

Plymouth City Transport

The Trams 1892 - 1945



Plymouth, Stonehouse & Devonport Tramways Co 1872-1922

Plymouth, Devonport & District Tramways Co 1882-1892

Devonport & District Tramways Co 1901-1915

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Cover Illustration: Car 152 built by Plymouth in 1927 and finished in varnished teak livery. (LTHL collection).

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Plymouth, Stonehouse & Devonport Tramways 1872-1922

The first tramway to be opened in Plymouth was by the Plymouth, Stonehouse & Devonport Tramways Company and it was also the first to be opened after the enactment of the 1870 Tramways Act. It started operations on 18 March 1872 and ran from Derry's Clock, Plymouth to Cumberland Gardens, Devonport via Union Street and Stonehouse Bridge, a distance of just under 2 miles. The line was single track with eight passing places and built to the railway gauge of 4ft 8½ins. A toll of ½d had to be paid to cross the bridge and the trams were recorded by the tollkeeper to be reimbursed later by the company.

The initial fleet consisted of eight double-deck open-top two horse cars (Nos. 1-8) liveried in light green and white. The tram shed was off Manor Lane just north of Union Street with stabling for up to 116 horses. The company was acquired by the Provincial Tramways Company within the first twelve months of operation

In 1874 the line was extended at the Devonport end to the junction of Fore Street and Marlborough Street with a one-way system inwards via Chapel Street and outwards via St Aubyn Street, involving a cross-over section in Cumberland Street, increasing the length of the system to 2½ miles.

By June 1880 returns showed the company had carried over 1 million passengers with its cars having travelled almost 135,000 miles. The increasing traffic resulted in the replacement of the fleet with twelve larger cars (Nos. 1-12).

By the end of the century the company was proposing to replace the horse cars with electric traction and in 1901 commenced relaying the whole system to a gauge of 3ft 6ins in common with adjacent tramway systems, which up until then had precluded through running. The eastern and western ends of the system that lay within the Plymouth and Devonport boundaries were sold to the respective Corporations, although the company obtained a 21-year lease to work the whole of the system.

Electric services commenced on 18 November 1901 with twelve (Nos. 1-12); Electric Railway & Tramway Carriage Works cars continuing the light green and white livery carried by the horse trams. A new depot was built on Market Street at the corner with Peel Street which replaced the Manor Street sheds. Three more cars (Nos. 14-16; No. 13 not being used because of superstition!) were purchased in 1903, 1904 and 1916 to complete the fleet.

In 1914 the three boroughs of Devonport, Stonehouse and Plymouth were united into the new borough of Plymouth, although by virtue of their 21-year lease the company continued to operate independently until 1 July

1922 when it was purchased by Plymouth Corporation Tramways, the company's fifteen cars being re-numbered 113-127 in the Corporation fleet.

Tram Fleet List 1872-1922

Horse Trams

This listing is in the format - Year into service; Fleet Nos; Type; Builder; Seating.

1872

1-8	Double-deck open-top two-horse	??	??/??
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Withdrawn c. 1888 (1-8).

c.1888

1-12	Double-deck open-top two-horse	??	??/??
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Withdrawn 1902 (1-12).

Plymouth City Transport: The Trams 1892-1945



One of the larger cars of the Plymouth, Stonehouse & Devonport company from the 1888 batch crosses the Stonehouse toll bridge assisted by trace horses. (LTHL collection).

Electric Trams

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

1901

1-12 **Double-deck open-top 4-wheel** **Brill 21E** **ERTCW** **26/22**

Nos. 1-12 also quoted as seating 24/22; to Plymouth Corporation 7/1922 (re-numbered 114-125 order unknown).

1903

14 **Double-deck open-top 4-wheel** **Brill 21E** **ERTCW** **26/22**

No. 14 also quoted as seating 24/22; to Plymouth Corporation 7/1922 (probably re-numbered 126).



A rather faded photograph of tram No. 12 of the Plymouth, Stonehouse & Devonport Tramways Company. It was built in 1901 by the Electric Railway & Tramway Carriage Works of Preston and seated 48. (LTHL collection).

