

TAUNTON ELECTRIC TRAMWAYS

TRAMWAYS FLEET

by

Peter Davey

and

John Perkin

1901



1921

Single Deck Car No.6, on Fore Street loop JBP Collection

BRISTOL TRAM
PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION
2001

Fleet List

Car No	Type	Built	Seats	Withdrawn
1 -5	D/Deck	1901	22/29	1905
6	D/Deck	1902	22/29	1905
1 - 6	S/Deck	1905	24	1921

All bodies, trucks, motors and controllers were made by The Brush Electrical Engineering Co. of Loughborough.

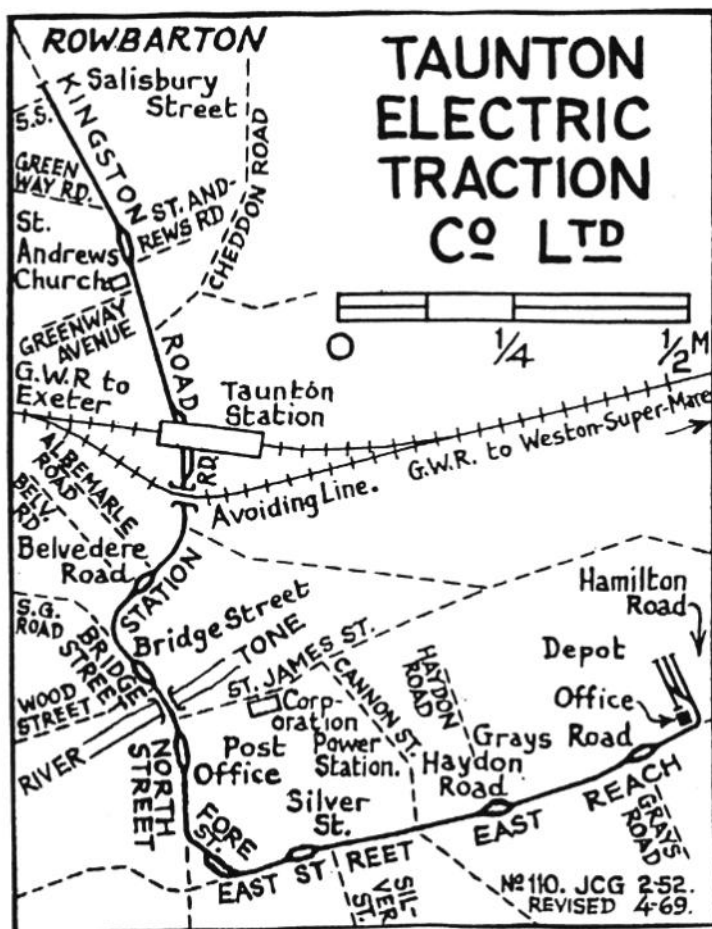
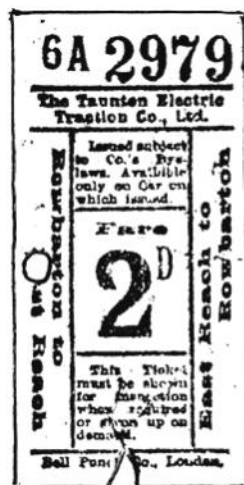
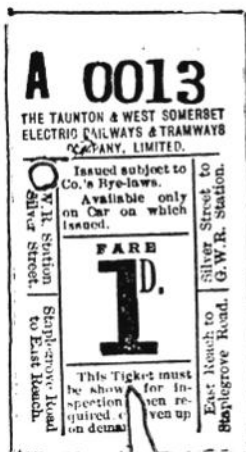
Seating shows inside/outside.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This booklet includes an illustration of each tram, plus a look at the town's one and only route. Most photographs have been collected over many years, including commercial postcards, by the two authors. May we thank all those photographers, who had the foresight to capture these trams, even though so many remain anonymous.

We both thank Nick Chipchase of Taunton, John Gillham of Ealing, Nigel Jackson-Stevens of Ilfracombe, Martin Rickitt of Taunton and Terry Russell of Horsham for all their help.

Cover Photo:- Single deck No.6, of 1905, proceeding east with the Market House arches behind. Hawkes' advert covers the end dash, but the figure 6 can be seen above the steps.



