At the same time Birmingham Corporation leased the lines within the city (although Birmingham did not become a city until 1889, for convenience it is always referred to as such) to the Company. On 24 March 1888, the former horse tram route from Colmore Row to Hockley Brook (rebuilt to 3ft 6ins gauge) was converted to cable traction by the Patent Cable Tramway Company, and, on the 20 April 1889, the line was extended to Handsworth (New Inns). The service commenced with Nos. 75-94, Falcon open-top bogie double-deckers. In October 1889 the portion of the acquired tramway along Bristol Road to Bournbrook was closed for reconstruction. It re-opened on 24 July 1890 and was worked by Nos. 101-112, Falcon battery-electric open-top double-deck cars.

This mixture of tramway systems proved unsatisfactory and on 29 September 1896 the assets of the Birmingham Central Tramways Company were acquired by a new company - the City of Birmingham Tramways Company Ltd., which intended to convert the whole system to overhead electric.

**Birmingham Central Tramways Co. Ltd.  
Tram Fleet List 1884-1896**

**Horse Drawn Cars**

This listing is in the format -Year into service; Fleet No; Type; Builder; Seating.

**1884**

1-10	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Falcon	20/18
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Nos 1-10 to City of Birmingham Tramways Co Ltd 29 September 1896.

**1886**

??-??	??	??	??
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18 horse cars were acquired from the Birmingham Tramways and Omnibus Co Ltd in 1886 - details unknown but these probably retained their former fleet numbers.

Withdrawn March **1887** (10 cars), July **1889** (8 cars).

## Steam Locos

This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet No; Builder.

1884	1-14	Kitson
1885	15-26	Kitson
1885	27-34	Falcon
1885	35-36	Kitson
1885	37-50	Falcon
1886	51-56	Falcon
1886	57	Falcon
1886	58-70	Beyer Peacock
1888	-	'Julien' system battery-electric loco
1893	71-72	Kitson
1894	73-82	Kitson

No. 57 ex-Hartlepool Steam Tramway Co. (new 1884) withdrawn 1888.

The battery-electric loco was used only briefly - date of withdrawal and disposal unknown.

Nos. 1-56, 58-82 to City of Birmingham Tramways Co Ltd 29 September 1896.



Birmingham Central Tramways No. 57, an 1886 Kitson loco that came from the Hartlepool Steam Tramway Company, towing a Falcon trailer. It was withdrawn in 1888. (Ashley Birch collection).

## Trailer Cars

This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet No; Type; Builder; Seating.

### 1884

11-23	Double-deck canopy-top bogie	Falcon	28/26
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### 1885

24-45	Double-deck canopy-top bogie	Falcon	28/26
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### 1885

46-54	Double-deck canopy-top bogie	Falcon	30/30
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### 1886

55-74	Double-deck canopy-top bogie	Falcon	30/30
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Nos. 11-74 to City of Birmingham Tramways Co Ltd 29 September 1896.

## Battery Electric Cars

This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet No; Type; Builder; Seating.

### 1890

101-112 Double-deck open-top bogie	Falcon	24/24
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### 1893

113-114 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brown, Marshall & Co	20/18
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Nos. 101-112 to City of Birmingham Tramways Co Ltd 29 September 1896.  
Withdrawn **1894** (113-114).

## **Cable Cars**

This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet No; Type; Builder; Seating.

### **1888**

<b>75-94</b>	<b>Double-deck open-top bogie</b>	<b>Falcon</b>	<b>24/20</b>
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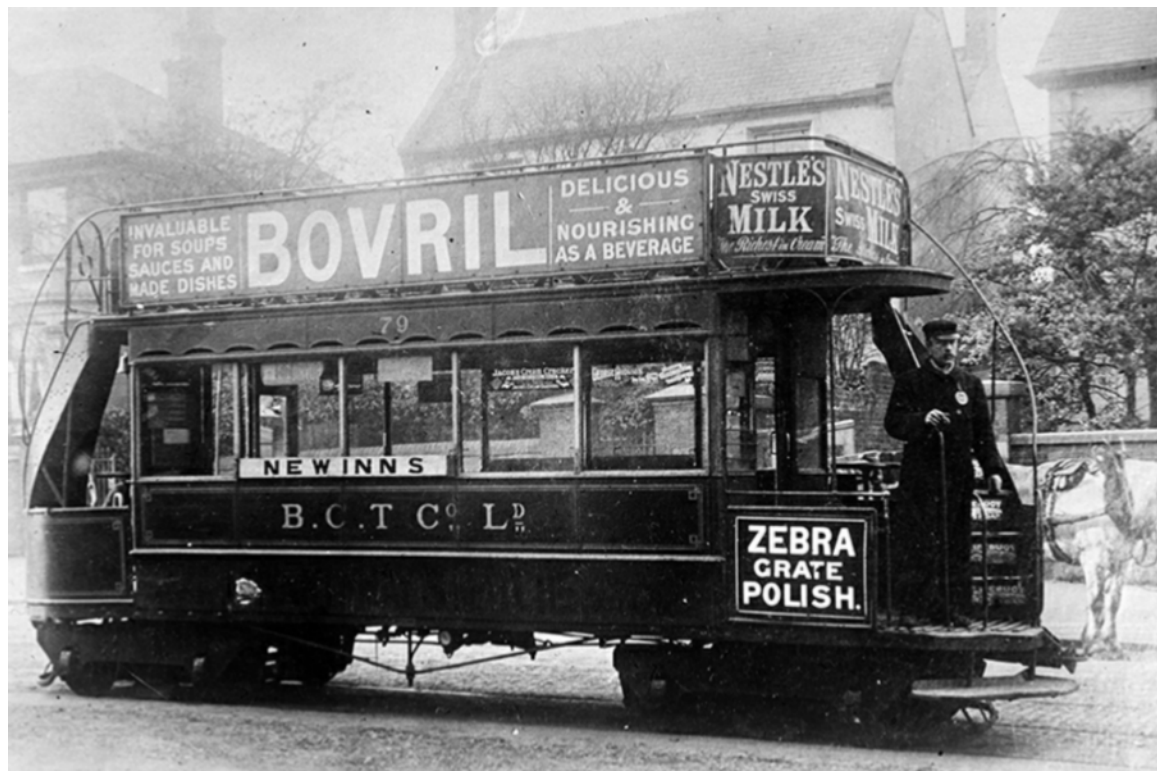
### **1889**

<b>95-100</b>	<b>Double-deck open-top bogie</b>	<b>Metropolitan</b>	<b>24/20</b>
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### **1895**

<b>113-118</b>	<b>Double-deck open-top bogie</b>	<b>Falcon</b>	<b>24/20</b>
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Nos. 75-100, 113-118 to City of Birmingham Tramways Co Ltd 29 September 1896.



