

Notts-&Derby Traction Company

(Notts & Derby Tramways Company 1913-1928)



1913 - 1971

Contents

Notts & Derby Traction Co - Fleet History 1913-1971	Page 3
Notts & Derby Tramways Co - Tram Fleet List 1913-1932	Page 9
Notts & Derby Traction Co - Trolleybus Fleet List 1932-1953	Page 12
Notts & Derby Traction Co - Bus Fleet List 1953-1971	Page 19

Cover Illustration: No. 408 (SRB536) was a 1953 Bristol KSW6G with ECW H32/28R bodywork. (John Kaye).

© The Local Transport History Library 2023. (www.lthlibrary.org.uk)
For personal use only. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, transmitted or distributed in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical or otherwise without the express written permission of the publisher. In all cases this notice must remain intact. All rights reserved. First published 2023.

PDF-239-1

The Nottingham & Derbyshire Tramways Company (N&DTC), more frequently shortened to Notts & Derby Tramways Company, was incorporated by an Act of Parliament on 11 August 1903 (it was never a limited company), which also authorised the construction of around 39 miles of tramway. Original plans were for around 95 miles spanning the Derbyshire - Nottinghamshire border but the large number of local authorities through whose areas the tramway was planned to run inevitably meant that the promoters ran into significant objections, both from the local authorities themselves (some with tramway systems of their own or plans to build them, and others who wished to extract as many concessions as possible from the company) as well as from other vested interests, chief amongst which was the Midland Railway Company. These objections resulted in a reduction in the size of the projected system.

In 1911 Balfour-Beatty purchased the entire share capital of the N&DTC, subsequently transferring it to another newly set-up subsidiary – the Tramways Light and Power Company – in 1912, and around the same time took over ownership of the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Electric Power Company (suppliers to Ilkeston Corporation and its tramway), neatly solving the question of electricity supply for the planned Nottingham & Derbyshire tramway.

As built the N&DTC single-line tramway ran from Ripley to Cinderhill (11¼ miles) on N&DTC-owned tracks (of the 39 miles of tramway authorised this was the only section completed). The track from Cinderhill to Basford (1½

miles) was leased from Nottingham Corporation and the final 2¼ miles was run over the Corporation's track from Basford into Nottingham city centre by agreement, making a total of around 15 miles. The system opened in stages and was finally completed for service on 15 January 1914.

Services started on the first completed section (from Kimberley to Loscoe) in July 1913, the exact date is open to debate, 4 July is often quoted although reports from local newspapers suggests 29 July as the date when regular services commenced.

24 cars had been ordered from the United Electric Car Company of Preston for the opening, twelve open-top double-deckers (Nos. 1-12) and twelve top-covered double-deckers (Nos. 13-24). They were liveried in light green and cream and garaged at Langley Mill.

Initially the tramway was well used, particularly by the local miners, however, the sudden onset of the Great War in 1914, with the resultant severe shortages of staff (and skills) and consequently reduced maintenance had a negative impact on the track and tramcars. During the war years the N&DTC had taken over operation of the Ilkeston tramway and had plans to join the two systems up, but this never materialised and the two remained separate.

In 1918 the tramway emerged from the conflict in a run-down condition, the company then making an effort to catch-up on maintenance and to improve the tramcar fleet through the fitting of a small number of top

covers. Subsequently postwar inflation coupled with a downturn in the mining industry and the inevitable competition from motorbus operators brought new challenges for the tramway.

In November 1921 the Tramways Light and Power Company was re-named the Midland Counties Electric Supply Co Ltd, although it still retained control of the N&DTC.

By 1922, events were overtaking any plans the N&DTC had had for expansion, its parent company (Balfour-Beatty) actively responding to motorbus competition by introducing motorbus services of its own, forming a new motorbus operating subsidiary, initially called the 'General', but soon renamed the 'Midland General Omnibus Company' – the new company sharing the depot with the N&DTC at Langley Mill. Along with another Balfour-Beatty subsidiary the Mansfield and District Tramways Company the group became the 'Midland General Group', all under the control of the Midland Counties Electric Supply Company.

By 1926 the tramway was reported as losing money weekly and the decision was made to replace it with a more modern form of transport.

