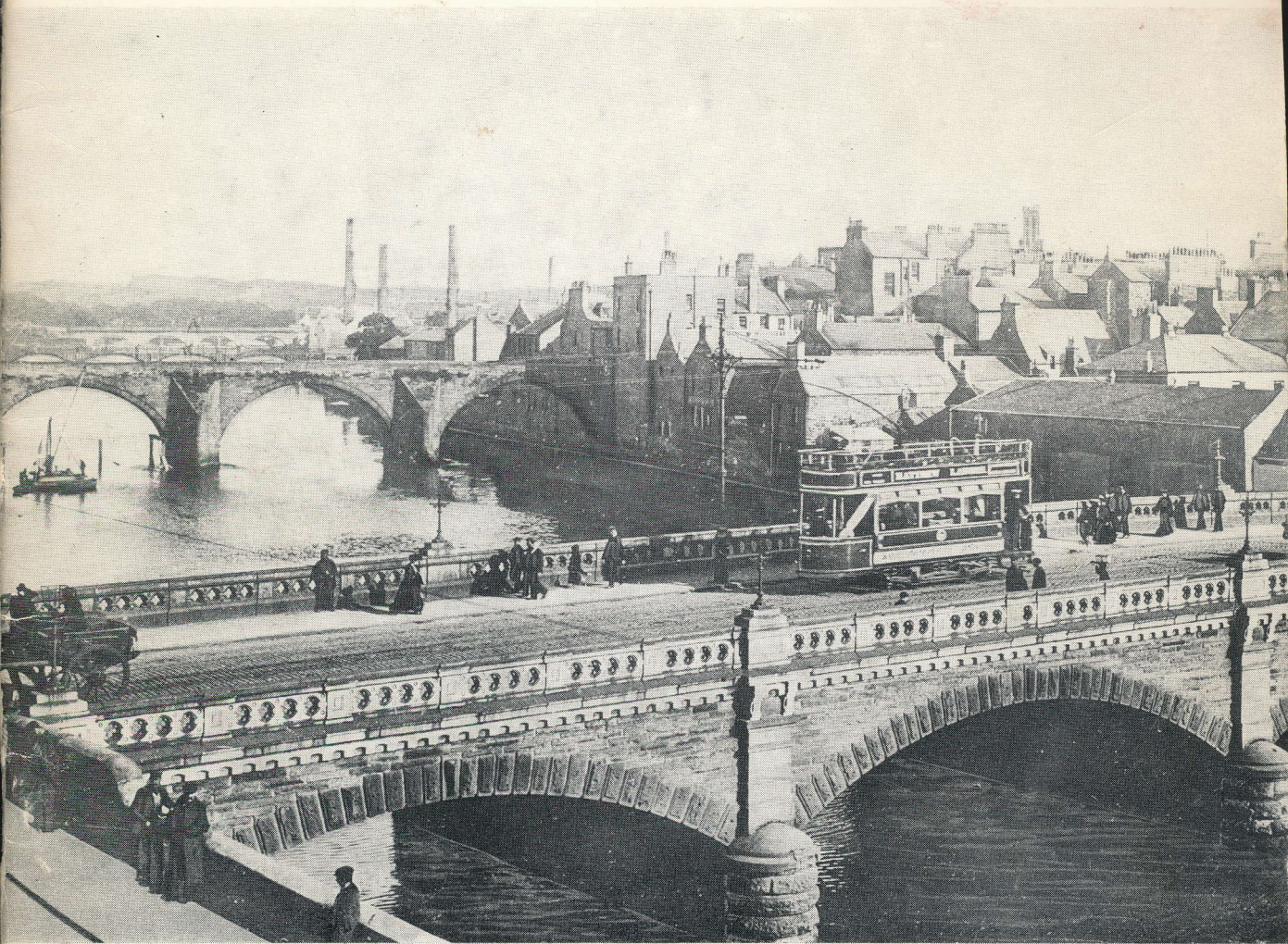


THE TRAMWAYS OF AYR



RONALD W. BRASH

£2.50
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The Tramways of Ayr

RONALD W. BRASH

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DEDICATION

In memory of Bailie Thomas Paterson, J.P.

Freeman of the Ancient and Royal Burgh of Ayr

Member of Ayr Town Council 1918-1953

COVER VIEW: Tram crossing Ayr's New Bridge, probably in 1910. The rebuilding of the Auld Brig took place then, and there are signs of this in the background of this view.

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FOREWORD

by

The Rt. Hon. Lord Ross of Marnock, P.C., M.B.E., M.A.

Former Secretary of State for Scotland

It is now over fifty years since the last tram clanged its way through Ayr, along Prestwick Road and into the depot at Newton Park. For thirty years Ayr Corporation Tramways had played an invaluable part in the life and development of the town.

It was not a complex tramway system — six miles of track from Burns Monument, straight through the town to Prestwick Cross with one spur which branched off at the Newton side of the New Bridge, along George Street and Whitletts Road to the Racecourse. It was this simplicity which made it efficient, dependable and profitable.