Birmingham Central Tramways No. 79 was an 1888 Falcon-built cable car for the Hockley Brook route. (National Tramway Museum).

## **Birmingham and Aston Tramways Co. Ltd. 1882-1904**

The first steam tramway in Birmingham was opened by the Birmingham and Aston Tramways Company on the 26 December 1882. The 3ft 6ins narrow gauge tramway was constructed under the Birmingham and Aston Tramways Order of 1880 and ran from Aston Street in the city centre (although Birmingham did not become a city until 1889 it is always referred to as such) to Witton via Aston Cross, where it diverged – one route travelling via Park Road and Witton Lane and the other via Lichfield Road and Church Lane.

The initial rolling stock consisted of six Kitson locos in a crimson livery and ten Starbuck double-deck trailer cars in cream.

On 23 February 1885 a branch line to the foot of Gravelly Hill from Lichfield Road was opened, with a connection to Erdington being provided by the Company's horse buses.

On the 30 June 1902, Aston Manor UDC purchased that portion of the tramway within their boundary in order to electrify it, whilst the remaining section passed to Birmingham Corporation on 1 January 1904 on the expiry of the lease.

**Birmingham and Aston Tramways Co. Ltd.  
Tram Fleet List 1882-1904**

**Locos**

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

1882	1	Kitson
1882	7-8	Wilkinson
1883	2-6	Kitson
1883	9-12	Kitson
1885	13-16	Kitson
1886	17-26	Kitson
1886	27	Kitson

Most rebuilt as follows: 1 (1897 - new boiler), 2 (1898), 5 (1895), 9 (1897), 11-12 (1898 - No. 11 new boiler), 14 (1899), 15 (1897), 16 (1901), 18-19 (1899), 23 (1901), 24 (1900), 25 (1897), 26 (1899), 27 (1899).

Nos. 7-8 withdrawn by 1889 but still retained.

Nos. 1-27 to Aston Manor UDC 30 June 1902.

Nos. 22-23 to City of Birmingham Tramways 1904 (re-numbered 91-92).

Withdrawn **1904** (1-21, 24-27).

## Trailer Cars

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

### 1882

<b>1-10 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel</b>	<b>Metropolitan</b>	<b>24/20</b>
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Nos. 1-10 were rebuilt single-ended with half-canopy roof cover before entry into service. Used to construct bogie cars 6-10 in 1896-1899.

Withdrawn **1896** (1-10).

### 1883

<b>11-18 Double-deck canopy-top bogie</b>	<b>Starbuck</b>	<b>32/20</b>
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### 1885

<b>19-22 Double-deck canopy-top bogie</b>	<b>Metropolitan</b>	<b>30/30</b>
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Nos. 21-22 rebuilt single-ended and re-seated to 32/30 in 1898.

### 1886

<b>23-26 Double-deck canopy-top bogie</b>	<b>Starbuck</b>	<b>32/30</b>
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## Trailer Cars (continued)

### 1896

**10      Double-deck canopy-top bogie                  Birmingham and Aston      34/34**

No. 10 constructed from withdrawn 4-wheel cars Nos. 1-10 of 1882 and was single-ended.

### 1897

**8-9      Double-deck canopy-top bogie                  Birmingham and Aston      34/34**

Nos. 8-9 constructed from withdrawn 4-wheel cars Nos. 1-10 of 1882 and were single-ended.

### 1898

**7          Double-deck canopy-top bogie                  Birmingham and Aston      34/34**

No. 7 constructed from withdrawn 4-wheel cars Nos. 1-10 of 1882 and was single-ended.

## Trailer Cars (continued)

1899

**6      Double-deck canopy-top bogie      Birmingham and Aston      34/34**

No. 10 constructed from withdrawn 4-wheel cars Nos. 1-10 of 1882 and was single-ended.

All trailer cars to Aston Manor UDC 30 June 1902.

Withdrawn **1904** (6-10, 11-26).



**Above:** Birmingham & Aston No. 27 an 1886-built Kitson loco, towing canopy-top trailer No. 6 - built by the company themselves in 1899 and seating 68. (Tramway & Light Railway Society).

**Following Page:** Birmingham & Aston loco No. 19, built in 1886 by Kitson towing a similar bogie canopy-top trailer. (National Tramway Museum).



## **City of Birmingham Tramways Co. Ltd. 1896-1911**

The City of Birmingham Tramways Company Ltd was formed on the 29 September 1896 to take over the assets of the Birmingham Central Tramways Company, with the intention of converting the whole system to overhead electric traction. It was anticipated that the approval of Birmingham Corporation would be forthcoming, however negotiations broke down on the 7 June 1898 without agreement. Nevertheless the conversion went ahead.

On the 14 May 1901 the battery-electric cars on the Bristol Road route were replaced by overhead electric traction, the initial service being operated by Nos. 151-165, open-top double-deckers from the Electric Railway, Tramway and Carriage Works of Preston.

In June 1902, control of the Company passed to the BET, who began negotiations with the surrounding authorities in consequence of Birmingham's decision (reached on 7 March 1899) to work all the tramways in the city themselves. The BET maintained that if this came to fruition then it would be necessary to change cars every time one reached the boundary and through running could only be guaranteed if the BET were in control of all the tramways. In 1903 they promoted a Bill, which would have given

them compulsory running powers over Birmingham Corporation track. The Corporation, however, realising that through running was required were prepared to come to some agreement, but argued against compulsion - and the Bill was defeated.

