

Falkirk & District Tramways Company



1905 - 1936

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Cover Illustration: Opening day of the Laurieston extension 3 September 1909 with tram No. 18, on the left, one of three trams which had been extended upwards and given a flat topped cover to protect passengers from the weather. The curved top of the windows on tram No. 10 on the right identifies it as one of the original 15 built in Paris and shipped to Scotland in 1905. (LTHL collection).

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Opened by the Falkirk Electric Construction Syndicate Ltd (who had taken over the Falkirk and District Tramways Company before construction began) on the 21 October 1905 under the Falkirk and District Tramways Order of 1901, this mainly single-track tramway used a 4ft gauge with 21 double-track passing loops. It began as a circular route linking the town of Falkirk with the neighbouring villages of Camelon, Larbert, Stenhousemuir, Carron and Bainsford. The original fleet consisted of 15 (Nos. 1-15) open-top double-deckers from the Compagnie Générale de Construction, of St. Denis, France.

The original livery of the trams was Prussian blue and cream but was changed to dark red and cream around 1929. The depot was at Carmuir.

An extension to St. Mary Square, Laurieston (with 7 short double-track passing loops) was opened on 3 September 1909 (following major engineering work to lower the road beneath the Skew Bridge) and completed the system. Only one car serviced the route running at 20-minute intervals with a second added in peak times. The fare was 1½d, any distance. The new route was never as much of a financial success as the circular route, which carried workers to the foundries each day and brought shoppers into the town centre.

On 21 June 1913 the company commenced bus operations, although on 16 August 1919 the bus side of the business was transferred to a new company - the Scottish General Omnibus Company Ltd, that had been incorporated

on 10 February 1919 especially for that purpose. On 22 May 1914 the name of the tramway company was changed to the Falkirk and District Tramways Company Ltd.

Following the First World War much of the infrastructure was in need of replacement. Motorbus operators began to challenge the Tramway Company's monopoly, who responded by acquiring buses of its own to operate services in addition to its established routes. A programme of track reconstruction began in 1921 although the circular route took eight years to complete. Soon after ten new single decker trams were introduced and much of the business lost during the reconstruction phase was regained.

In 1920 the Falkirk and District Tramways Company became a subsidiary of the Fife Tramway, Light and Power Company, itself a Balfour Beatty subsidiary. New tramcars were ordered in the shape of ten Brush single-deck tramcars (Nos. 1-10), with additional tramcars Nos. 13-16 arriving in 1931 and five single-deck vehicles from the Dearne District Light Railway system (Nos. 11, 12, 17-19) in 1934.

Strong competition from motorbuses on the Laurieston route prompted its closure in 1924. Rather than invest in the infrastructure the Company chose to dispense with the trams, the last tram running on 20 July with the buses of the Scottish General Omnibus Company replacing them the following day. By the end of the year all trace of the tracks and overhead cables had gone.

In 1926 the Dunfermline & District Tramways Company (also under the control of the Fife Tramway, Light and Power Company) was put under the management of Falkirk & District. The buses operated by the Dunfermline Company were transferred to Scottish General and operated as a subsidiary, although still owned by the Dunfermline Company. The Dunfermline & District Tramways Company still continued to acquire a number of small operators in its area and their buses were transferred to the Dunfermline subsidiary's bus fleet.

The name of the company was again changed in 1929 to the Falkirk and District Traction Company Ltd.

In 1935 the Scottish Motor Traction Company bought up most of the Company's shares and closed the tramway down the following year to make way for its bus services. The last tram running on 21 July 1936 suitably decorated for the occasion.

Tram Fleet List 1905-1936

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

1906

1-15	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	CGC 21E	CGC	28/22
16-18	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brush AA	Brush	28/22

Nos. 1-15 built by the Compagnie Générale de Construction (CGC) of St Denis, France; trucks replaced in 1908 by Hurst Nelson 21E trucks.

Nos. 16-18 top-covered from 1908 to 1913; tops removed and transferred to Dumbarton Tramways Nos. 7-8, 21.

Withdrawn **by 1929** (1-4), **by 1930** (5-10), **by 1931** (13-16), **by 1932** (11, 12, 17, 18).