Along its main route it served the railway stations of Ayr, Newton, and Prestwick. It passed through the principal shopping streets, past a dozen churches and was handy for cinemas and theatre.

The heyday of the Ayr trams coincided with the great days of the Clyde coast resorts. Apart from its sandy beach Ayr had a unique attraction — Robert Burns. Thousands and thousands of holiday-makers (they were not tourists then) flocked into Ayr and crowded the trams to visit Burns Cottage, the Monument and the Tea Gardens. In the days before the family car and the double-decked bus, the tramcar with its open top deck was itself an attraction. Race days and the Shows (at Newton Park) tested the ability of the trams to cope with crowds.

The men who manned the Corporation Tramways — drivers, conductors and engineers were a dedicated fraternity. I knew them well. After all it was an uncle of mine who led the first and only tram strike and yet another uncle who drove the last tram into the depot. To cope with the increased summer service A.C.T. used to take on temporary staff, many of them university students. That's how I became a tram conductor, and really got to know the Ayr tramwaymen and their trams. There were some colourful characters among them — but there were, too, among the passengers.

The trams served Ayr well and many will welcome Mr Brash's enthusiasm and patient research that has recalled an important part of Ayr's transport history.

ROSS OF MARNOCK



A view, in the early days of the tramway, of Ayr High Street
and the Wallace Tower.

THE TRAMWAYS OF AYR

The Royal Burgh of Ayr has been in existence for almost eight hundred years. It obtained its first charter from King William the Lion in the first decade of the thirteenth century, probably 1205, and soon established itself as the leading centre for trade and administration in south-west Scotland.

It owed its importance to its location as a crossing point on the River Ayr close to its mouth and protected harbour, and was dominated by its Royal Castle. All trace of this has long since vanished, but it is likely to have been located on the high point to the west of the town now occupied by the present Ayr Academy. Drifting sand, blown into the town by the strong prevailing westerly winds, seems to have been a problem from the outset, causing the abandonment of the original trading centre in Sandgate in favour of the more sheltered area of High Street around the Fish Cross. Opposite this the road led to the original thirteenth century bridge, the main entrance to the burgh from the north and one of the earliest bridges known to have existed in Scotland. Sandgate was again to come into favour at a later date, Ayr being virtually unique in possessing two wide "market" streets and two tolbooths.

As well as being a prosperous trading centre for both local and overseas trade, with its weekly market and two annual fairs, Ayr possessed an impressive parish church dedicated to its Patron Saint, John the Baptist, and both a Dominican and a Franciscan Friary, which were destroyed at the Reformation. Its oldest surviving building today is Loudoun Hall which was the Town House of the Campbells of Loudoun, the Hereditary Sheriffs of Ayrshire. This early sixteenth century building, recently restored and used regularly for meetings and exhibitions, is one of the very few surviving pre-17th century town houses in Scotland.

During Cromwell's military occupation of Scotland from 1651 to 1658 Ayr was a garrison town with a massive fort, part of whose walls still exist, constructed to the west of the town above the harbour (and incidentally protecting the burgh from further sand deposits). Thereafter the town seems to have declined in importance, its population according to an unofficial census of 1755 being around 2,000 which would have altered little over the previous two centuries. However, improved communications in the late eighteenth century led to the building of the first "New Bridge" over the River Ayr in 1775 to cater for a growing stage and mail coach traffic between Glasgow and the South-West. By the mid-nineteenth century Ayr had at last broken out of its medieval confines, and extensive and elegant house buildings began to transform the former sandswept lands between the Rivers Ayr and Doon.

The first railway arrived from Glasgow in 1840, originally terminating at the North Harbour (which remained as the Goods Depot until recent years). When a new station at Townhead, the site of the present Ayr Station, was opened in 1857, the future development southwards of the burgh was assured. It revived as a commercial centre, and the fine beach and impressive Racecourse caused its population to swell by several thousands during the summer months. By the 1880's Ayr was becoming a high-class holiday resort and a residential town for many whose business was in Glasgow and who could benefit from the excellent rail services offered by the Glasgow and South Western Railway.

Above all, Ayr was associated with Robert Burns, who was born within Ayr Parish at Alloway in 1759. Although Burns spent most of his short adult life away from Ayr, two of his poems, "The Brigs of Ayr" and "Tam o' Shanter" would forever associate the burgh with his name. The former ensured the preservation of Ayr's Auld Brig in 1910 when it was threatened with possible demolition, and the latter immortalised the Brig o' Doon, which has recently undergone similar restorative treatment. The erection of an imposing Monument beside the Doon in 1820, and the purchase

of Burns Cottage as a permanent memorial to the poet in 1881, made it certain that these places would become centres of pilgrimage for visitors from all over the world. The road between Ayr and Alloway was destined to carry a volume of traffic that would hardly have been envisaged by Tam o' Shanter even after one of his periodic phases of alcoholic amnesia in the celebrated hostelry still standing in Ayr's High Street!