On the 9 June 1903 the Company was granted a 21-year lease of the tracks of the former Birmingham and Aston Tramways Company by Aston Manor UDC, and cars 189-216, delivered in 1903 and 1904 in a crimson and cream livery, actually carried the coat of arms of Aston Manor UDC on the sides, even though they were owned by the Company. Services commenced on 19 September 1904, when the first car in Aston ran between Aston Church and Steelhouse Lane, Birmingham (by arrangement with Birmingham Corporation). Further routes in Aston were opened on 27 October 1904 (Victoria Road to Six Ways) and 14 November 1904 (Aston Cross to Gravelly Hill - extended to Erdington on 22 April 1907).

However, most of the Company's leases in Birmingham expired on the 31 December 1906 (which was also the last day of steam operation in Birmingham), and, on the 30 June 1911, the Company's lease on the routes to Cotteridge via Pershore Road, Selly Oak via Bristol Road and the cable tramway to Handsworth, expired. The remaining services passed to Birmingham Corporation on the 30 December 1911, along with 61 electric cars, leaving the way clear for the Corporation to unify and expand the tramway system.

**City of Birmingham Tramways Co. Ltd.  
Tram Fleet List 1896-1911**

**Horse Drawn Cars**

This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet No; Type; Builder; Seating.

**1896**

<b>1-10</b>	<b>Double-deck open-top 4-wheel</b>	<b>Falcon</b>	<b>20/18</b>
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Nos. 1-10 ex-Birmingham Central Tramways Co Ltd (Nos. 1-10, new 1884).  
Withdrawn **1906** (1-10).



An 1884 Falcon 4-wheel horse tram of the City of Birmingham Tramways at Nechells in 1906, shortly before withdrawal. (National Tramway Museum).

## Steam Locos

This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet No; Builder.

1896	1-26	Kitson
1896	27-34	Falcon
1896	35-36	Kitson
1896	37-56	Falcon
1896	58-70	Beyer Peacock
1896	71-82	Kitson
1898	83-90	Kitson
1898	57	Kitson
1898	60	Kitson
1899	61-62	Kitson
1904	91-92	Kitson
1904	93	Birmingham & Midland Tramways
1904	94-95	Kitson
1904	96-97	Birmingham & Midland Tramways

Nos. 1-56, 58-82 ex-Birmingham Central Tramways Co. Ltd. (Nos. 1-56, 58-82, new 1884 [1-14], 1885 [15-50], 1886 [51-56, 58-70], 1893 [71-72], 1894 [73-82]).

### Steam Locos (continued)

Nos. 91-92 ex-Birmingham & Aston Tramways Co. Ltd. (Nos. 22-23, new 1886), in 1904.

Nos. 93-97 ex-Birmingham & Midland Tramways Co. Ltd. (Nos. 13, 29, 30, 27, 28 respectively, new 1899, 1896, 1895, 1899 and 1900 respectively), in 1904.

Withdrawn **1898** (60-62 [ex-Birmingham Central Beyer Peacock locos]), **by 1907** (1-97 but 85, 86, 89, 90, 96, 97 retained for shunting cable cars until 1911).

## Trailer Cars

This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet No; Type; Builder; Seating.

### 1896

11-23	Double-deck canopy-top bogie	Falcon	28/26
24-45	Double-deck canopy-top bogie	Falcon	28/26
46-54	Double-deck canopy-top bogie	Falcon	30/30
55-74	Double-deck canopy-top bogie	Falcon	30/30

Nos. 11-74 ex-Birmingham Central Tramways Co. Ltd. (also Nos. 11-74, new 1884 (11-23), 1885 (24-54), 1886 (55-74)), in 1896.

Withdrawn **by 1907** (11-74).

### 1899

125-130	Double-deck canopy-top bogie	Midland	34/36
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Nos. 125-130 were single-ended.

Withdrawn **by 1907** (125-130).

## Birmingham Corporation Transport - The Trams 1904-1953

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City of Birmingham Tramways 1898 Kitson loco No. 86 towing a Falcon bogie-trailer. (National Tramway Museum).

**Trailer Cars (continued)**

**1900**

<b>131-136 Double-deck canopy-top bogie</b>	<b>City of Birmingham</b>	<b>34/36</b>
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Nos. 131-136 were single-ended.

Withdrawn **by 1907** (131-136).

## Cable Cars

This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet No; Type; Builder; Seating.

### 1896

75-94	Double-deck open-top bogie	Falcon	24/20
95-100	Double-deck open-top bogie	Metropolitan	24/20
113-118	Double-deck open-top bogie	Falcon	24/20

Nos. 75-94 ex-Birmingham Central Tramways Co Ltd (new 1888; Nos. 75-94).  
Nos. 95-100 ex-Birmingham Central Tramways Co Ltd (new 1889; Nos. 95-100).  
Nos. 113-118 ex-Birmingham Central Tramways Co Ltd (new 1895; Nos. 113-118).

Withdrawn 1911 (75-100, 113-118).

### 1898

119-124	Double-deck open-top bogie	Metropolitan	24/20
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Withdrawn 1911 (119-124).

## **Cable Cars (continued)**

### **1900**

<b>141-150 Single-deck toastrack bogie</b>	<b>City of Birmingham</b>	<b>40</b>
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Nos. 141-150 rebuilt as electric cars in 1905.  
Withdrawn **1905** (141-150).

### **1902**

<b>172-177 Double-deck open-top bogie</b>	<b>City of Birmingham</b>	<b>24/20</b>
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Withdrawn **1911** (172-177).



No. 150 was a company-built 40-seat toastrack cable car dating from 1900. It was rebuilt as an electric car in 1905. (Tramway & Light Railway Society).

## Battery Electric Cars

This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet No; Type; Builder; Seating.

### 1896

101-112	Double-deck open-top bogie	Falcon	24/24
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Nos. 101-112 ex-Birmingham Central Tramways Co. Ltd. (new 1890; Nos. 101-112).