In September 1928 the N&DTC secured powers to convert its own tramway, as well as the Ilkeston system, to trolleybus operation, a much-favoured option at this time, where the tramway owner also owned the electricity generation infrastructure, as was the case with the N&DTC. As part of the

enabling act, the N&DTC's title was formally changed to the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Traction Company.

By 1930, the track (which had inevitably suffered from mining subsidence), as well as the tramcars, were all reaching the end of their working lives, so it was imperative that the switch to trolleybus traction be quickly made. The Ilkeston system was by this time in a parlous state, so was the first to go, track lifting commencing on the 22 December 1930, and the last tram running just over two weeks later on the 8 January 1931. The trolleybuses were however not yet available, so the services were operated by motorbuses for exactly a year, before they in turn were displaced by the new trolleybuses on the route between Bridge Street, Cotmanhay and Hallam Fields, Ilkeston on 7 January 1932.

The N&DTC tramway was next to receive attention, the first trolleybuses entering into service in August 1932, and the last tramway service proper running some time in September, the precise date, like the inauguration of services in 1913, having eluded posterity. The date that the last tram of all ran, testing the final section of new overhead trolleybus wiring, is however known, 5 October 1932, with trolleybus services beginning the following day.

The trolleybus system proved to be efficient and reliable, the journey from Ripley to Nottingham taking 90 minutes with some 230 stops along the

way. In 1938 the route numbering system was superseded by a letter/number format and the trolleybus route became the A1.

In 1948 the electricity industry was nationalised and the Midland Counties Electricity Supply Company was absorbed into the state-owned British Electricity Authority in April 1948. At the same time the three Midland General bus companies were transferred to the British Transport Commission, which had been set up to acquire other transport groups under the Labour party's nationalisation plans.

By the early 1950's the trolleybus overhead was in need of renewal and along with the effects of mining subsidence on certain sections resulting in an unpopular detour around Nottingham and the loss of control over the electricity supply the days of the trolleybuses were inevitably numbered. The Nottinghamshire & Derbyshire Traction Bill received the Royal Assent on 1 August 1952 and authorised the abandonment of the trolleybuses which commenced almost immediately and by 25 April 1953 the trolleybuses had gone, replaced by the ubiquitous motorbus. The entire fleet of trolleybuses were purchased by Bradford Corporation for the sum of £62,500.

Setright Speed ticket machines were introduced on all services from 14 March 1953.

Although twenty-five new motorbuses had been ordered as trolleybus replacements in the event it was reduced to only fifteen with an

additional twelve vehicles (which had been new in 1948/49) transferred from the associated Mansfield & District fleet.

Now that Notts & Derby had been nationalised it had access to Bristol chassis which were available exclusively to nationalised companies and in 1957 ten Bristol Lodekkas with ECW bodies were ordered.

The garage at Park Road, Ilkeston was sold in 1960 and a new depot opened in Bath Street, Ilkeston on 28 February 1961 and Notts & Derby vehicles were transferred there from 12 March.

In 1963 the British Transport Commission was replaced by the Transport Holding Company, but this did not affect Notts & Derby operations. On 1 January 1969 the Transport Holding Company became the National Bus Company (NBC).

In anticipation of changes to the Midland General Group under NBC control the Notts & Derby fleet was absorbed into the Midland General fleet on 31 December 1971 and on 28 March 1972 was placed into voluntary liquidation, ending almost 60 years of public service.