Two and a half miles north of Ayr lies Prestwick. It was created a burgh, in the modern sense, as recently as 1903, but it had a long history as a burgh of barony going back to the late 12th century, thus making it older than Ayr, and in fact the oldest burgh in Ayrshire. It never achieved the size, importance or prosperity of its southern neighbour, but the coming of the railway and the exploitation of the surroundings as golf courses, made Prestwick a leading holiday resort and golfing centre by the end of the nineteenth century. At that time it was still physically separated from Ayr, there being virtually no houses between the end of the seafront at Grange-muir Road and the Ayr Boundary at Prestwick Toll, apart from a few cottages at Kingcase. The route followed by the trams in their early days afforded an uninterrupted view over Ayr Bay to the Heads of Ayr, until near the depot at Newton Park. However, in the years prior to the First World War, substantial red sandstone villas began to appear on both sides of Ayr Road as far as Kingcase, and by the late twenties modern bungalows were beginning to fill in the remaining gaps on the shore side of the main road, so that by 1930 housing development in that part was largely as it is today. By 1914 Prestwick possessed a small cinema, called appropriately "The Picture House", and a Beach Pavilion with a summer season of entertainers, in keeping with the custom prevailing in most Clyde Coast resorts. Finally in June 1931 came the Open Air Bathing Pool, one of the largest in Scotland. Prestwick was no mere residential suburb of Ayr, but a municipality with its own traditions and its own highly distinctive character.

To return to Ayr, a milestone in its development was the absorption of the independent Burgh of Newton-upon-Ayr, lying to the north of the river, in 1873. The town was then almost doubled in size and population, with an enlarged industrial base. In the census of 1871, Ayr had a population of just under 10,000. Twenty years later, following boundary extensions, this had risen to some 25,000 and by 1901 it was 28,697. Thirty years later, in 1931, with no further boundary changes, Ayr's population had reached 36,783. Today's figure would be around 48,000. The thirty year period from 1901 to 1931 witnessed the inauguration, development and demise of Ayr's municipal tramway system.



Construction of the final loop at Burns Monument terminus in the spring of 1902.

Tramway pre-history

Although Ayr's tramways come into the category of small electric systems from the outset, there had been proposals for a horse-drawn tramway nearly twenty years earlier. In October 1883, a Company was formed, The Ayr and District Tramways Company, with a proposed capital of £20,000 made up of £5 shares. The Company intended to construct and operate a horse-car service over seven miles of route on 3ft 6ins gauge between Prestwick and Burns Monument, and an Ayr town service as a circular route from the Town Hall via Sandgate, Racecourse Road, Racecourse View, Chapelpark Road, Monument Road, Carrick Road and High Street. The whole system was to be single track with loops. The recently opened Rothesay Tramways was to be the model. Ayr Town Council having given their approval to the scheme (the circular route plan having been dropped after a petition against it by Racecourse Road residents), the Ayr Tramways Bill was presented to Parliament in March 1884 and approved.

By the end of 1884, it was announced that tenders for the work were to be put out in January, though no further action seems to have been taken for over a year. Finally in February 1886 the Share Prospectus was at last issued, along with the names of the Directors, Engineer, Secretary, Brokers and Solicitor. On 26th March an article in "The Scotsman" indicated that the Ayr scheme was to go ahead. Meanwhile, the Solicitor, Mr John Cameron, S.S.C., of Edinburgh, was being pressed for further information by Mr Beveridge, the Parliamentary Agent responsible for the Ayr Tramways Bill, and in a series of letters to the Company Secretary demanded to know what was happening. That appears to have ended the correspondence as little more was heard of the scheme apart from an application in January 1887 to have the Tramways Bill extended to allow completion by May 1888. The proposal was formally abandoned in 1888. After that, the whole project was forgotten, despite further assurances of support from potential shareholders. It may be assumed that "wishful thinking" played a leading part in this abortive venture, which, had it succeeded, would have given Ayr a horse-car system of great length and interest.

A further ten years were to pass before the tramway issue was raised again. In October 1898, the following notice was given in the local newspapers:

"