1904

15 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel Brill 21E ERTCW 26/22

No. 15 also quoted as seating 24/22; to Plymouth Corporation 7/1922 (probably re-numbered 127).

1916

16 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel Brill 21E UEC 30/22

No. 16 to Plymouth Corporation 7/1922 (re-numbered 113).

Plymouth Tramways Co Ltd
(Plymouth, Devonport & District Tramways Co)
1882-1892

Authorised under the Plymouth, Devonport & District Tramways Act of 1882 this 3ft 6ins gauge tramway was authorised to use steam power. The first section constructed ran from the Great Western Railway's Millbay Station along Millbay Road, Princess Square, Westwell Street, Russell Street, Richmond Street, North Road, Houndiscombe Road and Mutley Plain to Mannamead, a distance of around 2½ miles. A ½ mile branch ran from Princess Square to the Yarmouth Inn, Barbican.

From the outset the company was beset with problems. The Board of Trade refused to allow trams to use the narrow Richmond Street, which effectively cut the system in two affecting its viability and in 1884 Devonport Corporation obtained an injunction to stop the company operating its trams until they had constructed the proposed lines in Devonport, for which the company had insufficient funds. As a result the company went into liquidation and in 1885 was replaced by a new company, the Plymouth Tramways Company who were authorised to take over the lines and construct the Devonport lines.

The new company purchased 12 new horse cars, liveried in red and cream,

from an unknown builder to replace the steam trams, which were sold off, and continued to operate the former steam routes with horse traction.

However they fared no better than the original company and in 1892 Plymouth Corporation acquired the system, forming the nucleus of the subsequent Corporation tramway system, although the Corporation did not commence running the system itself until 1893 (the exact date is uncertain).

Horse Cars

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

1890

1-12	Double-deck open-top two-horse	Bristol Wagon?	18/16
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Nos. 1-12 to Plymouth Corporation Tramways 6/1892 (retaining fleet numbers).

Devonport & District Tramways Company 1901-1915

Constructed under the Devonport Corporation Tramway Order 1899, this 3ft 6ins gauge tramway was operated by the Devonport & District Tramways Company (part of the BET group) and had the advantage of commencing operations as an overhead electric system.

The line as built ran from the town centre west to Morice Town; north through South Keyham, North Keyham and Keyham to Camel's Head; north east to the depot at Milehouse and finally east to Victoria Park. Services commenced with twenty (Nos. 1-20) open-top double-deck cars from the American firm of Brill liveried in chocolate and cream. Five more Brush double-deckers (Nos. 21-25) were purchased in 1902.

In 1900 Devonport Corporation obtained powers for the construction of an extension to the system to Tor Lane, Peverell and Saltash Passage and leased the completed lines to the company.

Following a serious accident in Rawtenstall in 1911 the Board of Trade banned cars with regenerative equipment. The Devonport company had twelve such cars and as a result they were taken out of service and stored, passing to Plymouth Corporation in 1915. As a result eight second-hand

cars (Nos. 26-33) were purchased from the City of Birmingham Tramways to add to the fleet.

In 1914 the boroughs of Devonport, Stonehouse and Plymouth were united to form the new borough of Plymouth and the Devonport & District Tramways Company was purchased by Plymouth Corporation Tramways in October 1914, although the last company tram did not run until 20 October 1915, when the fleet passed to the Corporation.

Tram Fleet List 1901-1915

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

1901

1-20	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brill 21E	Brill	26/20
21-25	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brush A	Brush	26/20

Nos. 1-25 to Plymouth Corporation 10/1915; seven working cars passed to Plymouth in 10/1915 [six from the 1-20 batch and one from the 21-25 batch, receiving temporary fleet numbers 59-65]; six more were acquired as non-runners [five from the 1-20 batch and No. 22]; twelve further cars were taken from store in 1918 and eleven were re-equipped]; No. 24 was not used. The cars were then numbered 63-65 and 74-88 by Plymouth Corporation.