The map above showing the route is reproduced with the kind permission of John Gillham.

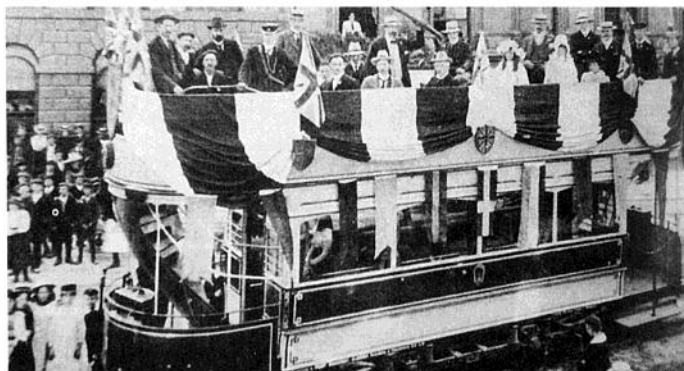
The tickets on the left are:-

Top - An original 1d ticket, with the former title, which was issued to a passenger on the first public run. This was 5pm on 21st August 1901 from the GWR Station to Silver Street.

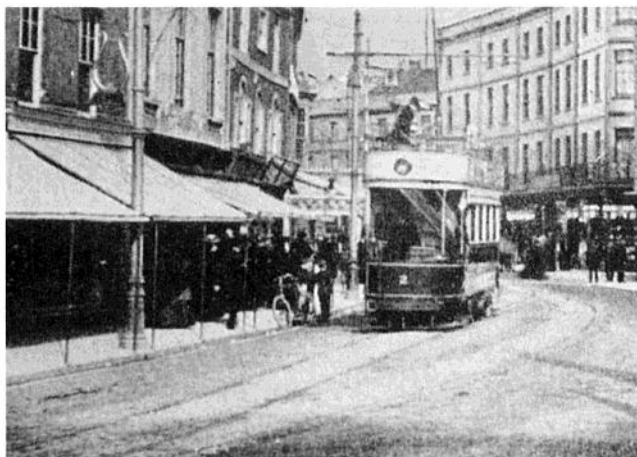
Middle and Bottom - They have the later title of the company, and include the extension to Rowbarton. The 1d is "off white" and the 2d is a "dirty pink".

(Tickets - Martin Rickitt Collection)

1 The system commenced on 22nd August 1901 and on that first day employees from W.A. Chapman, who sponsored the opening, are seen outside their store, which was later to become Debenhams.



(JBP Collection)



(PGD Collection)

3 This view shows the reverse staircase, and we are looking at the underneath of the stairs. The tram is about to pull up at the Parade stop. A passenger awaits to step off.

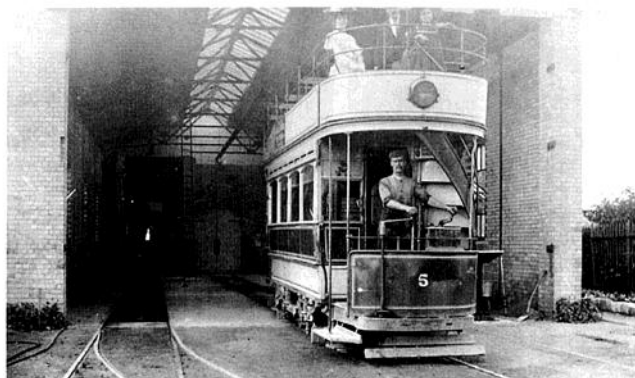


(B.Y. Williams)

4 Waiting at the eastern terminus, with a crew and possibly an inspector, No.4 stands close to the depot. This is behind the tram, to the left, and is where the present traffic signals at the southern end of the Victoria Parkway are. Destination boxes were not fitted to Taunton's trams. There was only one route!