Tram Fleet List 1913-1932

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

1913

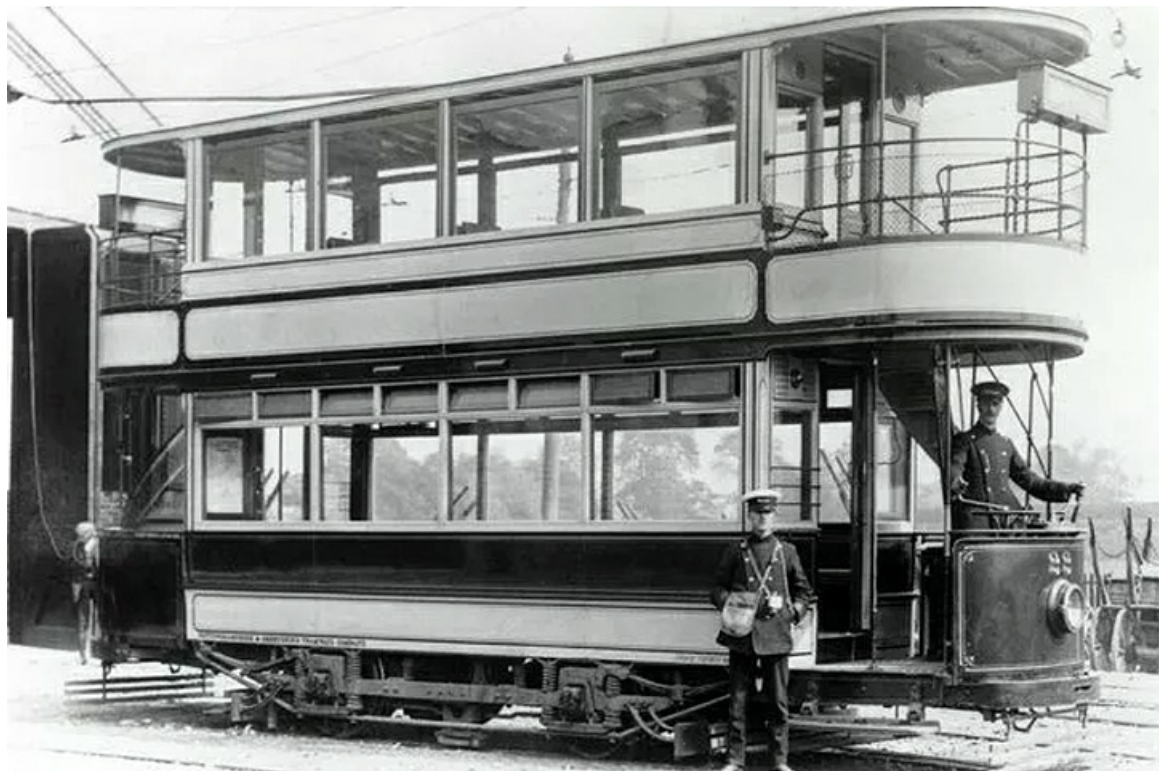
1-12	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Peckham P22	UEC	24/32
13-24	Double-deck top-covered 4-wheel	Peckham P22	UEC	24/32

Nos. 1-3 fitted with top-covers in 1922; they re-entered service 4/22.
Withdrawn **by 1932** (1-24).