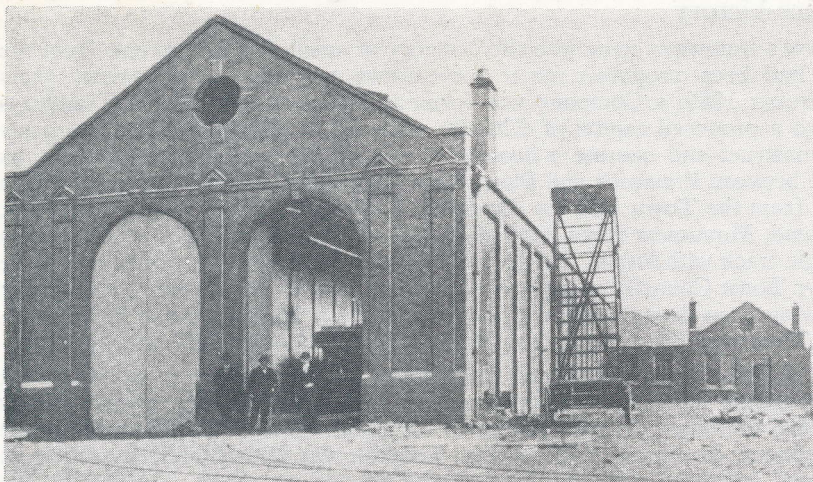
LIGHT RAILWAY COMMISSION

THE AYR, PRESTWICK AND MONKTON LIGHT RAILWAY

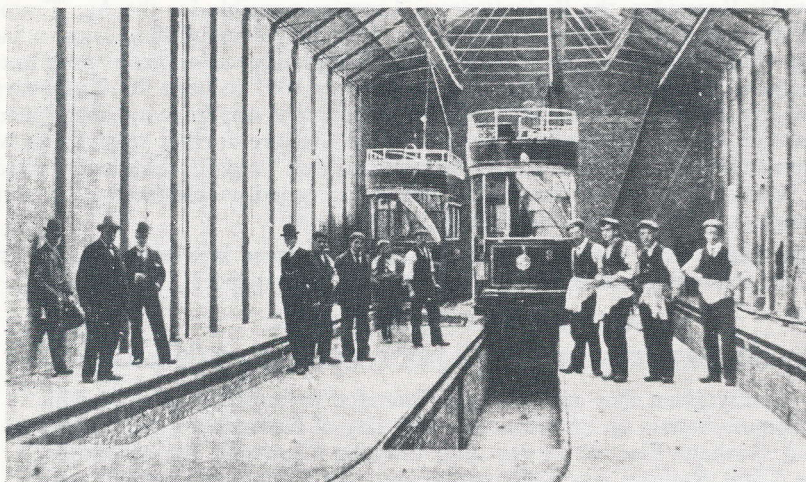
Notice is hereby given that application is intended to be made to the Light Railway Commissioners on or before the 30th day of November 1898 by the Drake and Gorham Electric Power and Traction Company for an Order under the Light Railway Act 1896 authorising the Company to make and maintain the light Railway hereinafter described and other works and conveniences in connection with. The Railway proposed to be authorised is: 'A Railway commencing in the Parish of Ayr in the Royal Burgh of Ayr and County of Ayr at the junction of St Leonard's Road and Broomfield Road passing along Carrick Road, Beresford Terrace, Killoch Place, Alloway Street, High Street, New Bridge Street, New Bridge of Ayr, Main Street, New Road, Prestwick Road through New Prestwick, Kingcase and Prestwick and terminating in the village of Monkton in the Parish of Monkton and County of Ayr at the junction of the turnpike roads leading to Irvine and Kilmarnock which intended railway shall be situated in the said Royal Burgh of Ayr and in the said Parishes of Ayr and Monkton and in the Parish of Newton-upon-Ayr in the County of Ayr. . . . The proposed gauge of the said Railway is three feet and six inches and the motive power to be employed is electrical.'

(Dated) 1st November 1898."

Unlike the earlier, and later, tramway proposals, there was no suggestion that the tramway would benefit the large tourist trade to Burns Cottage and Monument. It was to be essentially a town system linking Ayr with the two villages to the north, and with its southern terminus at St Leonard's Church, which at that time marked the end of the built-up area.



1901 view of the original depot.



Interior of the original depot with car 3 and another.



A trial run for Councillors prior to the opening, at the Grammar School – then single storey only. The car driver is Councillor Robert Craig, Convener of the Tramways Committee.

The Drake and Gorham Company was typical of the many electrical bodies promoting new tramways, or taking over existing horse-car companies with the intention of electrifying them, which proliferated in the late 1880's, mainly as a consequence of the passing of the Light Railways Act in 1896. This Act, which could apply to both railways and tramways, was frequently used in preference to the 1870 Tramways Act as it had fewer complications. It appears that Ayr was their first venture into tramway promotion, none of which turned out to be successful as the Company was wound up in 1906.

Ayr Town Council had been forewarned of this and seemed to have sought advice from other municipalities, as a letter from the Town Clerk of Dundee, dated 14th October 1898, stated categorically "You should not allow any Railway Company to come within your burgh". Within ten days of the Drake and Gorham notice being made public, the Town Council astonished its ratepayers by announcing that it was intending to include in the Ayr Burgh Bill about to be presented to Parliament, powers to construct tramways between Prestwick and Burns Monument with powers to work them themselves or lease them to an operating company. The speed with which this decision was taken was justified as a defensive measure to forestall any plans for tramways by extraneous bodies, as a letter, dated 19th October 1898, from John Kennedy, the Burgh's Parliamentary Agent in London to the Town Clerk makes clear:

"Where the Local Authority resolve themselves to make tramways, the Light Railway Commissioners will not sanction the construction of competing tramways by a Company within the district of that Authority ... so far as Ayr is concerned, the application by Drake and Gorham will not be sanctioned."

Despite some adverse criticism in the local press that no one had thought it proper to consult local opinion before committing the burgh to such an expensive undertaking, the Town Council was determined to go ahead with its own tramway scheme. In this manner Ayr took the first steps towards achieving the ambition of many towns at that time, namely, to have its own tram system. Almost by accident it created a municipal tramway undertaking which was to achieve several "firsts" in British tramway history.