(J.B.P. Collection)



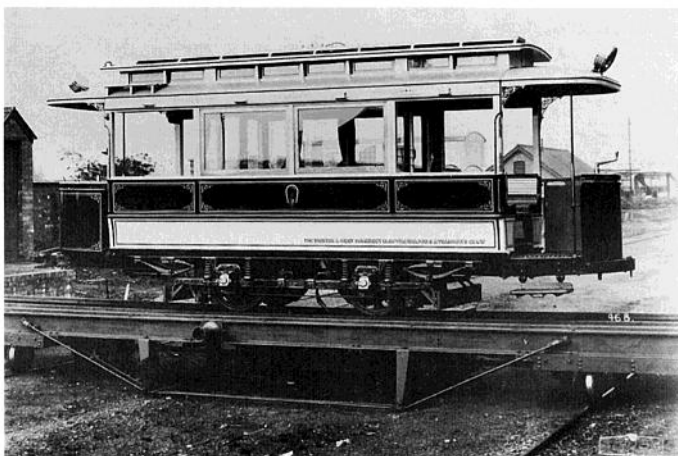
(G.W. Copeland)

6 This last double decker came a year later in 1902, to complete the "half dozen". It's the only known photograph of No.6. These six trams were eventually sold to the Leamington and Warwick Tramways in 1905, who numbered them No.7 to No.12. Sadly, double deckers were short lived in Taunton and were never to be seen again in the town.



(P.G.D. Collection)

5 On top is the manager, Mr W. Smith with his wife and his daughter, whilst an employee is at the controls. No.5 is posing on one of the three depot tracks, with a pit for inspections on the left



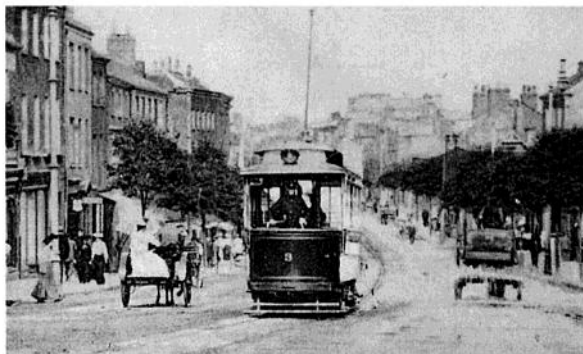
(N. Jackson-Stevens Collection)

along the side as well as “W. Smith, General Manager”, and the BET monogram. When the system closed, this body was mounted on a trailer and exhibited in the 1921 Carnival, pulled by a traction engine!



(JBP. Collection)

3 Coming up the gradient of East Reach, is No.3 about to enter East Street. In 1921, when closed, No.2 and No.3 were then sold to the Gravesend and Northfleet tramways, together with the truck of No.1. The wheelbase was 6ft. on these A type trucks.



(P.G.D. Collection)

1 Taunton then decided to buy six single deckers and number them, again, No.1 to No.6. Here is number No.1 at the Brush works on their traverser. They were combination cars; an “inside” and two “semi-outsides”. The whole original name is

2 Passing round into Fore Street is No.2 with those large side advertisement boards in place. These hide the Edwardian style of roof as seen on No.1 above. This second “half dozen” were all ordered and delivered at the same time. Their overall length was 25ft. 6ins.



(P.G.D. Collection)

4 It's not been easy to find a good photo of No.4, but in East Street she comes towards the camera, round into Fore Street. The whole system was single tracked, with eight passing loops, when these six arrived. Their width was 6ft. 6ins. overall.



5 Standing on the same spot, No.5 has just passed us, and a conductor can be seen standing very proudly upright. Note on these views, the length of the trolley poles needed to reach the supply wires. The seating, when first delivered, was 6 + 12 + 6.

6 A very smart pose of some employees including Drivers No.3 and No.4, with Conductors 1 and No.3 at East Reach terminus looking back into the town. All these six trams remained in service until the closure in 1921. No.4, No.5 and No.6 were sold to the Torquay Tramways Co.



(P.G.D Collection)

The original title of the company was “The Taunton & West Somerset Electric Railways & Tramways Company Limited”, being part of the BET Group. Later the name was shortened to “Taunton Electric Tramways Co Ltd.”. The system only ran on electricity; there were never horse trams in the town.



(S. Miles Davey Collection)

We start with three views at the depot, the first above is showing double decks No.5, No.2 and No.1 being prepared for their journey to the Leamington system in 1905 where they had a second life. Below the second No.6 has arrived, with the Brush company's notice in the window. On the left stands Mr B.H. Griffith.