Withdrawn **1901** (101-112).

## Electric Cars

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

### 1901

151-165 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Peckham 9A	ERTCW	24/21
166-168 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Peckham 9A	CBT	24/21

Nos. 151-168 had reversed staircases.

Nos. 152, 154, 156, 158, 160, 162, 164, 166, 168 to Birmingham Corporation 1912 (re-numbered 502-510 respectively).

Nos. 151, 153, 155, 157, 159, 161, 163, 165, 167 distributed by the BET to other subsidiaries 1912.

### 1902

169-171 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Peckham 9A	CBT	24/21
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Nos. 169, 171 distributed by the BET to other subsidiaries 1912.

No. 170 to Birmingham Corporation 1912 (re-numbered 511).

## Electric Cars (continued)

### 1903

<b>178-180 Double-deck open-top bogie</b>	<b>Brush D</b>	<b>CBT</b>	<b>34/28</b>
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Nos. 178-180 had reversed staircases.

Nos. 178, 180 to Birmingham Corporation 1912 (re-numbered 451-452 respectively).

No. 179 distributed by the BET to other subsidiary 1912.

### 1904

<b>181-188 Double-deck open-top bogie</b>	<b>Brush D</b>	<b>Brush</b>	<b>29/26</b>
<b>189-192 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel</b>	<b>Brush A</b>	<b>Brush</b>	<b>28/22</b>
<b>193-208 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel</b>	<b>Brush A</b>	<b>Brush</b>	<b>26/22</b>
<b>209-216 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel</b>	<b>Brush L&amp;C Radial</b>	<b>CBT</b>	<b>26/22</b>
<b>217-238 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel</b>	<b>Brush L&amp;C Radial</b>	<b>Brush</b>	<b>26/22</b>
<b>239-242 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel</b>	<b>Brush A</b>	<b>CBT</b>	<b>26/22</b>

Nos. 181-192 had reversed staircases; Nos. 181-188 re-trucked with 4-wheel Brush L&C radial trucks in 1904; Nos. 189-192 ex-Sheerness & District (Nos. 9-12, new 1903) in 1904.



No. 242 was another company-built double-deck car on Brush trucks seating 48. It passed to Birmingham Corporation in 1912. (Tramway & Light Railway Society).

## **Electric Cars (continued)**

### **1904 (continued)**

Nos. 193-242 had direct staircases; Nos. 193-208 re-trucked with Brush 8ft flexible wheelbase trucks in 1909-10.

Nos. 181-188, 193-208, 212-214, 220, 222-227, 229, 231, 233-234, 236-242 to Birmingham Corporation 1912 (re-numbered 473-480, 453-468, 481-497, 469-472 respectively).

Nos. 189-192, 209-211, 215-219, 221, 228, 230, 232, 235 distributed by the BET to other subsidiaries 1912.

### **1905**

<b>243-256 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel</b>	<b>Brush L&amp;C Radial</b>	<b>Brush</b>	<b>26/22</b>
<b>257-262 Single-deck toastrack 4-wheel</b>	<b>Brush L&amp;C Radial</b>	<b>CBT</b>	<b>40</b>

Nos. 257-262 rebuilt from withdrawn cable cars Nos. 141-150; to Dudley & Stourbridge Tramways Co. (re-numbered 63-68) in 1912.

Nos. 246-247, 249, 251 to Birmingham Corporation 1912 (re-numbered 498-501 respectively).

Nos. 243-245, 248, 250, 252-256 distributed by the BET to other subsidiaries 1912.



No. 258 was another company-built car on Brush trucks. This was an overhead electric toastrack car seating 40 constructed from a withdrawn cable car. It passed to the Dudley & Stourbridge Tramways Company in 1912. (National Tramway Museum).

**Birmingham District Power & Traction Co. Ltd.  
(Birmingham & Midland Tramways Ltd.)  
1885-1928**

Constructed by the Birmingham and Western Districts Tramways Company Ltd, under the Birmingham and Western Districts Tramways Order of 1881, this 3ft 6ins gauge steam tramway was operated by the newly formed (22 November 1883) Birmingham & Midland Tramways Ltd. The tramway was originally planned to run from Kings Heath through the city (although Birmingham did not become a city until 1889, for convenience it is always referred to as such) and along Dudley Road to Oldbury and Dudley, and, including a number of proposed branch lines, would have been around 28 route miles. In the event just over 12 miles were constructed. The mainly single-track route was from Birmingham (Summer Row) along Dudley Road to Smethwick, Oldbury, Tividale and Dudley, with two branch lines serving West Bromwich (from West Smethwick via Spon Lane, and from Oldbury via Bromford Lane).

Services commenced on the 6 July 1885 on the section of track from Summer Row to the city boundary (which had been constructed by Birmingham Corporation), and was on lease until 30 June 1906), and the through service to Dudley commenced on 30 August 1885.

The initial fleet consisted of 12 (Nos. 1-12) Kitson tram locos towing Oldbury trailer cars (Nos. 1-16) in a dark green and cream livery, operating from a depot in West Smethwick.

The tramway was not a financial success and services on the branch lines to West Bromwich ceased in 1892. However, they were re-opened in May 1893 and operated under lease by Mr. B. Crowther (reportedly a local undertaker), with two of his own single-deck horse cars and two Company-owned Metropolitan single-deckers (Nos. 23-24), until electrification in 1903.

The Company came under the control of the BET in February 1900, who intended to electrify the system, leases being obtained from the local authorities involved. The first lines to be electrified were the branch lines into West Bromwich, along Spon Lane and Bromford Lane, which opened on 3 November 1903 and were worked temporarily by South Staffordshire company cars, no electric cars having yet being delivered to the Birmingham and Midland company.

The Birmingham to Dudley route was opened to electric cars on 19 November 1904, along with a new branch line from Cape Hill along Bearwood Road to Bearwood. On the 31 December 1904, another branch along Heath Street to the city boundary was opened (this had actually been constructed by the Birmingham and Western Districts Tramways Company in 1886, but had lain

unused until now) and extended to Soho Station in Smethwick on the 25 May 1905.