Tram No. 4 of the Devonport & District Tramways Company was built in America by Brill & Co of Philadelphia and seated 46. (LTHL collection).

1911

26-29 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel Brush Conaty Brush 26/22

Nos. 26-29 ex-City of Birmingham Tramways (Nos. unknown; new 1904-1905); to Plymouth Corporation 10/1915 (re-numbered 66-69).

1912

30 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel Brush A Brush 28/22
31-33 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel Peckham 9A ERTCW 28/22

No. 30 ex-City of Birmingham Tramways (No. unknown; new 1902 to Sheerness & District Tramways).

Nos. 31-33 ex-City of Birmingham Tramways (Nos. unknown; new 1901-1902; all or some may have been constructed by the City of Birmingham Tramways Company).

Nos. 30-33 to Plymouth Corporation 10/1915 (re-numbered 55-58 respectively).

Plymouth City Transport 1892-1945

In 1892 Plymouth Corporation paid £12,500 to purchase the business of the Plymouth Tramways Company Ltd and set up their own department - Plymouth Corporation Tramways Department - to run the system.

The Company's 12 original horse cars were taken into stock, the Corporation using a vermilion and white livery.

The Millbay to Mutley route was extended in March 1893 southwards to West Hoe Basin terminating in Pier Street and on 3 April it was extended northwards to Compton Lane End. Additional stables were provided at Lower Compton Lane and Belgrave Mews, Mutley.

In 1894 five new cars from Milnes (Nos. 13-17) were purchased followed by a further two in 1895 (Nos. 18-19).

A further route to Mutley Plain was opened in 1895 via Tavistock Place and Tavistock Road, North Hill to Duke Street/Clarence Street junction where the two routes divided.

By the latter part of the century proposals were put forward to convert

the system to electric traction. In 1898 Plymouth received authorisation to convert to electric traction although it was not until 22 September 1899 that the first route from Prince Rock to Market Avenue opened, extended shortly afterwards to the Theatre Royal.

The initial fleet consisted of six Milnes-built open top double-deck cars (Nos. 1-6), which were driven in procession along the track in the opening parade. These were fitted for towing and in the early years towed trailers converted from withdrawn horse cars, although the practice was discontinued in the early 1920's after an accident when a trailer car became uncoupled. In the meantime the horse trams continued to operate, the last horse car running in 1907 when the system became fully electrified.

By the time of the Great War in 1914 the Corporation was operating the following tram routes:

Theatre	-	Compton
Theatre	-	Peverell
West Hoe	-	North Road Station
Theatre	-	Beaumont Road
Theatre	-	Prince Rock

In October 1914 the three boroughs of Devonport, Stonehouse and Plymouth were united to form the new enlarged borough of Plymouth and as a result

the Corporation purchased the Devonport company, although for the time being, due to wartime conditions, it was operated separately and it was not until late 1915 that through running between the two systems commenced with the new services being numbered as follows:

1 Theatre	-	Compton
2 Theatre	-	Fore Street via Peverell
3 Theatre	-	Morice Square via Peverell
4 Theatre	-	Beaumont Road
5 Theatre	-	Prince Rock
6 Guildhall	-	Fore Street via Stuart Street
7 Guildhall	-	St Budeaux via Stuart Street
8 Morice Square	-	St Budeaux
9 Drake Circus	-	West Hoe

A white disc with the appropriate route number was carried on the dash of the car.

The former Devonport company's depot at Milehouse was utilised as the main depot for the trams and was extended and modified over a period of four years and during 1919-1920 it was used for the construction of 'new' trams cannibalising old cars for parts to build additional cars.

More new tram services were introduced in 1922 when the Corporation

acquired the Plymouth, Stonehouse & Devonport company on the expiry of their lease, being numbered as follows:

9/9A	(Circular) Theatre	- Milehouse via Mutley Plain and Peverell
10	Theatre	- Morice Square via Alma Road and North Keyham
11	Beaumont Road	- Fore Street via Theatre and Union Street
12	Prince Rock	- Fore Street via Theatre and Union Street
14	Theatre	- St Budeaux via Milehouse and Albert Road

The livery of the trams was also changed in 1922 when a primrose yellow and white livery was introduced, replacing the vermilion and white adopted in 1892.