Inauguration

The Ayr Burgh Act 1899 included, among other provisions, powers to construct and operate the following tramways:

- Tramway No. 1** A tramway wholly in the united parish of Monkton and Prestwick 1 mile 2 furlongs and 3.80 chains or thereabouts in length, commencing in Main Street, Prestwick, at a point 38 yards north-eastwards of Prestwick Cross passing thence in a southerly direction along Main Street and Prestwick Road to and terminating at the municipal boundary of the Burgh of Ayr at a point 134 yards southward from Waterloo Road opposite or nearly opposite the north-eastern corner of Marchfield Cottage.
- Tramway No. 2** A tramway wholly in the parish and burgh of Ayr 3 miles and 2.90 chains or thereabouts in length (whereof 2 miles 1.80 chains is single line and 1 mile 1.10 chains is double line) commencing in Prestwick Road by a junction with Tramway No. 1 at its termination passing thence in a southerly direction along Prestwick Road, New Road, Main Street, Darlington Place, the New Bridge, New Bridge Street, High Street, Alloway Street, Killoch Place, Beresford Terrace, Carrick Road, Monument Road to and terminating at the municipal boundary of the burgh of Ayr at a point 7 yards north-east from the north-eastern corner of Slaphouse farm steading.
- Tramway No. 3** A tramway wholly in the parish of Ayr 1 mile 1 furlong and 3.50 chains in length commencing by a junction with Tramway No. 2 at its termination passing thence in a southerly direction along Monu-

ment Road and terminating in that road at a point 13 yards westward from the west corner of Burns' Arms Hotel.

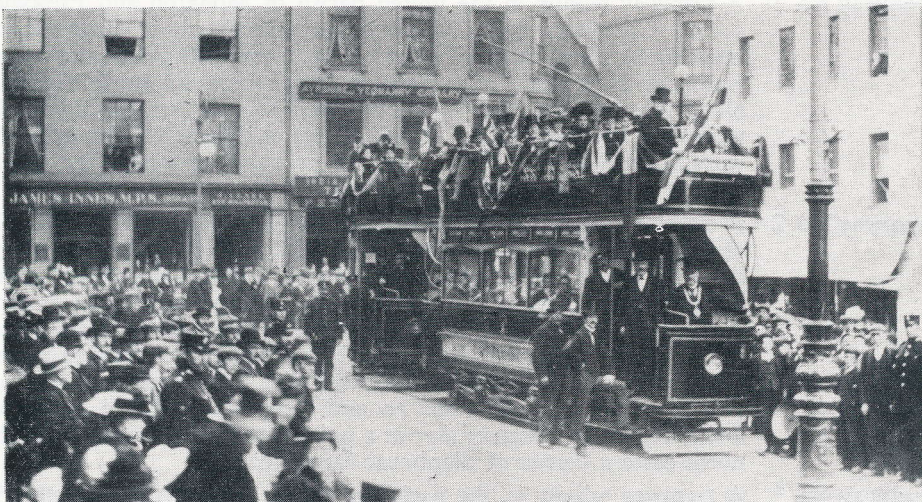
Tramway No. 4 A tramway wholly in the parish and burgh of Ayr 7.10 chains in length (single line) commencing in Alloway Street by a junction with Tramway No. 2 at a point opposite the southern side of Dalblair Road passing in a south-easterly direction into and along the roadway on the north-east side of Burns Statue Square and terminating in that roadway at a point 10 yards due west from the southern side of the main gateway giving access to and on the west side of Town-head railway station.

Tramway No. 5 A tramway wholly in the parish and burgh of Ayr, 5.10 chains in length (single line) commencing by a junction with Tramway No. 2 at a point 29 yards southward from Miller Road passing thence in a north-easterly direction along the roadway on the south side of Burns Statue Square and terminating in that roadway by a junction with Tramway No. 4 at a point 30 yards west from the point hereinbefore described as the termination of Tramway No. 4.

(Tramways 4 and 5 would have formed a triangular terminal spur serving Ayr Station, but were never constructed, and AYR STATION as shown on destination screens referred to Killoch Place fully 200 yards west of the station entrance.)

Although the Act did not specify the motive power to be used, the Town Council was virtually committed to electric traction, having opened its own municipal electricity generating station in Mill Street in 1896.

A deputation of Councillors visited four English systems seeing cable trams in London and gas trams in Lytham as well as electric cars in Blackpool, Liverpool and Dover, the last being of particular interest as it was a small, municipally-owned concern. In April 1900 the deputation presented its recommendations to the Council that they should operate the tramways themselves and that they should be powered on the overhead trolley system, using power from their own generating station which would have to be doubled in size. At that time the only electric trams in Scotland were to be found in Glasgow and Aberdeen, while they had still to appear in London, Manchester and Birmingham. Ayr was moreover a pioneer in an even more significant sense. Not only was it then the smallest Scottish town to plan its own tramway; it was one of the first in Britain to apply for powers to operate lines outside its own boundary. Ayr's success is believed to have strengthened the hands of many other Corporations in making similar applications.