The lease of all the lines within the city of Birmingham expired on 30 June 1906, and all short workings within the city passed to Birmingham Corporation, although the Company continued to work the through service to Dudley and the branch lines to West Bromwich.

On the 13 August 1912 the name of the Company was changed to the Birmingham District Power and Traction Co. Ltd.

From 1 April 1928, Birmingham Corporation took over the main line through to Dudley and working of the West Bromwich branches were transferred to the Dudley, Stourbridge & District Electric Traction Company. As a result, the Birmingham District Power and Traction Company ceased to be a tramway operator, although the Company itself continued in existence, changing its name to the Birmingham and District Investments Trust Ltd the following year.

**Birmingham District Power & Traction Co. Ltd.  
(Birmingham & Midland Tramways Ltd.)  
Tram Fleet List 1885-1928**

**Horse Cars**

This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet No; Type; Builder; Seating.

**1893**

<b>23-24</b>	<b>Single-deck 4-wheel</b>	<b>Metropolitan</b>	<b>??</b>
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Leased to B. Crowther for use in maintaining the West Bromwich branch lines from 1893 until electrification in 1903.

Withdrawn **1903** (23-24).



Metropolitan horse car No. 23 c. 1900. Built in 1893 it was operated on lease from the Company by B. Crowther on the West Bromwich branch lines until they were electrified in 1903. (Tramway & Light Railway Society).

## Steam Locos

This listing is in the format- Year into service; Fleet No; Builder.

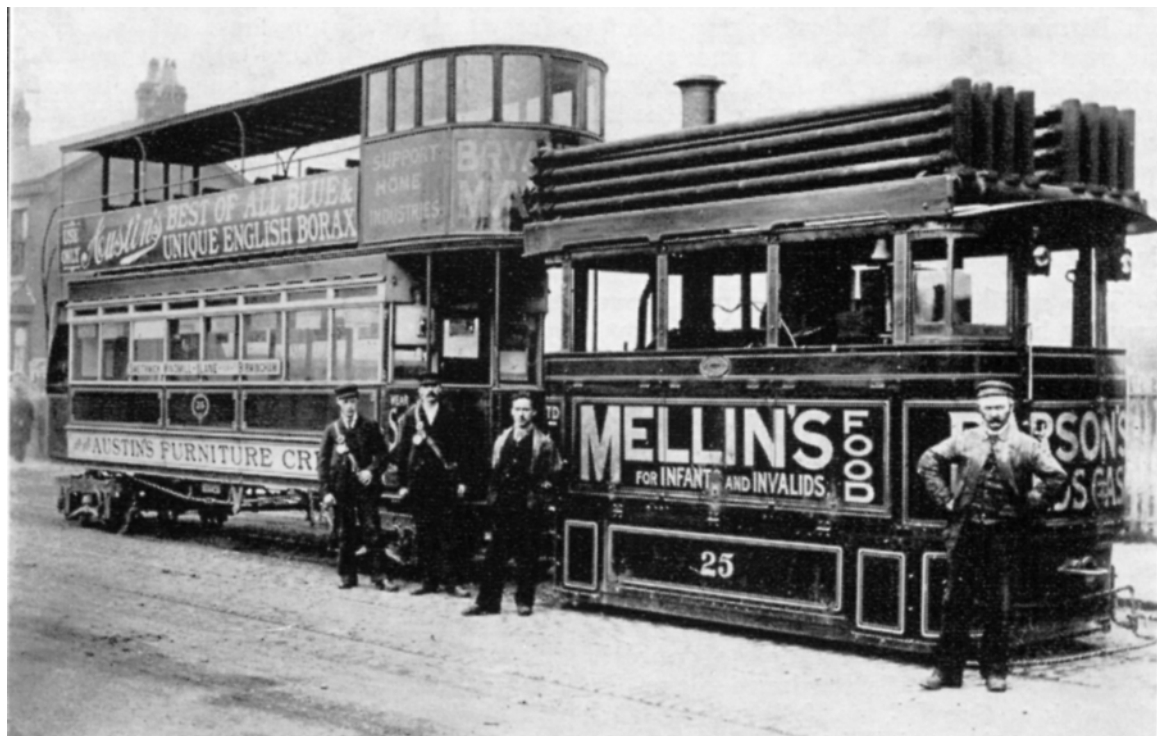
1885	1-12	Kitson
1885	13	Green
1886	14-19	Kitson
1886	20-24	Green
1897	25	Birmingham & Midland
1898	26	Birmingham & Midland
1899	27	Birmingham & Midland
1900	28	Birmingham & Midland
1900	1, 10	Kitson
1900	29-34	Kitson

No. 13, 22, 24 rebuilt in 1899, 1897, 1898 respectively.

Nos. 1, 10, 29-34 (of 1900) ex-Dudley & Stourbridge Steam Tramways Co. Ltd (Nos. 2, 10, 12, 11, 5, 9, 8, 1 respectively; new 1884, 1891, 1896, 1895, 1884, 1885, 1884, 1884 respectively).

Nos. 13, 29, 30, 27, 28 transferred to City of Birmingham Tramways in 1904 (re-numbered 93-97 respectively).

Withdrawn **by 1900** (1 and 10 [of 1885]), **1904** (1-34).



Loco No. 25 was built by Birmingham & Midland to Kitson design in 1897. It is towing company-built bogie trailer also No. 25, built in 1897. (Tramway & Light Railway Society).

## Trailer Cars

This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet No; Type; Builder; Seating.

### 1885

**1-16 Double-deck canopy-top bogie Oldbury 30/30**

Withdrawn **1899** (2, 3, 6, 11) **1904** (1, 4-5, 7-10, 12-16).

### 1886

**17-22 Double-deck canopy-top bogie Starbuck 32/30**

Withdrawn **1904** (17-22).

### 1897

**25 Double-deck canopy-top bogie Birmingham & Midland 32/30**

No. 25 constructed from withdrawn cars 2, 3, 6, 11. It was single-ended with glazed balconies.

Withdrawn **1904** (25).