(Brush, Loughborough)



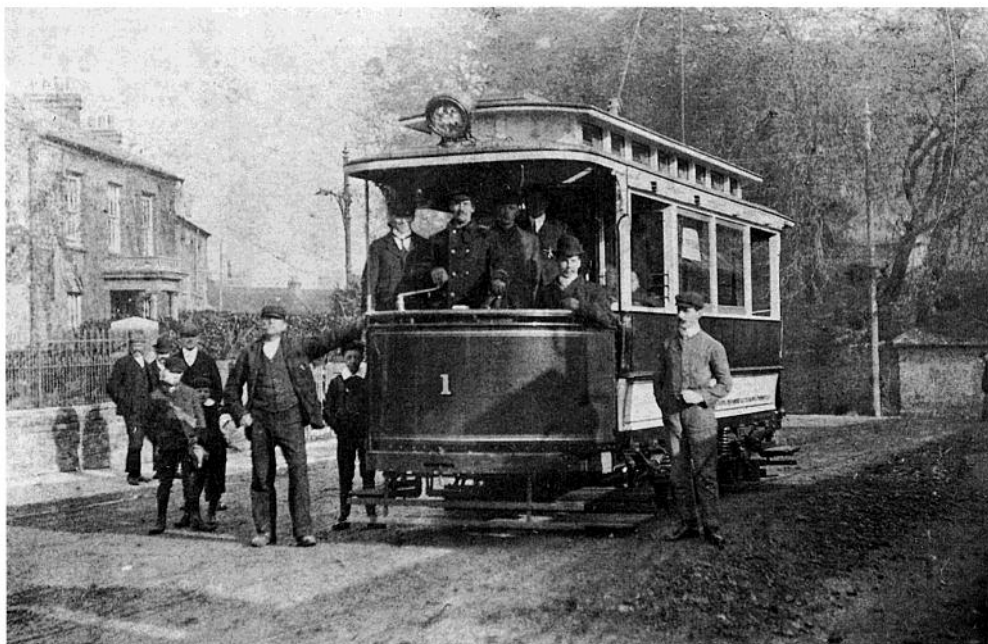
(S. Miles Davey Collection)

A single decker of the “second fleet” has a removable, home made, overhead inspection platform fitted to the roof. Next to this tram is the towerwagon, used with horse or manpower, also for overhead inspection.

Below is a view showing the depot exit/entrance between the pedestrian and the tramway pole. The Manager’s house is on the left and the location is about where today’s traffic lights are at the south end of Victoria Parkway. The Leper Hospital of St. Margaret is in the distance, and beyond on the right is the Western National bus garage.



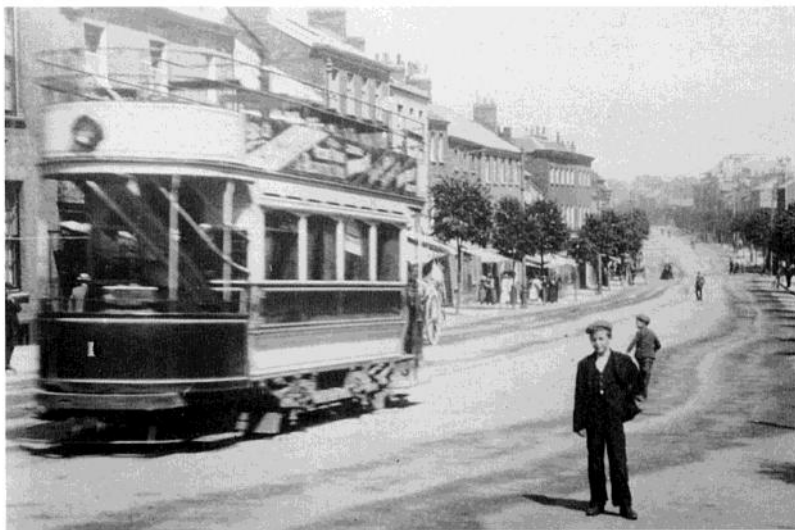
(N. Chipchase Collection)