The procession in the High Street at the Town Buildings on the opening day, 26th September 1901. Car 5 is driven by Provost Templeton.



A peaceful Edwardian scene looking south from Prestwick terminus. The well-dressed family appear to be setting out on a major journey.



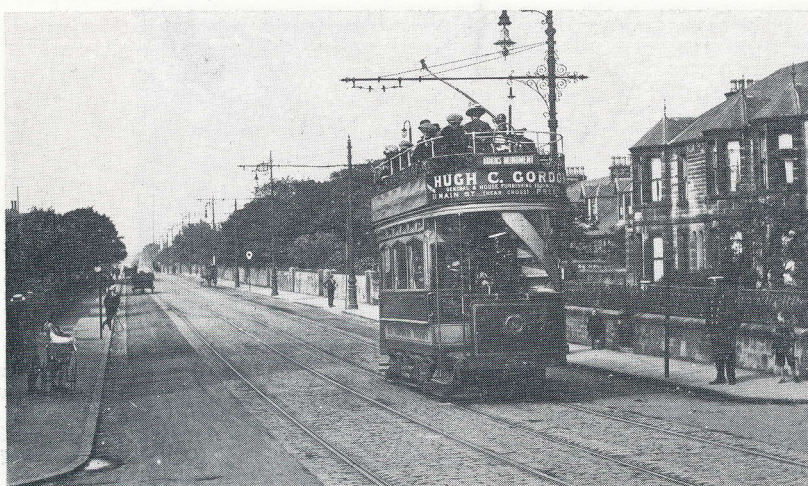
Prestwick Main Street looks very much part of a quiet village in the early years of the century.



Car 1 in Prestwick, looking north. Another scene of tranquility, dating from, probably, 1902.



A full load, with standing passengers on the top deck, bound for Prestwick, photographed between Prestwick Toll and Kingcase.



Car 3 on the long straight stretch of Prestwick Road looking north from Tam's Brig.



Centre poles are in evidence in New Road on the south side of Tam's Brig. They were removed in 1924.

Having obtained Parliamentary Authority, the Town Council, on the advice of their Parliamentary Agent, engaged a well-known tramway engineer, Mr J. E. Winslow, to prepare the plans for construction of the system. He was in favour of abandoning the Monument route in favour of a line down Miller Road to the Sea Front with an extension along the Esplanade to the Racecourse (then at Seafield), on the grounds of initial cost and future profitability, but the Council decided to stick to their original plan. They did, however, adopt his recommendation of 4ft 8½ins gauge to give reasonable room inside the cars, though his desire to see "cross seats inside as well as on the roof" was not realised until some thirty years later. On 14th November 1900 the Tramway Committee was formed and immediately invited tenders for the construction of the permanent way, overhead work and electrical supply, extensions to the electricity works, depot and other buildings, and the purchase of ten cars to provide a tramway initially from Prestwick Cross to St Leonard's Church. Work started in February 1901 and was completed in seven and a half months.

Public interest in the tramways erupted quite unexpectedly in late May with the decision of the Tramway Committee, confirmed by the Council, to provide a Sunday service of cars. Letters of protest from individuals and organisations, particularly church bodies, flooded the local press and many representations were made to the Town Clerk, including a courteously worded but uncompromising Memorial from ministers of the Ayr churches. At a public meeting held in Carrick Street Halls, the Rector of Ayr Academy, Mr William Maybin, moved a resolution that every endeavour be made to compel the Town Council to reverse its decision to desecrate the Sabbath:

"The Town Council of tomorrow and tomorrow will shift the line from time to time till gradually, imperceptibly, quite naturally we join the Continental advanced guard of liberal Sabbath breakers, and the quietness, serenity, rest and worship of the good old Scottish Sabbath shall have gone beyond recall for ever. (Applause) Then will come on you the Nemesis that dogs the steps of every abuse of liberty. Then you will desire, as many on the Continent now desire, the return of the day of rest, and then you will fail of your desire as they now fail. May God avert such a calamity from Scotland."



A fine view of the High Street, photographed on 29th July 1903, with car number 2. Hunter & Grant are still in business on the opposite side of the street. Their original premises are now demolished.

If this seems an exaggerated response, it must be remembered that at that time Ayr had no Sunday trains or excursion steamers, and the motor car and motorbus were still to come. Likewise the excuse to pose as "bona fide" travellers by Sunday drinkers could conceivably be encouraged by public transport provision. Anyway, the outcome of this meeting was the organising of a mass petition collected street by street which totalled over 6,500 signatures pasted together to form a roll sixty-five yards long! Prestwick provided nearly 800 signatures on a separate petition.

The outcome was interesting. The Council decided to abide by their decision to run Sunday cars, but to hold a "referendum" on Saturday 26th April 1902, after a six-month trial, voting to be done by Wards as in a Municipal Election. The result of this poll gave the Sunday running a clear majority — 1,252 For and 433 Against — and the issue was never raised again. It is worth noting that the one and only occasion on which the ratepayers were given an opportunity to express their views on their transport undertaking took place within the first year of operation.