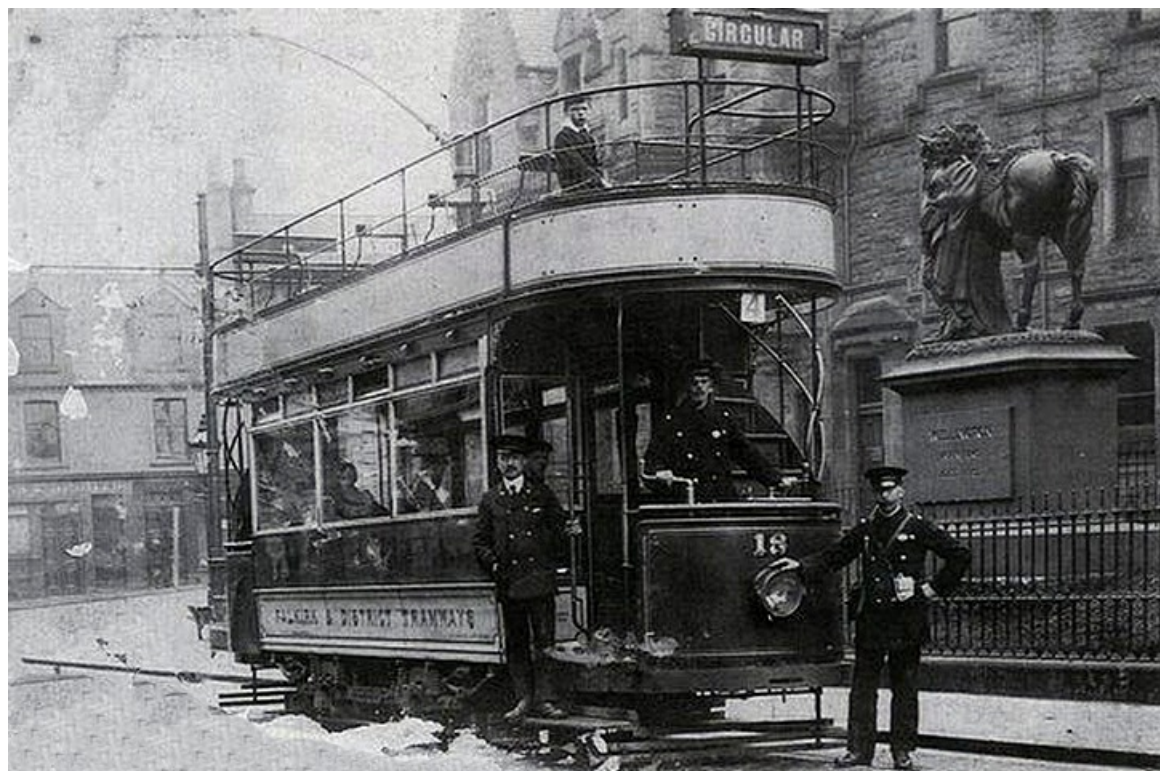
1929

1-4	Single-deck saloon bogie	Brush (Max Traction)	Brush	30
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Withdrawn **1936** (1-4).



One of the original 1905 cars was No. 10, built by the French firm of Compagnie Générale de Construction of Paris and shipped to Scotland, seen here at Camelon Bridge. This tramcar was replaced in 1921 by a new single-deck saloon car which took its number. (LTHL collection).



No. 18 was a 1905 Brush-built open-top 4-wheel car. It received a top cover in 1908 but, strangely, it was removed in 1913. (LTHL collection).



No. 3 was one of ten Brush-built single-deck saloon cars purchased in 1921 to replace the double-deckers. They afforded much better protection from the inclement Scottish weather. (LTHL collection).

1930

5-10	Single-deck saloon bogie	Brush (Max Traction)	Brush	30
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Withdrawn **1936** (5-10).