By 1925 traffic requirements had increased and it was proposed to add more trams to the fleet to cope with demand. The General Manager at the time decided that the Milehouse works was capable of building the required trams and a prototype (No. 151) was constructed, fashioned of solid teak with upholstered seating and bogies it entered service in 1925. Following trials and modifications a further fifteen cars were built over the next two years, although the bogies proved troublesome and there were many derailments prompting the Corporation to replace most of them with long 4-wheel trucks.

By 1930 the Corporation was considering the future of the tramway system.

The continued development of the suburbs and resultant increase in passenger traffic meant that the tram system was in need of not only complete renewal but continued expansion if it was to serve the needs of the community. The idea of replacing the trams with trolleybuses was mooted but in the end a programme of tram replacement by motorbuses was agreed on.

In February 1930 the first stages of tram replacement had begun with route 8 being closed completely and a section of route 14 being abandoned, both taken over by motorbuses and in 1931 routes 4, 5, and 11 were abandoned to the motorbus. More routes followed and by the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 only twenty-seven cars were still in service but due to the onset of the War tramway abandonment was put on hold.

Plymouth suffered many air raids during the War and, as well as the bus fleet, the tramcars suffered considerable damage as did the infrastructure and by the time it ended on 2 September 1945 only four cars were left serviceable and just a single route from the Theatre Royal to Peverell remained. The decision was taken to end tram services altogether on 29 September and car No. 158 was chosen to make the final trip to Milehouse depot, suitably adorned, bringing the tramway era to a close.

Tram Fleet List 1892-1945

Horse Trams

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

1892

1-12 **Double-deck open-top two horse** **Bristol Wagon Works** **??/??**

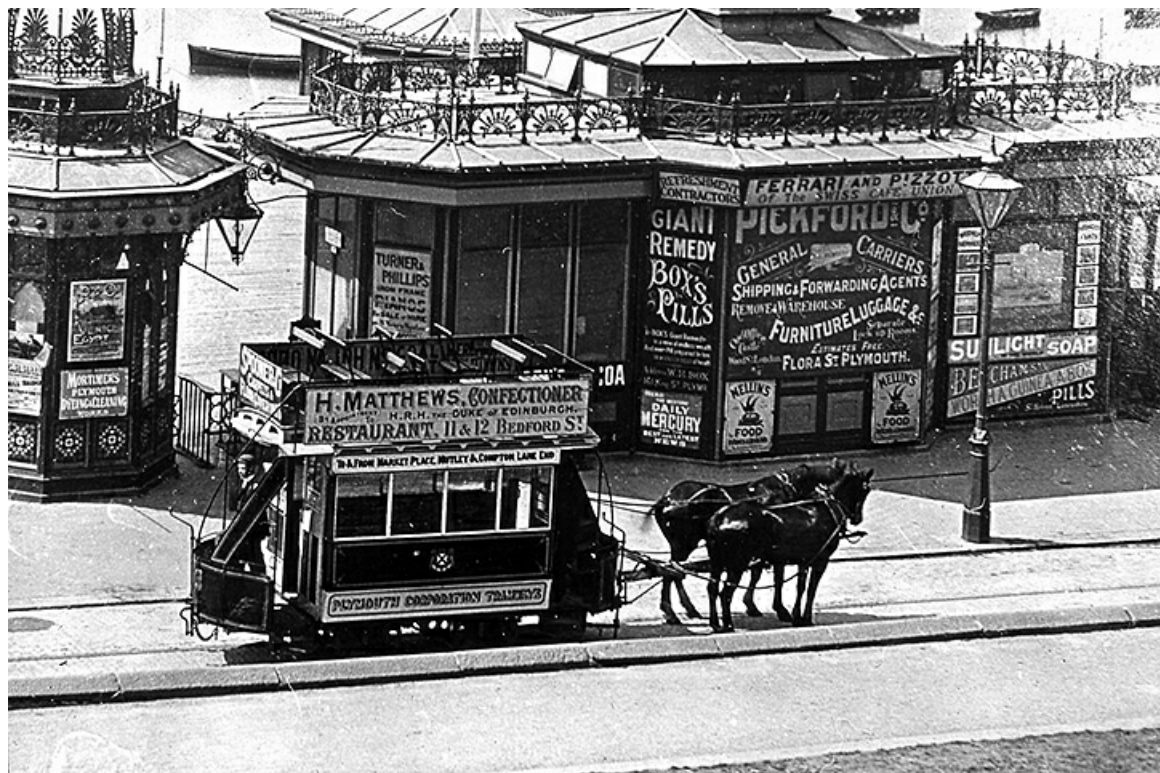
Nos. 1-12 ex-Plymouth Tramways Company (Nos. 1-12; new 1890).
Withdrawn **by 1907** (1-12).