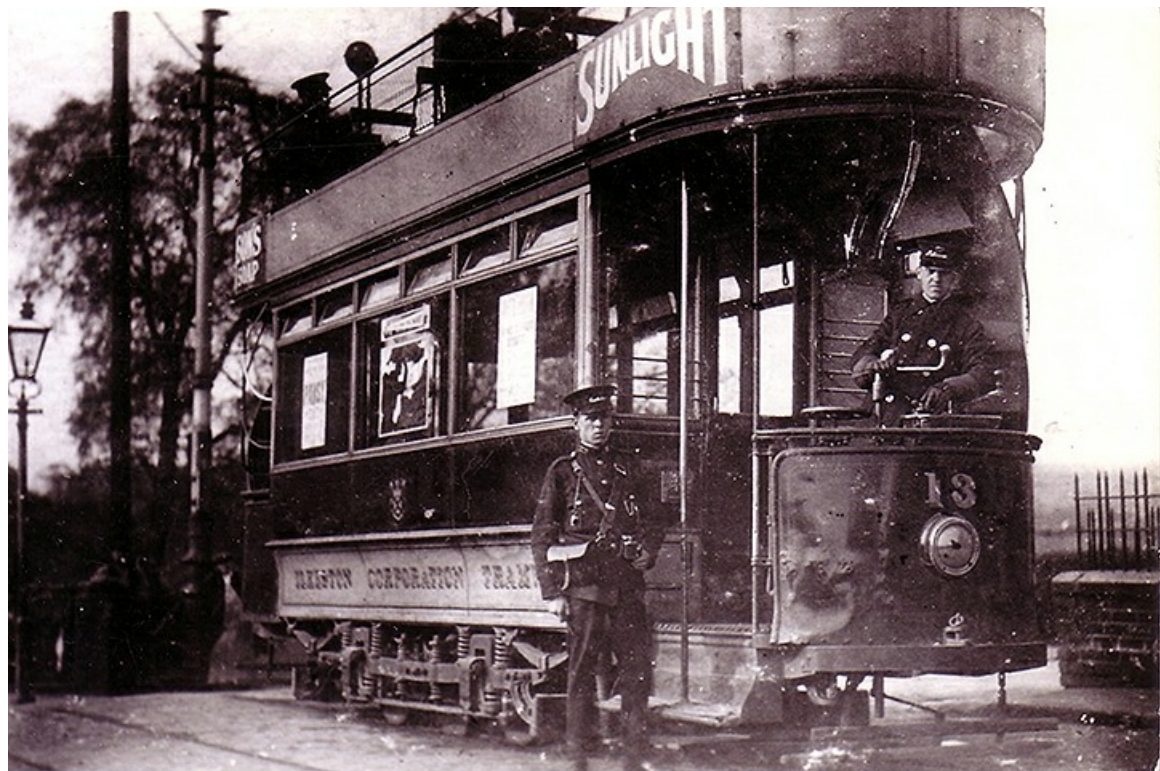
1916

1-9	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brill 21E	ERTCW	26/22
10-13	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brill 21E	Milnes	26/22

Nos. 1-13 ex-Ilkeston Corporation (new 1903); overhauled and re-furbished at Langley Mill; four ERTCW cars were distributed to other companies (two [Nos. 7-8] to Dunfermline Tramways Co [numbered 44-45] and two [Nos. unknown] to City of Carlisle Electric Tramways [numbered 13-14]) and one Milnes car [No. unknown] also went to Carlisle [numbered 15]); the remaining eight cars were re-numbered 1-8 (order unknown); the new No. 7 was cut down to single-deck in 1924.
Withdrawn **1931** (1-8[previous numbers unknown]).



Car 22 was one of the twelve balcony top-covered cars purchased from the United Electric Car Company in 1913 for commencement of services. (LTHL collection).



1903 Milnes-built tram No. 13 of Ilkeston Tramways at Cotmanhay terminus in 1915. The fleet was taken over by N&DT in 1916 and re-furbished. Five were distributed elsewhere and the remainder re-numbered 1-8. (LTHL collection).

Trolleybus Fleet List 1932-1953

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

1932

300-302	RB5568-70	English Electric	1018/23/21	EEC	B32F
303-305	RB5571-73	English Electric	1020/22/19	EEC	B32F
306-315	RB6613-22	AEC 662T	662T001-10	EEC	B32F
316	UK9601	Guy BT	BT23654	Guy	B32F

No. 316 ex-Guy demonstrator (new 1930).

Withdrawn **1937** (300-305), **1941** (312-315), **1942** (308-310), **1947** (306-307), **1948** (311), **1949** (316).



One of the six all-English Electric B32F trolleybuses in a pre-delivery photo. They took the numbers 300-305 but were withdrawn after five years and purchased by Mexborough & Swinton. (LTHL collection).



No. 306 (RB6613) was an AEC 662T trolleybus with English Electric B32F bodywork. (LTHL collection).

1933

317-319	RB8951-53	AEC 661T	661T016/14/13	MCCW	H31/24R
320-322	RB8954-56	AEC 661T	661T015/17/27	MCCW	H31/24R
323-325	RB8957-59	AEC 661T	661T024/18/20	MCCW	H31/24R
326-328	RB8960-62	AEC 661T	661T006/23/21	MCCW	H31/24R
329-331	RB8963-65	AEC 661T	661T025/19/22	MCCW	H31/24R

Withdrawn 1949 (317-331).

1937

300-301	DRB616-17	AEC 661T	661T198-99	Weymann	H30/26R
302-305	DRB618-21	AEC 661T	661T209-12	Weymann	H30/26R
332	DRB622	AEC 661T	661T213	Weymann	H30/26R

Withdrawn 1953 (300-305, 332).

1941

333-335	HNU826-28	AEC 661T	661T377/76/79	Weymann	H30/26R
336-337	HNU829-30	AEC 661T	661T378/73	Weymann	H30/26R

Withdrawn 1953 (333-337).



No. 327 (RB8961) was a 1933 AEC 661T trolleybus with MCCW H31/24R bodywork. (LTHL collection).



No. 337 (HNU830) was a 1941 AEC 661T trolleybus with Weymann H30/26R bodywork without the dummy radiator which by now was no longer in fashion. (LTHL collection).