## 1898

No. 26 constructed from withdrawn cars 2, 3, 6, 11. It was single-ended with glazed balconies.

Withdrawn **1904** (26).

# 1899

No. 27 constructed from withdrawn cars 2, 3, 6, 11. It was single-ended with glazed balconies.

Withdrawn **1904** (27).

# 1900

Nos. 28-32 ex-Dudley and Stourbridge Steam Tramways Company (fleet numbers unknown, but from batch of eight (Nos. 1-8), new 1884).

Withdrawn **1904** (28-32).

## Electric Cars

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

### 1904

1-12	Double-deck Bellamy-top 4-wheel	Brush AA	Brush	26/22
13-50	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brush L&C Radial	Brush	26/22
51-60	Single-deck combination 4-wheel	Brush L&C Radial	CBT	34

Nos. 1-12 had top covers removed at unknown dates; they had direct staircases.

Nos. 13-50 were top-covered at an unknown date; they had direct staircases.

Nos. 51-52 to Dudley, Stourbridge & District Electric Traction Company in 1910 (re-numbered 61-62).

Withdrawn **unknown** (1-50, 53-60).

### 1915

51-52	Single-deck combination 4-wheel	Bham & Midland	Bham & Midland	22
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Withdrawn **unknown** (51-52).

## Electric Cars (continued)

1925

**61-62 Single-deck combination 4-wheel Brush L&C Radial CBT 34**

Nos. 61-62 ex-Dudley, Stourbridge & District Electric Traction Company  
(Nos. 61-62, originally Birmingham & Midland Nos. 51-52 of 1904).

Withdrawn **unknown** (61-62).

## **Birmingham Corporation Tramways 1904-1953**

On the 20 May 1872 the Birmingham and District Tramways Co. Ltd., opened the first tramway line in the region. It ran from the Birmingham boundary at Hockley Brook through Handsworth to West Bromwich, where, at Carter's Green (the company's main depot) it forked to serve Hill Top, south of Wednesbury and west to Dudley Port.

In September 1873 under the Birmingham Corporation Tramways Order of 1872, Birmingham Corporation constructed a line from Monmouth Street in the city centre via Hockley Hill to meet the Birmingham and District line at Hockley Brook. The line was leased to the company.

The line, however, failed to meet financial requirements and at the end of 1873 the branch to Dudley Port was closed. The route to Hill Top was curtailed at Carter's Green in 1875 as a further economy measure. By 1876 the company was in financial difficulties and, on 24 May 1876, a new company, specially formed for the purpose - the Birmingham Tramways and Omnibus Co Ltd purchased the line.

A southern extension to the system, on lines owned and constructed by the Corporation but leased to the new company, was opened on 17 June 1876. This travelled along Colmore Road, Anne Street, Paradise Street, Suffolk

Street and Bristol Road for some 2.5 miles to the southern boundary, serving the residential south side of the city.

In 1882 the Birmingham and Aston Tramways Co. Ltd., opened a narrow gauge line from Aston Street northwards to Aston Cross, where the lines diverged, travelling by different routes to Witton. In 1885 a branch line was opened to Salford Bridge linking with a company operated horse bus service to Erdington.

1884 saw the appearance of another tramway company, the Birmingham Central Tramway Co. Ltd., who began running horse trams between Old Square and Nechells Park Road with subsequent routes being steam operated. The principal routes served Perry Barr, Saltley Road, Lozells, Sparkbrook, Moseley Road and Small Heath, those to the north running from Old Square and those to the south from the LNWR's New Street station.

The Birmingham and Midland Tramways Ltd., promoted by a group of local businessmen to link Birmingham with Dudley, opened the first section of track in July 1885. It ran from Summer Row in the centre of Birmingham along Dudley Road to the boundary at Cape Hill, on a section of track constructed by the Corporation. The remainder, constructed by the Birmingham and Western Districts Tramways Co. Ltd., opened in August 1885 and continued the line to Dudley station, with two branches to West Bromwich. Some 35 miles of track were planned but only a quarter of this was ever built.

The tramway was not a financial success and the company sold out in 1899 to the British Electric Traction Co, who wished to electrify the line as part of their Black Country scheme. In July 1904 the company became part of the Birmingham and Midland Tramways Joint Committee.

In January 1886, the Birmingham Central Tramway Co bought the portion of the Birmingham Tramways and Omnibus Co's system that lay outside the city, the Corporation continuing to lease those lines that were within the city boundary.

The Colmore Row to Hockley Brook route was converted to cable traction in March 1888, because of the steep climb up Hockley Hill, and extended in April 1889 to Handsworth.

In July 1890 the reconstructed Bristol Road route to Bournbrook route re-opened and double-deck open-top bogie battery electric cars worked the route. These cars lasted until 1901, when electric cars using an overhead supply replaced them.

On the 29 September 1896 the City of Birmingham Tramways Co Ltd, took over the running of the Birmingham Central Tramway Company.

In June 1902 Aston Manor UDC purchased the portion of the line within its boundary, previously leased to the Birmingham and Aston Tramway Co., electrified it and leased it to the City of Birmingham Tramway Company.

By this time the British Electric Traction Co. had acquired a controlling interest and commenced expansion plans as part of the envisaged Black Country system. Known as the Birmingham and Midland Joint Tramways Committee it was formed on the 4 December 1903 by the BET and included several subsidiaries (Birmingham and Midland, Wolverhampton District, South Staffordshire, and the Dudley, Stourbridge and District tramways). A common fare structure was established with through timetabling and running and, by 1907, it even had its own car production works at Tividale, just east of Dudley. However problems arose because of the enormous amount of agreements made with local authorities, some of which already ran their own systems. In 1924 West Bromwich Corporation decided not to renew the lease on the tracks within their boundary, ripping the heart out of the system and by 1930 the BMJTC had disappeared.