1894

13-15? **Double-deck open-top two horse** **Milnes** **12/12**
16-17? **Single-deck saloon one horse** **Milnes** **??**

It is not certain the cars were numbered in the order shown.
Withdrawn **by 1907** (13-17).

Plymouth City Transport: The Trams 1892-1945



Plymouth Corporation horse car possibly No. 13 built by George Milnes & Co in 1894 at the Promenade Pier on the West Hoe route. (LTHL collection).

1895

18-19	Double-deck open-top two horse	Milnes	12/12
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Withdrawn **by 1907** (18-19).

1897

20-23?	Double-deck open-top two horse	Milnes	12/12
24-25?	Single-deck saloon one horse	Bristol Wagon Works	??

It is not certain the cars were numbered in the order shown.
Withdrawn **by 1907** (20-25).

1898

26-27?	Double-deck open-top two horse	Midland RC&W Co	12/12?
28-29?	Single-deck saloon one horse	Bristol Wagon Works	??

It is not certain the cars were numbered in the order shown.
Withdrawn **by 1907** (26-29).

Electric Trams

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

1899

1-6 **Double-deck open-top 4-wheel** **Peckham** **Milnes** **22/20**

Nos. 2, 5-6 had balconies fitted and seating increased at a later date.
Withdrawn **by 1924** (3-4), **by 1925** (2, 5-6), **1929** (1).

1901

7-20 **Double-deck open-top 4-wheel** **Peckham** **Brush** **24/22**

No. 12 re-trucked with Brill 21E truck ex-Devonport car at a later date.
No. 15 rebuilt with canopy and additional seats at a later date.
Withdrawn **by 1924** (7-8, 10-11, 13-14, 17-19), **by 1928** (9), **by 1929** (12, 15-16, 20).

Plymouth City Transport: The Trams 1892-1945



No. 13 was a 1901 Brush-built car seen here at Milehouse car sheds sometime between 1922 when the primrose livery was introduced and 1924 when it was withdrawn. (LTHL collection).

1902

21-30 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel Peckham Brush 33/22

No. 24 re-trucked with a Conaty-type truck by 1921.

No. 28 fitted with Brill 21E truck in 1924.

No. 29 was fitted with Conaty truck with Peckham pendulum gear later.

Withdrawn **by 1924** (21, 23-25, 29-30), **by 1931** (22, 26-28).

1905

31-36 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel Brush Conaty Brush 30/22

Withdrawn **by 1924** (34), **by 1930** (36), **1931** (31), **1932** (32), **1933** (35), **1934** (33).

1906

37-42 Single-deck demi-car 4-wheel Brush AA Brush 20

Withdrawn **1924** (37-42).



No. 26 was built by Brush in 1902 on Peckham trucks and seated 55. It was withdrawn from service by 1931. (LTHL collection).

1915

43-54	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Peckham P22	Brush	30/24
55	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brush A	Brush	28/22
56-58	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Peckham 9A	ERTCW	28/22
59-62	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brill 21E	Brill	26/20
63	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brush A	Brush	26/20
64-65	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brill 21E	Brill	26/20
66-69	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brush Conaty	Brush	26/22

Nos. 55-58, 66-69 ex-Devonport & District Tramways (Nos. 30-33, 26-29 respectively; new 1901-1902[30-33] or 1904-1905[26-29]); Nos. 55-58 re-numbered 70-73 in 1918; Nos. 56, 58 re-numbered 41-42 respectively in 1922.