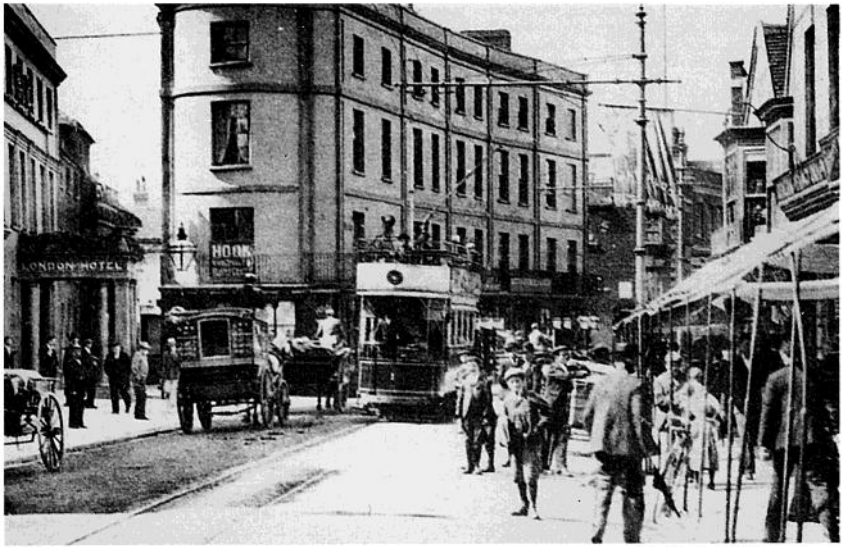
(P.G.D. Collection)

We start the route, having left the depot, at the east side of the town, where single deck No.1 is seen at the East Reach terminus. The depot is just off to the left behind the tram.

Trams came along from the right up East Reach which now becomes East Street. Double deck No.1 is on her way back, running down the incline. The system was the smallest urban electric tramway in Great Britain.



(J.B.P. Collection)



(P.G.D. Collection)

Towards the town is the London hotel, later the “Clarence”. The route continues to the right. Again, No.1 is seen leaving for East Reach terminus travelling away from the town.

Looking the other way, just around the corner, is the loop where East Street meets Fore Street, and the Burma Monument is on the right. A single decker pulls away from the town centre, covered with advertising.



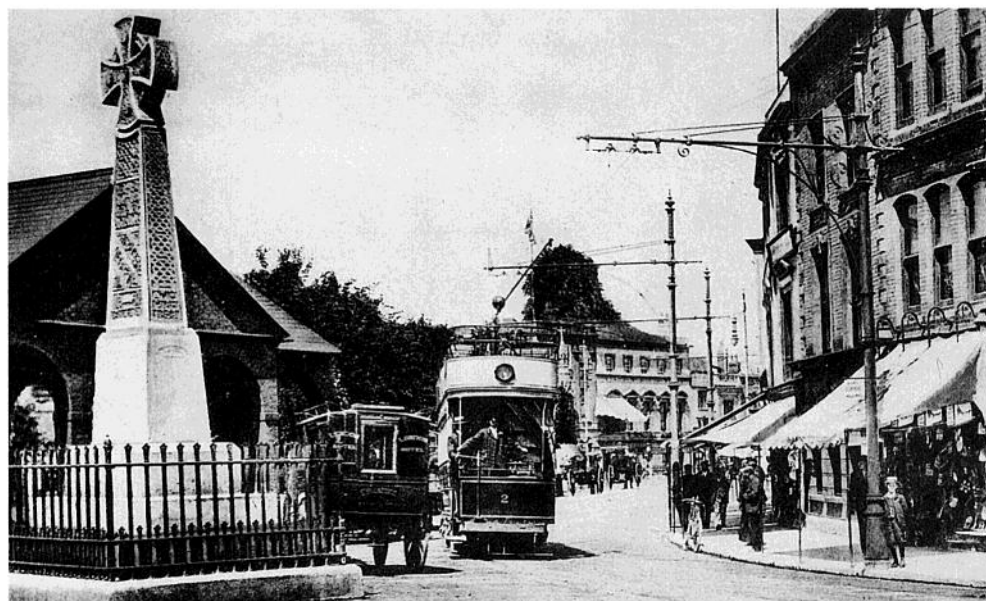
(J.B.P. Collection)



(J.B.P. Collection)

This tram is on the same loop as the previous picture and along the rocker panel is an advert for “Devon & Somerset Stores”.

Turning to the left, we see a view of the Parade with double deck No.2 coming towards the camera. The rear of the courtesy horse bus of the London Hotel shows beside the Burma Cross Memorial.



