

Musselburgh & District Electric Light & Traction Co Ltd



1904 - 1936

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Cover Illustration: Musselburgh electric tram no. 9 in the foreground is one of the original batch delivered in 1904, supplied by the British Electric Car Company of Manchester. In the background is an Edinburgh cable tram, which appears from the arrangement of the windows to be one of those supplied by Brown Marshall of Birmingham. (LTHL collection).

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At the turn of the century the Drake and Gorham Electric Power & Traction Co Ltd proposed to construct a tramway linking the Edinburgh terminus at Joppa to Musselburgh, which resulted in the passing of the Portobello & Musselburgh Tramways Order of 1900. Matters progressed little thereafter and an extension of the Order had to be granted, although by 1903 no tramway had materialised.

In 1903 the Portobello & Musselburgh Tramways Order authorised a subsidiary company the Pioneer Electric Company to construct the portion of the route between Joppa and Brunstane Burn and an extension until 6 August 1904 was granted. In September 1903 the Pioneer Electric Company became the National Electric Construction Co Ltd. However still nothing materialised and it was not until later in 1904 during April/May that construction finally began using the overhead electric system. Due to the late start, the line was not completed on time and it was 2 December 1904 before the first trial run took place and the line finally opened to the public on 12 December 1904. The system was operated by the Musselburgh & District Electric Light & Traction Company Ltd (incorporated in August 1905).

The line was built to the standard gauge of 4ft 8½ins and ran from Levenhall to Joppa where it met the tracks of the Edinburgh Corporation system, although because Edinburgh trams used the cable system no connection could be made and passengers had to change trams here to

continue onwards - this became known as the 'Joppa Muddle'.

The initial fleet consisted of ten (Nos. 1-10) BEC-built open-top double-deckers housed in a four-track corrugated iron shed behind buildings on the south side of High Street reached by a single line through a high arched gateway. The cars were liveried in red and ivory and carried the fleetname 'Musselburgh Electric Tramways' but postwar was gradually changed to 'M. & D. E. L. & T. Coy Ltd' and an overall green livery adopted.

The service proved popular and extensions to serve Tranent, Port Seton and Newcraighall were proposed.

On 23 December 1905 the Company commenced an half hourly motorbus service from Levenhall to Tranent on Saturdays and Sundays to test demand. Two new Wolseley 36-seat double-deckers were purchased for the service. One of the buses was destroyed by fire on 2 April 1906 and later replaced by a Napier double-decker. From 1 May 1907 this route operated daily, although reverting to weekends only again in the summer of 1907. It ceased entirely in 1913, the Napier becoming a tower wagon.

The Portobello and Musselburgh Tramways (Port Seton Extension) Order of 1906 proposed a single-line route with twelve passing loops to connect

the Levenhall terminus with Port Seton. Again the company tested demand by opening another half hourly Saturday and Sunday service between the two points using an 18-seat Thornycroft charabanc. Construction of this extension began in the summer of 1907; the new extension partially opened on 5 August 1909 as far as Tranent Road, Cockenzie, the remainder to the Port Seton terminus opened on 31 December 1909. The charabanc was withdrawn and transferred to another NEC company, the Mexborough & Swinton Traction Company.

With the onset of War in 1914 maintenance became difficult and the service became less reliable although miners traffic called for additional cars and three single-deckers (Nos. 17-19) were acquired from Sheffield Corporation in 1918.

By 1923 Edinburgh had replaced the cable trams with overhead electric trams and a through service commenced on 24 June 1923 and necessitated the purchase of three additional cars, again ex-Sheffield Corporation but this time double-deck cars.

However, by 1928, the Company's financial situation was unsatisfactory and on 23 February the Edinburgh to Port Seton route was replaced by the Company's own motorbuses and to make room for them the open-top trams and single-deckers were removed from the depot and driven to Edinburgh's

Gorgie depot to await disposal. On 25 February the Company ceased to operate trams completely, although it is thought miners cars ran for a few weeks afterwards at shift changeover times. Operation of the Joppa to Levenhall section was taken over by Edinburgh Corporation on 1 March 1928 and the entire Musselburgh tramcar fleet sold for scrap, bringing the tramway era to an end.

The company continued to operate the former Edinburgh to Port Seton tram route using a fleet of buses under the fleetname 'Coast Line'.