Nos. 59-62, 64-65 ex-Devonport & District Tramways (from 1-20 batch; new 1901); re-numbered 74-79 respectively in 1918; Nos. 75, 79 had top deck removed and converted to towing car from 1928-1931[75] or 1932-1942[79] respectively.

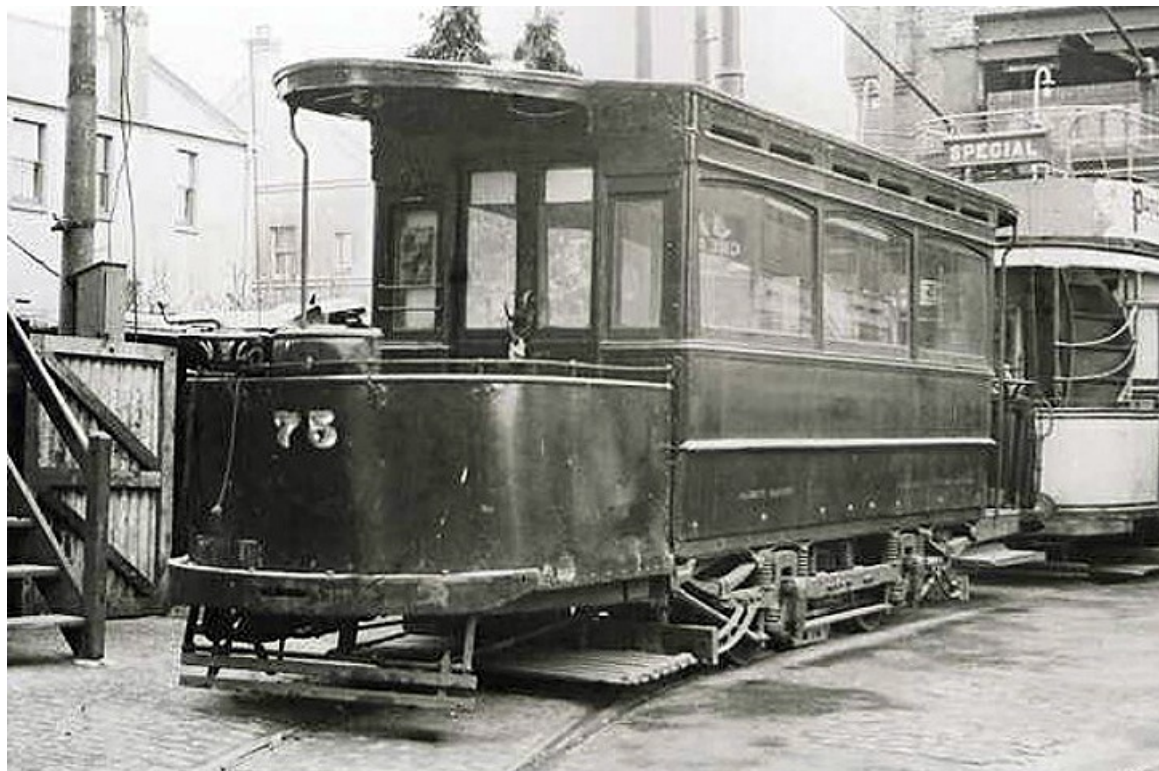
No. 63 ex-Devonport & District Tramways (one of Nos. 21, 23 or 25; new 1901).

Withdrawn **1920** (62[77]), **1924** (55[70]), **by 1927** (66), **1928** (60[75], 63), **c.1930** (56[41], 58[42], 64[78]), **1931** (69), **1932** (65[79]), **1934** (43, 51-53, 57[72], 59[74], 67-68), **1935** (44-50, 54).

Plymouth City Transport: The Trams 1892-1945



No. 74 was originally No. 59, an ex-Devonport & District car built in 1901 in America by Brill on Brill 21E trucks, acquired by Plymouth in 1915. (LTHL collection).