(P.G.D. Collection)



(P.G.D. Collection)

Double deck No.1 leaves the Parade, continues north by entering North Street and will soon pass the Chapman Store down on the left.

At about the same place, a single decker, with an advertisement for the T. Harris clothing store, passes a Somerset registered car Y 338. The petrol engine had not long arrived.



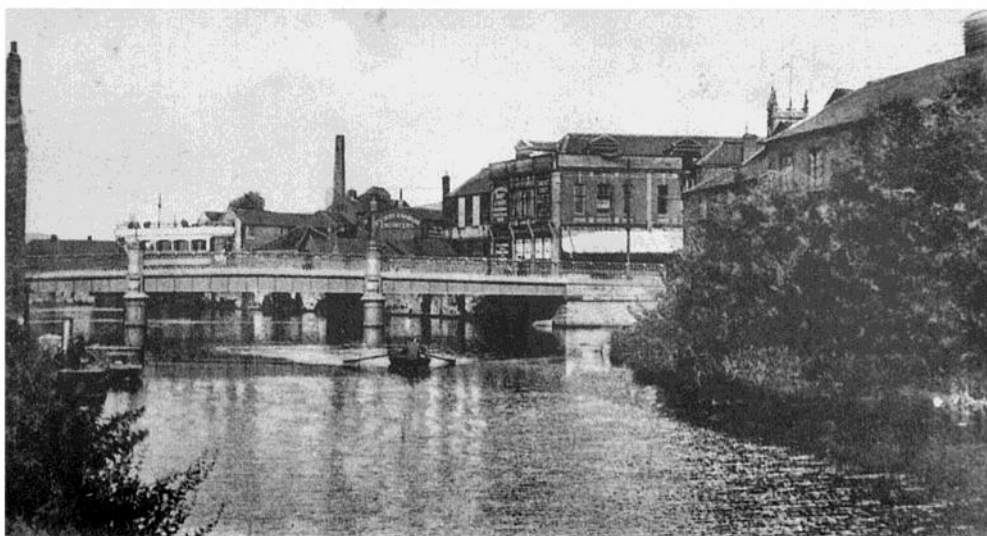
(J.B.P. Collection)



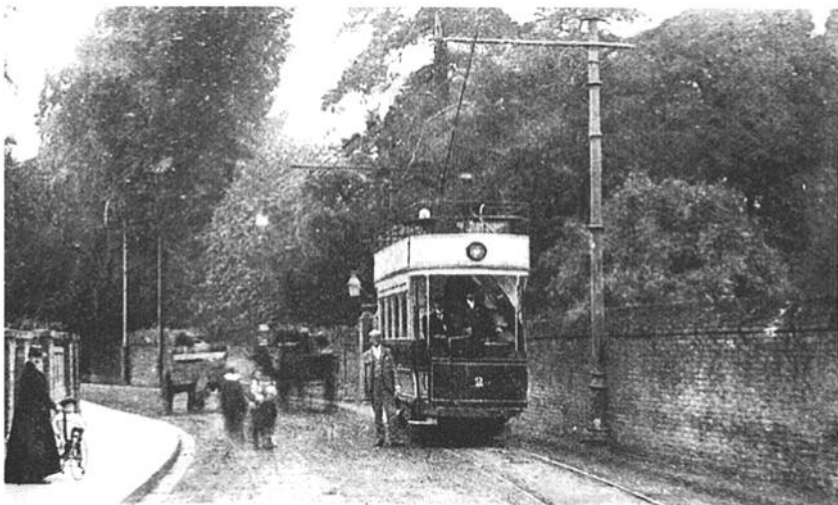
(P.G.D. Collection)

Outside Chapman's store on the system's 3ft. 6ins. gauge, stands double deck No.4 on the North Street loop. The route crosses the bridge behind the camera. J. Wide, the tailor is to the left of the tram.

On the bridge is a double decker following the tram above; whereas the route we follow goes to the left into Bridge Street, having crossed the River Tone.



(J.B.P. Collection)



(P.G.D. Collection)

After Bridge Street, the route turns into Station Road, where we are looking north, with the wall of Flook House on the left. Shops now stand on the right. Double deck No.2 continues north, but the crew is posing on the “southern” end for this photograph. The trolley is on the northern wire.