Although the Corporation owned all the tracks within the city of Birmingham it was not until 1904 that it commenced operations in its own right. In that year the lease on the Birmingham portion of the Birmingham and Aston Tramways system expired. The Corporation took over the line, electrified it and re-opened the section from Steelhouse Lane to the boundary using United Electric Car double-deck open-top bogie cars numbered 1-20. As the leases on the City of Birmingham Tramway Co.'s tracks slowly expired they were taken over by the Corporation. On the 1 January 1912 the operating rights on the last remaining lengths of track passed to the Corporation along with a number of the Company's trams and

they were now in control of the tracks within the city boundary, which had already been expanded by the absorption of several neighbouring smaller authorities.

Following World War I the system continued to expand into a comprehensive network of long routes extending to the city boundary in all directions from a number of central termini, linking with other undertakings at several points. Connections were made with the Black Country network of BET at Ladywood (Birmingham and Midland) and at Handsworth with the South Staffordshire Company, whose loss of the West Bromwich lease sparked the collapse of the Black Country ideal. In 1924 Birmingham Corporation took over the West Bromwich lease, enabling Birmingham trams to reach Dudley in the west. On the 1 April 1928 the Corporation took over the main line route to Dudley of the former Birmingham and Midland Tramway Company (it had been re-named the Birmingham District Power and Traction Co. Ltd., in 1912). Later that year on 26 August the last major tram route to Stetchford opened.

On 26 November 1922 trolleybuses replaced the route to Nechells and although tramway abandonment did not gather pace until the 1930's, the decline had already started. The route to Bolton Road was abandoned in May 1930, quickly followed by the Hagley Road route (August 1930). By 1939 the Lozells, Yardley, Stratford Road to Acocks Green, West Bromwich, and Dudley routes had all been replaced. However the bulk of the system

remained in use throughout the war years until 1947 when wholesale closure of the system started.

On the 4 July 1953, the last three routes to Short Heath, Pype Hayes and Erdington closed simultaneously and over 70 years of tramway operations in Birmingham came to an end.

**Birmingham Corporation Tramways  
Tram Fleet List  
1904-1953**

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

**1904**

<b>1-20</b>	<b>Open-top double-deck bogie</b>	<b>Brill 22E</b>	<b>UEC</b>	<b>28/28</b>
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Withdrawn **1940-41** (1-2, 4-7, 10-12, 14, 16 [all destroyed in air raids during WWII]), **1949** (3, 8-9, 13, 15, 17-20).

**1905**

<b>21-70</b>	<b>Open-top double-deck 4-wheel</b>	<b>Brill 21EM</b>	<b>UEC</b>	<b>26/22</b>
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Withdrawn **between 1930-1937** (21-70).



Birmingham Corporation No. 57, built by the United Electric Car Company of Preston - the first electric tram to Erdington in 1907. (Birmingham Archive & Heritage Service - Eric Armstrong collection).

## 1906

71-220	Open-top double-deck 4-wheel	M & G	UEC	28/24
221-270	Open-top double-deck 4-wheel	Brill 21EM	UEC	26/22

Nos. 221-270 also quoted as seating 28/24.

Withdrawn **between 1930-1937** (221-270), **between 1937-1939** (71-220).

## 1908

271-300	Open-top double-deck 4-wheel	Brill 21EM	UEC	26/22
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Nos. 271-300 also quoted as seating 28/24.

Withdrawn **between 1930-1937** (271-300).

## 1911

301-400	Top-covered double-deck 4-wheel	UEC	UEC	28/24
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Nos. 301-400 also quoted as 28/22 or 28/21.

Withdrawn **1940** (303, 307, 324, 360, 390 [all damaged during air raid in WWII]), **1950** (301-302, 304-306, 308-323, 325-359, 361-389, 391-400).

## 1912

401-450	Top-covered double-deck 4-wheel	M & G	UEC	30/24
451-452	Open-top double-deck bogie	Brush D	CBT	34/28
453-468	Open-top double-deck 4-wheel	Brush A	Brush	26/22
469-472	Open-top double-deck bogie	Brush	CBT	26/22
473-480	Open-top double-deck bogie	Brush	Brush	29/26
481-497	Open-top double-deck bogie	Brush/Brill	21E CBT	26/22
			or Brush	26/22
498-501	Open-top double-deck	Brush	Brush	26/22
502-511	Open-top double-deck	Peckham 9A	ERTCW	24/21

No. 445 quoted as Peckham truck.

Nos. 451-452 ex-City of Birmingham Tramways (CBT) (Nos. 178-179; new 1903); also quoted as seating 30/28 and 34/34. Received Mountain & Gibson Burnley bogies in 1916.

Nos. 453-468 ex-CBT (Nos. 193-208; new 1904).

Nos. 469-472 ex-CBT (Nos. 239-242; new 1904).

Nos. 473-480 ex-CBT (Nos. 181-188; new 1903).

Nos. 481-497 ex-CBT (Nos. 212-214, 220/222-227, 229/231/233-234/236-238; new 1904); Nos. 481-483 had body by CBT; Nos. 484-497 had body by Brush.

## 1912 (continued)

Nos. 484/488-489/491 had Brill 21E bogies.

Nos. 498-501 ex-CBT (Nos. 246-247/249/251; new 1905).

Nos. 502-511 ex-CBT (Nos. 152/154/156/158/160/162/164/166/168/170; new 1901). Also quoted as having Brill 21E trucks and seating 26/22.

Withdrawn **between 1913-1928** (502-511), **1924** (473, 476-477, 479), **between 1937-1939** (453-472, 481-501), **1938** (474-475, 478, 480), **1941** (439), **1949** (401-438, 440-452).

## 1913

<b>512-586 Top-covered double-deck bogie</b>	<b>M&amp;G</b>	<b>UEC</b>	<b>34/28</b>
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Withdrawn **1941** (525, 538, 564, 567-568, 574-575, 582 [all damaged or destroyed during air raid in WWII]), **between 1950-1953** (512-524, 526-537, 539-563, 565-566, 569-573, 576-581, 583-586).



No. 518 was originally a 1913 United Electric Car Company 62-seat top-covered bogie car rebuilt with enclosed canopy later. (D. J. Norton).