1942

338-340 HNU970-72 AEC 661T	661T380/74/81	Weymann	H30/26R
341-342 HNU973-74 AEC 661T	661T375/82	Weymann	H30/26R

Withdrawn 1953 (338-342).

1949

343-357 NNU224-38 BUT9611T	9611T116-30	Weymann	H30/26R
-----------------------------------	--------------------	----------------	----------------

Withdrawn 1953 (343-357).



The last batch of trolleybuses arrived in 1949. This is No. 344 (NNU225), a BUT 9611T with Weymann H30/26R bodywork. (LTHL collection).

Bus Fleet List 1953-1971

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

1953

300-314	SRB528-42	Bristol KSW6G	98.014-28	ECW	H32/28R
315-322	JV0941-48	AEC Regent III	9612E3715-22	Weymann	H30/26R
323-324	JV0949-50	AEC Regent III	9612E3725/24	Weymann	H30/26R
325-326	JV0951-52	AEC Regent III	9612E3747-48	Weymann	H30/26R

Nos. 315-326 transferred from Mansfield & District Traction Co (Nos. 145-156 respectively; new 1948[145-147, 149-150, 152] or 1949); No. 316 fitted with new ECW H33/25R body in 1955 following accident.

Withdrawn **1965** (318-326), **1967** (315-317), **1968** (300-314).

1957

464	13DRB	Bristol LDL6G	134.127	ECW	H37/33R
-----	-------	---------------	---------	-----	---------

No. 464 fitted with platform doors 6/64.

Withdrawn **1971** (464).



No. 322 (JV0948), a 1949 AEC Regent III with Weymann H30/26R bodywork that was transferred from the associated Mansfield & District Traction Company in 1953 for trolleybus replacement services. (John Boylett courtesy John Kaye).



No. 464 (13DRB) was a solitary Bristol LD6G with ECW H37/33R bodywork that joined the fleet in 1957. (John Kaye).

1958

465-467	14-16DRB	Bristol LD6G	134.166/81/218	ECW	H33/25R
468-470	17-19DRB	Bristol LD6G	134.246/004-05	ECW	H33/25R
471-473	20-22DRB	Bristol LD6G	134.171-73	ECW	H33/25R

Nos. 465-473 fitted with platform doors 6/64, 7/64, 2/64, 7/64, 4/64, 4/64, 5/64, 5/64, 8/64 respectively.

Withdrawn **1970** (465-466), **1971** (467-473).

1965

633-634	BRB492-93B	Bristol FLF6G	224.063-64	ECW	H38/32F
635-636	DNU15-16C	Bristol FLF6B	224.107-08	ECW	H38/32F
637-639	DNU685-87C	Bristol FLF6G	224.128-29/36	ECW	H38/32F
640-641	DNU688-89C	Bristol FLF6B	224.168-69	ECW	H38/32F

Nos. 633-634 transferred from Midland General 1/65 (new 1964); to Midland General Omnibus Co 12/71 retaining fleet numbers.

Nos. 635-641 to Midland General Omnibus Co 12/71 retaining fleet numbers.

1968

301-306	TRB568-73F	Bristol FLF6G	236.307-10/18-19	ECW	H38/32F
----------------	-------------------	----------------------	-------------------------	------------	----------------

Nos. 301-306 to Midland General Omnibus Co 12/71 retaining fleet numbers.



No. 472 (21DRB) was a Bristol LD6G with ECW H33/25R bodywork, seen here after platform doors had been fitted in 1964. (Brian Bennett).

1970

676-682 SRB74-80F Bristol FLF6G 236.171-76/224 ECW H38/32F

Nos. 676-682 transferred from Midland General Omnibus Co 6/70 (new 1967);
to Midland General Omnibus Co 12/71 retaining fleet numbers.

If you enjoyed reading this booklet please consider making a donation of any amount to help fund the production of more booklets.

Donate



© Local Transport History Library 2023

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 Directory of British Tramways, Turner, PSL, 1996; PSV Circle Fleet History PE19, 2020; Midland General, Oxley, Robin Hood, 1999.

Illustrations courtesy; John Kaye, Brian Bennett, John Boylett (courtesy John Kaye).

Series Editor: Peter Gould (secretary.lthl@gmail.com).