Coming around the bend, almost at the same spot, is a single decker continuing right to the station. Double decks terminated there, being limited by the second bridge. Unfortunately, no photograph has been found at this first terminus.



(J.B.P. Collection)



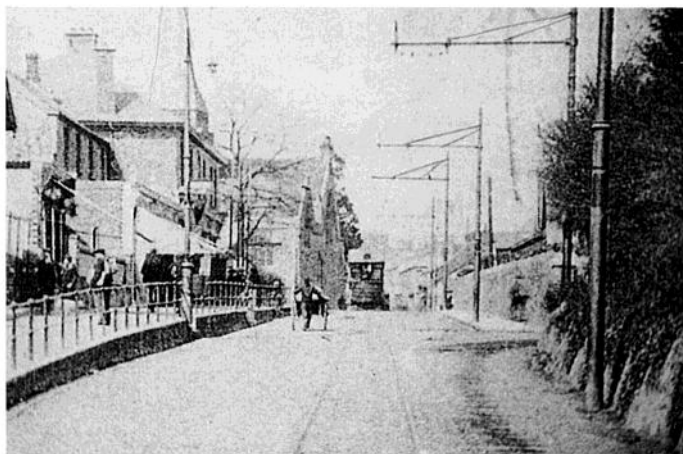
(P.G.D. Collection)

A little further up, passing the Royal Mail Stores, the route bends round to the station, which is just off to the left, past the Ashton Temperance Hotel.

When the single deckers arrived in 1905, they also terminated at the station. Later in 1909, an extension was constructed up Kingston Road. This section

had the more modern posts or “traction standards”, without the elaborate metal detail.

St. Andrew’s Church is behind the lamp post on the high pavement. From now on, it’s single deckers only, and two additional passing loops were added.



(J.B.P. Collection)



(J.B.P. Collection)

At the north end of St. Andrew's loop we see the Cherry Grove Inn on the upward slope. The final total mileage was 1.66 miles.

The turning to the left is Greenway Road in the lower picture and was taken a little further along towards the terminus, at Rowbarton. Again no view seems available of a tram at the end. This single decker has the Hawkes advertisement, with many others on the roof. It shows well the length of the trolley arm needed to reach the supply lines. The later style of poles is still evident in these two views.

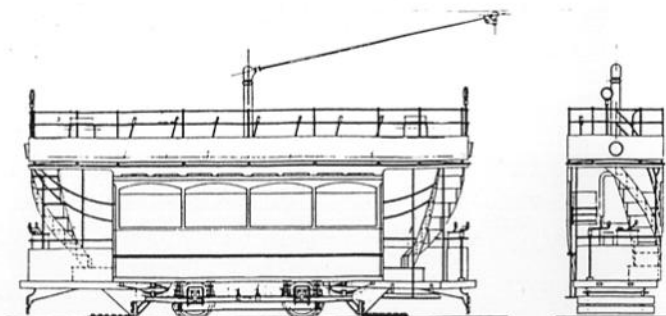


(J.B.P. Collection)

Sadly the system closed on the 28th May, 1921 due to a dispute with Taunton Corporation over the price of the current. The power supply was cut off and that was the end of Taunton's trams.

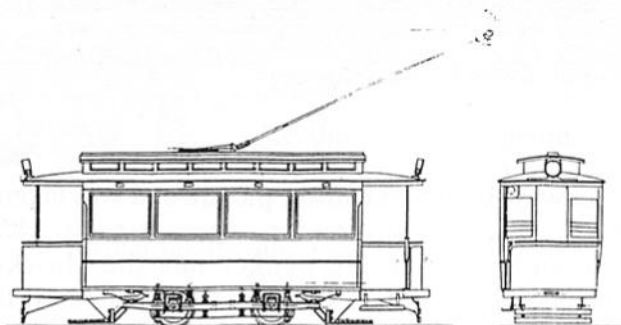
Drawing of the first "half dozen", being the double deckers. They were sold to the Leamington and Warwick Tramways.