**1920**

**587-636 Top-covered double-deck bogie      Brush Burnley      Brush      34/28**

No. 630 had an EMB Burnley bogie.  
Withdrawn **between 1949-1953** (587-636).

**1923**

**637-661 Fully-enclosed double-deck bogie      EMB Burnley      Midland 35/28**

Withdrawn **1952-1953** (637-661).

**1924**

**662-701 Fully-enclosed double-deck bogie      EMB Burnley      Brush      35/28**

Withdrawn **1941** (663, 669-670, 680-681, 685, 697, 699 [all destroyed in air raid during WWII]), **1952-1953** (662, 664-668, 671-679, 682-684, 686-696, 698, 700-701).

## **1925**

**702-731 Fully-enclosed double-deck bogie EMB Burnley      Brush      35/27**

Nos. 702-731 also quoted as seating 35/28.

Withdrawn **1940-1941** (702-703, 707-708, 711, 714, 718, 720, 723-724, 727),  
**1952** (704-706, 709-710, 712-713, 715-717, 719, 721-722, 725-726, 728-731).

## **1926**

**732-761 Fully-enclosed double-deck bogie EMB Burnley      Brush      35/28**

Nos. 732-761 also quoted as seating 33/27.

Withdrawn **1952** (732-761).

## 1928

<b>762-811</b>	<b>Fully-enclosed double-deck bogie</b>	<b>EMB Burnley</b>	<b>Brush</b>	<b>35/27</b>
<b>812-841</b>	<b>Fully-enclosed double-deck bogie</b>	<b>Maley &amp; Taunton</b>	<b>Short</b>	<b>36/27</b>

Nos. 762-811 also quoted as seating 33/27.

Withdrawn **1941** (785, 821 [damaged or destroyed in air raid during WWII]),  
**1952** (762-784, 786-820, 822-841).

## 1929

<b>842</b>	<b>Lightweight fully-enclosed double-deck bogie</b>	<b>English Electric Maximum Traction</b>	<b>Short</b>	<b>36/27</b>
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Withdrawn **1952** (842).

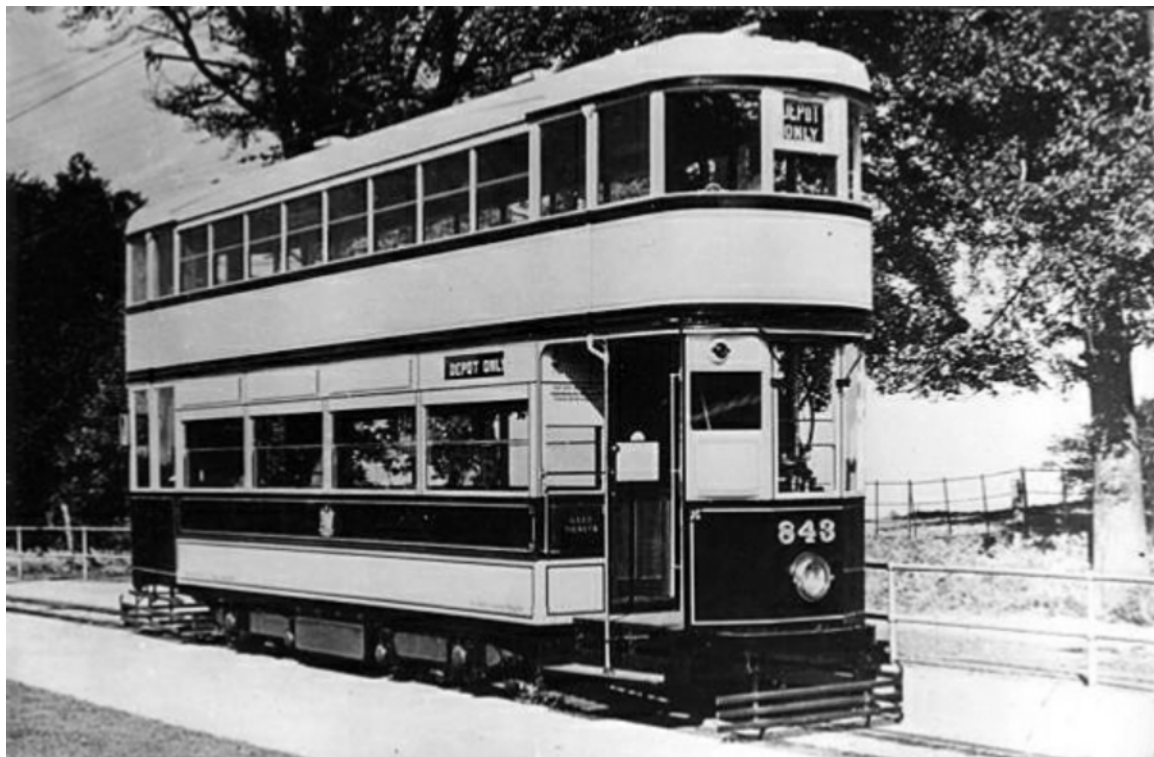


No. 779 was a 1928 Brush built fully-enclosed car on EMB Burnley bogies seating 62. It survived in the fleet until 1952. (D. J. Norton).

**1930**

<b>843</b>	<b>Lightweight fully-enclosed double-deck bogie</b>	<b>Maley &amp; Taunton</b>	<b>Brush 33/27</b>
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No. 843 also quoted as having Mountain & Gibson (M & G) bogie.  
Withdrawn **1952** (843).



No. 843 was a fully-enclosed car seating 60 built in 1930 and was the newest in the fleet. (LTHL collection).

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

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*In producing this booklet reference has been made to the following publications; The Directory of British Tramways, Turner, PSL, 1996; Black Country Tramways Vol 1 1872-1912, Webb, 1974; Birmingham Transport Vol 1, Jensen, Birmingham Transport Historical Group, 1978; A Short Review of Birmingham Corporation Tramways, Hardy & Jacques, HJ Publications, 1971; PSV Circle Fleet Histories PDF9C, 1982 and PD10C, 1984.*

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*Series Editor: Peter Gould ([secretary@lthlibrary.org.uk](mailto:secretary@lthlibrary.org.uk)).*