In 1930 the BET made an offer for the purchase of Musselburgh's parent company - the National Electric Construction Company, which was duly accepted and Coast Line became a BET controlled company.

On 1 January 1937 the BET transferred the buses and services to the Scottish Motor Traction company ending the separate operating existence of the Musselburgh & District Electric Light & Traction Company.

Tram Fleet List 1904-1928

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

1904

1-10	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	BEC	BEC	32/22
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No. 5 involved in collision with No. 13 in 1917 and scrapped.
Withdrawn **1917** (5), **1928** (1-4, 6-10).

1905

11-14	Double-deck open-top 4-wheel	Brush	Brush	35/22
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Nos. 11-14 fitted with top covers in 1909; No. 13 involved in collision with No. 5 in 1917; rebuilt and re-numbered 5, re-entering service in 1918.
Withdrawn **1928** (11-12, 13[5], 14).



Musselburgh electric car No. 3 at Joppa with Edinburgh Corporation's cable car No. 145 in the background. It was here that passengers had to change cars to travel onwards to Edinburgh or Levenhall. (LTHL collection).



Car 12 was built in 1905 by Brush and seated 57. It was fitted with a top-cover in 1909. (LTHL collection).

1909

15-16	Double-deck covered 4-wheel	Brush	Brush	36/22
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Withdrawn **1928** (15-16).

1918

17	Single-deck saloon 4-wheel	Brill 21E	Brush	28
18	Single-deck saloon 4-wheel	Milnes girder	Sheffield CT	28
19	Single-deck saloon 4-wheel	Milnes girder	Sheffield CT	28

Nos. 17-19 ex-Sheffield Corporation (Nos. 94, 203, 210 respectively; new 1900, 1903, 1903 respectively); Nos. 18-19 order uncertain.

Withdrawn **1928** (17-19).

1923

20	Double-deck covered 4-wheel	Milnes girder	Milnes	30/22
21	Double-deck covered 4-wheel	Brill 21E	Cravens	29/22
22	Double-deck covered 4-wheel	Brush AA	Sheffield CT	30/22

Nos. 20-22 ex-Sheffield Corporation (Nos. 141, 170, 252 respectively; new 1901, 1902, 1905 respectively).

Withdrawn **1928** (20-22).

Musselburgh & District Electric Light & Traction Co Ltd 1904-1936



Musselburgh & District tram No 15 is seen at Joppa on 23 June 1923 with one of Edinburgh's electric trams the day before through running began. (LTHL collection).

Bus Fleet List 1905-1936

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

1905

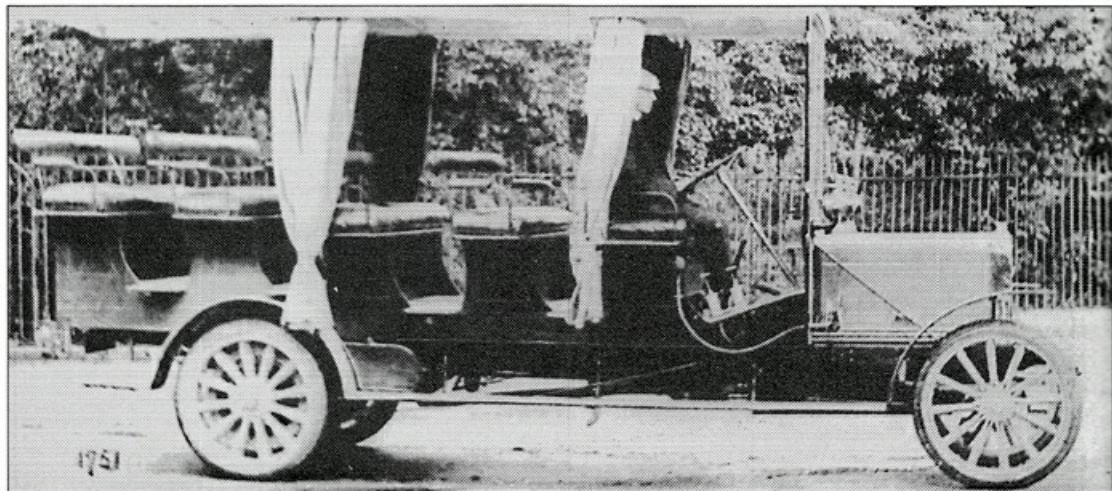
??	SS4	Wolseley	??	??	018/18R0
??	???	Wolseley	??	??	018/18R0

One of the Wolseley's was destroyed by fire in April 1906; the other continued to operate until the end of the service in 1913.