1931

13-16;	Single-deck saloon bogie	Brush (Max Traction)	Brush	28
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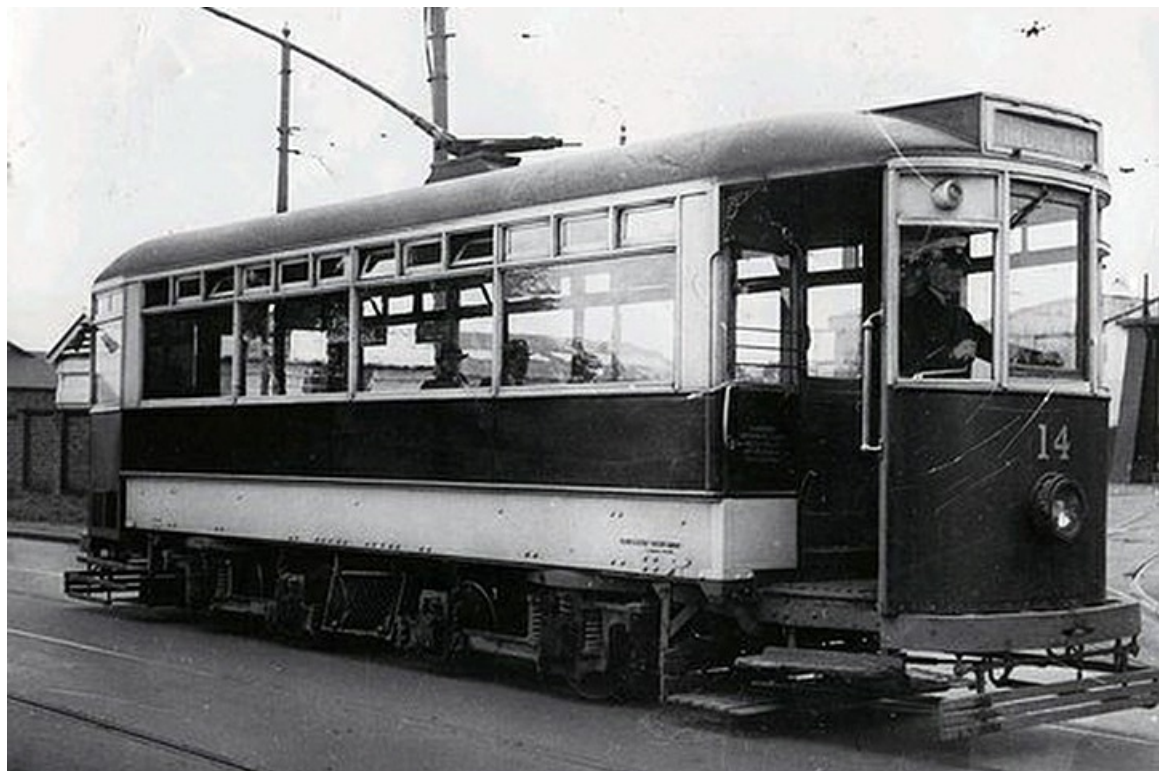
Withdrawn **1936** (13-16).

1934

11-12	Single-deck lowheight	Peckham P22	English Electric	23
17-18	Single-deck lowheight	Peckham P22	English Electric	23
19	Single-deck lowheight	Peckham P22	English Electric	26

Nos. 11-12, 17-19 ex-Dearne District Light Railway (Nos. 27-30 and 1 unknown other; new 1924); originally 36 seat but re-seated as shown in 1928-29.

Withdrawn **1936** (11-12, 17-19).



In 1931 another 4 Brush single-deck cars were added to the fleet. They were identical to the first 10 of 1929-30 and took the numbers of withdrawn double-deck cars 13-16. This is No. 14. (LTHL collection).

Bus Fleet List 1913-1919

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

1913

1	LN9772	Commer WP2	879	??	Ch24
	MS959	Commer 32hp	??	??	Ch??

Withdrawn 1913 (MS959), 1914 (1).

1914

1	MS1348	Tilling-Stevens 42hp	??	Tilling	B??F
2	MS1176	Commer 42hp	??	??	Ch??
	MS1325	Argyll 12hp	??	??	Ch??

No. 1 may have been bodied by Dodson; to Scottish General Omnibus Co 8/19 retaining fleet number.

No. 2 was convertible lorry/charabanc.

Withdrawn **unknown** (MS1325), 1914 (2).



Falkirk & District's first bus was No. 1 (LN9772) a 1913 Commer WP2 with bodywork by an unknown builder. It was requisitioned in 1914 by the War Department but returned in 1919 as No. 6 and eventually passed to Scottish General later in 1919. (LTHL collection).

1915

2	MS1354	Tilling-Stevens 42hp	??	Tilling	B??F
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No. 2 may have been bodied by Dodson; to Scottish General Omnibus Co 8/19 retaining fleet number.

1918

3-5	MS1895-97	Tilling-Stevens 42hp	??	Tilling	B??F
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Nos. 3-5 may have been bodied by Dodson; to Scottish General Omnibus Co 8/19 retaining fleet number.

1919

6	LN9772	Commer 42hp	879	??	Ch24
7-8	MS2018-19	Tilling-Stevens TS3	??/??	Tilling	B26F
9-11	MS2020-22	Tilling-Stevens TS3	1102-03/??	Tilling	Ch27
12	MS2188	Tilling-Stevens TS3	??	Tilling	B26F

No. 6 (formerly No. 1 of 1913); commandeered by War Dept in 1914 and returned 1919; fitted with wooden roof and canvas sides; to Scottish General Omnibus Co 8/19 retaining fleet number.

Nos. 7-8, 12 may have been bodied by Dodson; to Scottish General Omnibus Co 8/19 retaining fleet numbers.

Nos. 9-11 to Scottish General Omnibus Co 8/19 retaining fleet numbers.



No. 6 (LN9772) with driver and passengers c. 1919, showing the wooden roof and rolled up canvas sides fitted after it was returned by the War Department. (LTHL collection).



MS2021 was new in 1919 to Falkirk & District Tramways and is seen here decorated for an unknown occasion. Numbered 10 it was a Tilling-Stevens TS3 probably with Tilling bodywork. (LTHL collection).

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