Former Devonport & District car No. 75 (ex-car 60) was converted to a towing car on withdrawal in 1928 by removing the top deck. It was used as such until 1931 when it was finally withdrawn from service. (LTHL collection).

1916

55-62	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Peckham P22	Brush	30/24
64-65	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brush A	Brush	26/20
80-88	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brill 21E	Brill	26/20

Nos. 59, 62 re-numbered 90, 92 respectively at unknown date (possibly before entry into service).

Nos. 64-65 ex-Devonport & District Tramways (two of Nos. 21, 23, 25; new 1901).

Nos. 80-88 ex-Devonport & District Tramways (from 1-20 batch; new 1901);

No. 83 had top deck removed and converted to rail grinder 1933-1942.

Withdrawn **by 1928** (80-81, 86), **1928** (65), **by 1930** (64, 82-85, 87-88), **1934** (55-57, 62[92]), **1935** (58, 59[90], 60-61).

1919

91	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brill 21E	Plymouth	30/24
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No. 91 constructed by Plymouth possibly using spare parts from ex-Devonport & District tram No. 22.

Withdrawn **1935** (91).

Plymouth City Transport: The Trams 1892-1945



No. 87 was an ex-Devonport & District car built by Brill in 1901. It was withdrawn by 1930. (LTHL collection).

1920

93	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brill 21E	Plymouth	30/24
94-105	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Peckham P22	Brush	30/24

No. 93 constructed by Plymouth possibly using spare parts from ex-Devonport & District tram No. 24.

Withdrawn **1933** (93), **1935** (94, 105), **1936** (95-104).

1922

112	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brush 21E	Plymouth	30/24
113	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brill 21E	ERTCW	24/22
114-127	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brill 21E	ERTCW	24/22

No. 112 constructed by Plymouth using spare parts from ex-Devonport & District cars; there were to have been five cars reconstructed (to take Nos. 108-112) but No. 112 was only one completed and Nos. 108-111 were not used.

Nos. 113-127 ex-Plymouth, Stonehouse & Devonport Tramways (Nos. 1-12, 14-16 [order unknown]; new 1901-1904 or 1914).

Withdrawn **1931** (114, 117, 121, 123), **by 1933** (124-125, 127), **1933** (115, 118, 120, 122, 126), **1934** (112, 116), **1935** (113, 119).

Plymouth City Transport: The Trams 1892-1945



New in 1920 was No. 95, a Brush-built car seating 54 on Peckham P22 trucks. (LTHL collection).

Plymouth City Transport: The Trams 1892-1945



No. 119 en-route to South Keyham was an ex-Plymouth, Stonehouse & Devonport Tramways car acquired following the expiry of the lease in 1922. It was built by ERTCW on Brill 21E trucks. (LTHL collection).

1924

131-150 Double-deck open-top 4-wheel Brill 21E EEC 32/24

Withdrawn **1937** (134, 137-138, 140), **c.1938** (135, 139, 146-147), **1939** (131-133, 136, 141, 145, 148-150), **c.1942** (142-144).

1925

151 Double-deck open-top bogie MSCC Max T Plymouth 40/30

Withdrawn **1945** (151).

1927-28

152-166 Double-deck open-top bogie MSCC Max T Plymouth 40/30

Withdrawn **1941** (153, 159), **1942** (156, 163-164), **1945** (152, 154-155, 157-158, 160-162, 165-166).

Plymouth City Transport: The Trams 1892-1945



No. 151 was the first of the Plymouth-built bogie cars with seating for 70, seen here in later years in the maroon and cream livery. (LTHL collection).

1931

1-3	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Peckham P22	Brush	30/24
4-7	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Peckham P22	Brush	30/24
8-9	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Peckham P22	Brush	30/24

Nos. 1-9 ex-Exeter Corporation (Nos. 28-34, 26-27 respectively; new 1925[28-30], 1926[31-34], 1921[26-27]).