Both these plans are reproduced courtesy of Terry Russell Trams and are available from him at Chaceside, St. Leonard's Park, Horsham, RH13 6EG



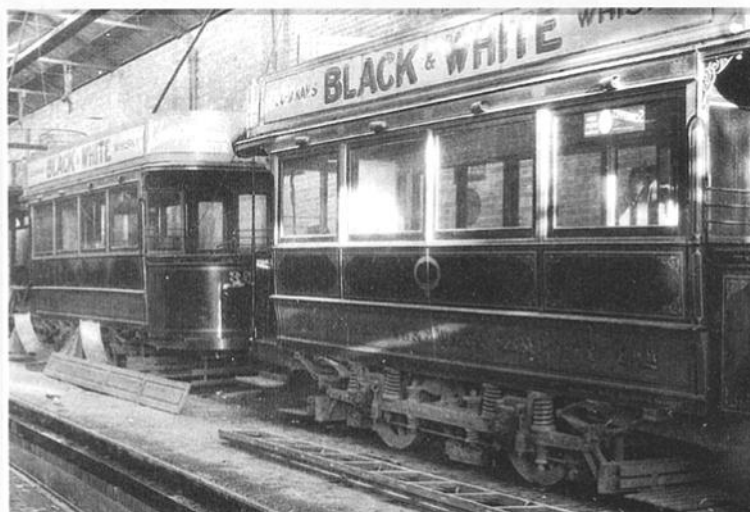
TAUNTON ELECTRIC TRAMWAYS Co. Ltd
OPEN TOP 4 WHEEL TRAMCAR - 1901

Plan of the second "half dozen" being the single deckers. Two were sold to Gravesend, three were sold to Torquay; the body of 1 was used on a float in Taunton's 1921 carnival and after that there is no further record of it, but the truck went to Gravesend as a spare.



TAUNTON ELECTRIC TRACTION Co. Ltd
SINGLE DECK 4 WHEEL TRAMCAR - 1905

This view shows two of the cars later working for the Torquay Tramways, which bought three of them and rebuilt the ends for one man operation.



(S. Miles Davey Collection)

TAUNTON TRAMWAYS.

TIME TABLE.

JULY 17th, 1920, AND UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

WEEK-DAYS.

Cars will Leave East Reach at

6.40, 7.10, 7.40, 8.10, 8.30, 8.37, 8.45, 8.52 A.M., and every 7½ mins. until 9.0 P.M., then every 10 mins. until 10.30 P.M.

Cars Leave Castle Hotel for Rowbarton at

6.45, 7.15, 7.45, 8.15, 8.35, 8.42, 8.50, 8.57, A.M., and every 7½ mins. until 9.5 P.M., then every 10 mins. until 10.35 P.M.

Cars Leave Castle Hotel for East Reach at

7.5, 7.35, 8.5, 8.35, 8.55, 9.2, 9.10, 9.17 A.M., and every 7½ mins. until 9.5 P.M., then every 10 mins. until 10.55 P.M.

Cars Leave G.W.R. Station for Rowbarton at

6.50, 7.20, 7.50, 8.20, 8.40, 8.47, 8.55, 9.2, 9.10, 9.17 A.M., and every 7½ mins. until 9.10 P.M., then every 10 mins. until 10.40 P.M.

Cars Leave G.W.R. Station for East Reach at

7.0, 7.30, 8.0, 8.30, 8.50, 8.57, 9.5, 9.12, 9.20 A.M., and every 7½ mins. until 9.10 P.M., then every 10 mins. until 10.50 P.M.

Cars Leave Rowbarton for East Reach at

6.55, 7.25, 7.55, 8.25, 8.45, 8.52, 9.0 A.M., and every 7½ mins. until 9.5 P.M., then every 10 mins. until 10.45 P.M.

SATURDAYS

as above up to 10 A.M., after which an increased Service will be Run until 8 P.M., when a 7½ mins. service will be continued until 10.45 P.M. from East Reach, 10.50 Castle Hotel to G.W.R. Station and Rowbarton. Last Car leaves Rowbarton 11 P.M. for East Reach.

SUNDAY SERVICE.

CARS LEAVE East Reach 5.22, Castle 5.27, G.W.R. 5.32, Rowbarton 5.37, and every 7½ mins. until 9.45 from East Reach and 10 P.M. from Rowbarton.

Every effort will be made to work to this Time Table, but in the event Heavy Traffic or Accident it cannot be guaranteed.

TRAMWAY DEPÔT,
TAUNTON.

BY ORDER,