1906

??	??	Thornycroft	??	??	Ch18
??	??	Napier	??	??	??/??

The Thornycroft had toastrack style seating and a covered top.
Withdrawn **1909** (Thornycroft), **1913** (Napier).



Musselburgh & District operated this Thornycroft charabanc with wooden roof, side curtains and toastrack style seating on the Port Seton route from 1906 until 31 December 1909. It was transferred to Mexborough & Swinton Traction, another NEC company, in 1910. (LTHL collection).

1928

?	SY3484	Leyland PLSC3	46896	Leyland	B31R
722	SY3485	Leyland PLSC3	46895	Leyland	B31R
?	SY3486	Leyland PLSC3	46897	Leyland	B31R
?	SY3487	Leyland PLSC3	46898	Leyland	B31R
?	SY3488	Leyland PLSC3	46899	Leyland	B31R
?	SY3489	Leyland PLSC3	46900	Leyland	B31R
727	SY3549	Albion PM28	7021F	??	B32R
728	SY3564	Albion PM28	7026L	??	B32R
-	SY3659-62	Leyland PLSC3	47477-80	Leyland	B31R

Fleet numbers used were the Edinburgh licence numbers.

Nos. SY3484-SY3489, SY3659-SY3662 to Scottish Motor Traction 1/37 (re-numbered G67-G76 respectively).

Withdrawn **by 1937** (727-728).



SY3487, a 1928 Leyland PLSC3 with Leyland B31R bodywork used on the Edinburgh-Portobello-Musselburgh-Prestonpans-Port Seton route of the Musselburgh & District Electric Light & Traction Co using the Coast Line fleetname. (Bus Archive)

1930

590*	GE3516	Albion M38	13500C	??	B32F
591*	OF7099	Albion PMA28	7057F	??	B32F
-	SY4125-27	Leyland LT1	50608/10/13	Leyland	B32F
590	SY4240	Albion PMA28	7064G	??	B32R
591	SY4238	Albion PMA28	7062H	??	B32R
592	SY4239	Albion PMA28	7063J	??	B32R

Nos. 590*-591* were Albion demonstrators on loan until 7/30 pending delivery of 590-592; fleet numbers used were Edinburgh licence numbers. SY4125-SY4127 to Scottish Motor Traction 1/37 (re-numbered G77-G79 respectively).

Withdrawn **1930** (590*-591*), **by 1937** (590-592).

1931

-	SY4506-07	Bristol B	B704/19	Bristol	B32F
SY4506-SY4507	to	Scottish Motor Traction	1/37	(re-numbered X1-X2	respectively).



Coast Line No. 590 (SY4240) was a 1930 Albion PMA28 with B32R bodywork by an unknown builder. (Bus Archive).



SY4506 was one of two Bristol B chassis with Bristol B32F bodywork purchased in 1931. (Bus Archive).

1932

-	SY4730-31	Bristol B	B816-17	Bristol	B30D
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SY4730-SY4731 to Scottish Motor Traction 1/37 (re-numbered X3-X4 respectively).

1935

L01-L04	SY5441-44	Leyland TS7	6597-600	Brush	B32R
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L01-L04 to Scottish Motor Traction 1/37 (re-numbered H144-H147 respectively).

1936

L05-L08	SY5712-15	Leyland TS7	9303-06	Brush	B32R
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L05-L08 to Scottish Motor Traction 1/37 (re-numbered H148-H151 respectively).



No. L03 (SY5443) was a Leyland TS7 with Brush B32R bodywork new in 1935. It passed to SMT in 1/37 where it was numbered H146. (Bus Archive).

1937

L09-L12	SY6020-23	Leyland TS7	12885-88	Brush	B32R
L14	SY6024	Leyland TS7	12889	Brush	B32R

L09-L12, L14 ordered by Coast Line but delivered 4/37 to Scottish Motor Traction in SMT livery but with Coast Line fleet numbers; re-numbered H205-H209 respectively.



H208 (SY6023) was ordered by Coast Line but delivered direct to SMT, albeit with Coast Line fleet number L12. It was a 1937 Leyland TS7 with Brush B32R bodywork. It remained in service until 1960 although re-bodied in 1954 with second-hand Alexander C35F body. (LTHL collection).

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