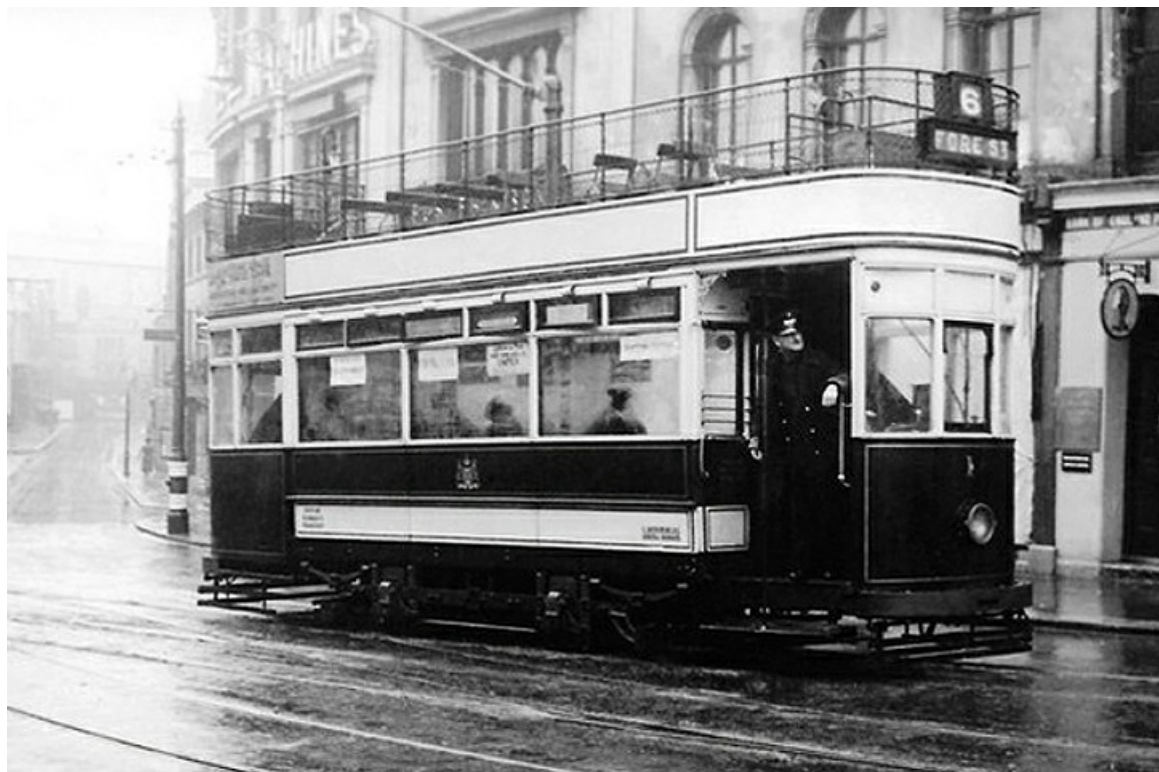
Withdrawn 1937 (1, 3-5, 7-9), 1942 (2, 6).

1934

10-11	Double-deck open-top bogie	Brush 3L Max T	Brush	72
12-15	Double-deck open-top bogie	Brush 3L Max T	Brush	76
16-21	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brush 21E	Brush	27/22

Nos. 10-21 ex-Torquay Tramways (Nos. 41-42, 37-40, 7, 9-10, 16-18 respectively; new 1928[41-42], 1923[37-38], 1925[39-40], 1907[7, 9-10, 16-18]).

Withdrawn 1936 (16-21), 1942 (10-15).



No. 1 came second-hand from Exeter Corporation Tramways in 1931. It was built by Brush in 1925 on Peckham P22 trucks and seated 54. (LTHL collection).

Plymouth City Transport: The Trams 1892-1945



No. 14 was a Brush-built bogie car seating 76 formerly in the fleet of Torquay Tramways and was acquired in 1934. (LTHL collection).

Plymouth City Transport: The Trams 1892-1945



Built by Brush in 1907 was car No. 17 ex-Torquay Tramways Company acquired in 1934. (LTHL collection).

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