By the end of August 1901 the system was ready to begin its trials. The contract for the first ten cars had gone to Hurst Nelson & Co. Ltd. of Motherwell, this being the first contract which that firm had received for complete trams. The cars were four-wheel open-top double deckers, the first, No. 1, arriving in Ayr on 31st August.



The narrow part of the High Street, where existed the only span wire on the original system.



Car 14 passing the Clydesdale Bank in Ayr High Street. The early motor car has the rest of the street to itself.

On Wednesday 4th September it made a trial run from the depot at Newton Park out to St Leonard's and back to Prestwick Toll before returning to the depot. The remaining cars arrived during the following two weeks, and were used for driver training as well as testing the track and overhead. The Tramways Manager appointed was Major Fred Coutts, formerly Engineer with the Dundee Tramways, and his initial staff numbered thirty-five, namely: Engineer; Traffic Inspector; Night Motor Inspector; 2 Clerkesses; 12 Drivers; 12 Conductors; 4 Cleaners; 1 Storeman; 1 Apprentice Electrical Engineer. Even in later years the total workforce was small enough to give the concern the semblance of a family business. One driver was employed on the trams throughout the thirty years of their existence and several others had over twenty years' service. A considerable "Dundee" influence pervaded the system initially. Uniforms were of the Dundee type and some of the first drivers came with Coutts from Dundee. Lifeguards under the cars were of a type patented by the Dundee Tramways manager.

Ayr Corporation Tramways began operations officially on Thursday 26th September 1901. The official inspection by the Board of Trade Inspector, Colonel Von Donop, took place in the morning and the system was passed for public service. Two days earlier, five cars had been tested over the entire route, several members of the Town Council being on board. Now everything was ready for the official opening by a procession of these five cars, lavishly decorated and filled with councillors, officials and invited guests. Each car carried a different terminal point on its destination indicator (as Glasgow's trams were to do in their closing procession over sixty years later). The first car, No. 5, was driven by Provost Templeton from the depot out to St Leonard's Church and back to the Town Hall, where the distinguished guests were entertained to the customary Cake and Wine Banquet, while the cars entered revenue service and were immediately and enthusiastically patronised by the large crowds who had come to watch the spectacle.

Von Donop's report stipulated the maximum speeds allowed. Top speed (10mph) was permitted between Prestwick Terminus and Tam's Brig, and in Carrick Road. Elsewhere 8mph was generally required, but only 4mph over facing points and "when passing Wallace Tower in the High Street". The electrical part of the system was inspected by Major Trotter on 2nd October.

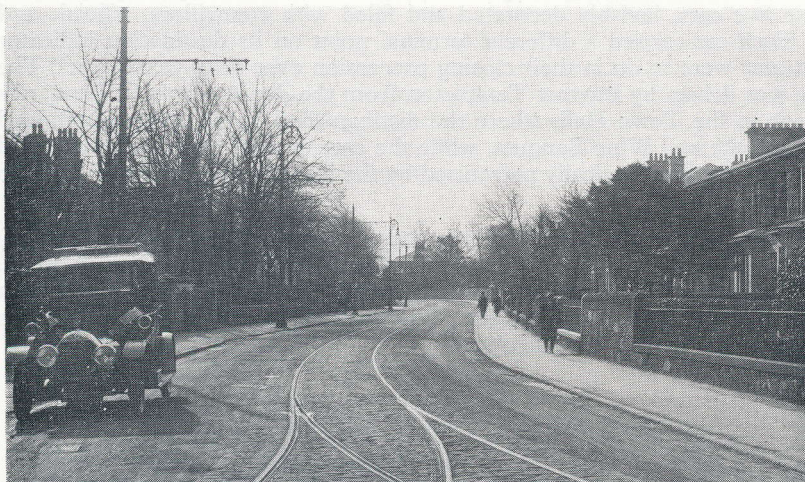


One of the second batch of cars uplifting passengers at Burns Statue Square on its way to St Leonard's Church.

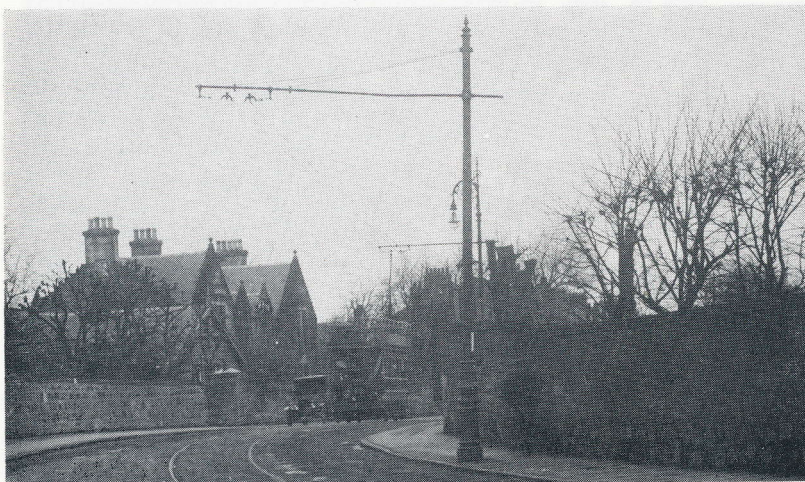
The returns from the first four days of operation were certainly encouraging:

	<i>Cars in Service</i>	<i>Passengers</i>	<i>Drawings</i>
Thursday 26th Sept. (from 4.00pm)	5	3432	£14.6.6
Friday 27th Sept.	4	5231	£19.2.1½
Saturday 28th Sept.	5	10050	£35.0.7½
Sunday 29th Sept.	4	3000	£12.7.2
		<hr/> 21713 <hr/>	<hr/> £81.6.5 <hr/>

Returns for the first full week gave 45,180 passengers carried, providing a revenue of £169.12.5. The local press, while commending the success of the new enterprise, drew attention to the hazard posed by young boys playing a form of "chicken" game by lying down on the tracks or doing somersaults over the rails whenever a car appeared. More ominously, the large crowds now assembled at the Town Hall stop began to suffer from the unwelcome attentions of pickpockets!



The middle loop in Carrick Road prior to the road widening and track doubling, with a fine old car.



The long loop at the south end of Carrick Road, a high class residential street.

The System Grows

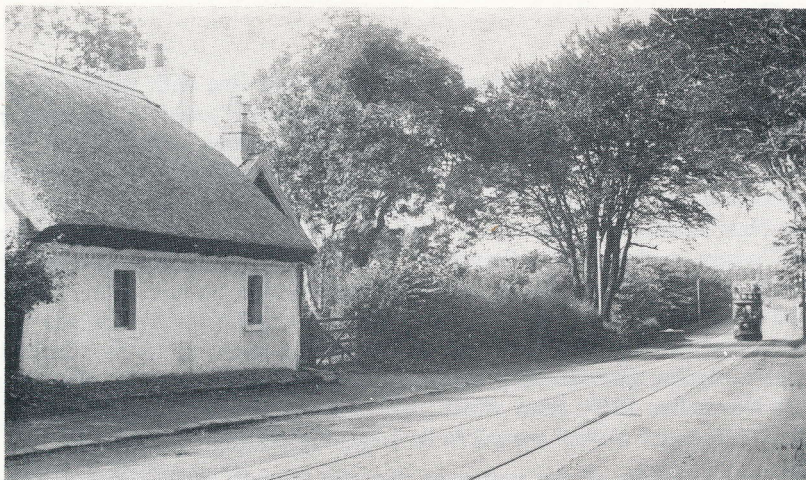
The four-mile route from Prestwick Cross began as a single line with passing loops as far as the depot (always known popularly as the "Car Sheds") which was built at right angles to Prestwick Road about half-way between Prestwick Toll — the Ayr Burgh Boundary — and the railway bridge crossing the Glasgow to Ayr line of the Glasgow and South Western Railway (Tam's Brig). The lines were double from the depot by way of New Road, Main Street, the New Bridge, High Street, Alloway Street and Beresford Terrace as far as the Grammar School, with crossovers at Newton Station (just north of Tam's Brig), Town Hall and Burns Statue Square. The remaining five hundred or so yards from the Grammar School to St Leonard's Church was again single with one passing loop near the terminus. In addition to the through service there was a regular shortworking between Newton Station and the Grammar School until 1st November 1907, after which this shortworking was extended to St Leonard's and the Grammar School ceased to be a turning point.

Such was the initial success of the tramways that the Council were encouraged to proceed with the remainder of the authorised route to Burns Monument, and construction was undertaken during the winter months. On 19th May 1902 a special car took the members of the Tramway Committee as far as Burns Cottage, and an experimental service from the Town Hall to Burns Monument on a five-minute headway was tried out in order to gain experience in compiling a regular timetable. The Board of Trade Inspection was undertaken by Colonel Yorke on Thursday 29th May and the regular service from Prestwick commenced immediately. Six additional cars were obtained from Hurst Nelson, Nos. 11-16, similar to the original batch but with direct stairs and seating two more than the first batch. The depot was also extended to cope with the increased fleet and allow for future growth.

Colonel Yorke's report authorised generally a speed of 10mph on the new lines. After complaints, the whole route was re-examined in November 1903 and some increased speeds permitted. The Board of Trade also requested that oil lamps be carried to warn any other road traffic if a car broke down where there was no street lighting — Ayr responded by stating that they found candles quite adequate!

The new extension was an immediate success. It was mostly through beautiful countryside including a woodland stretch where the road ran between the estates of Belleisle and Rozelle (both of which later became public parks). It was single line throughout with five passing loops, each able to accommodate three cars, except that at Chapelpark Road which was virtually a short length of double track, probably provided to hold extra cars during race meetings since this was the nearest point to the original racecourse at Seafield. The road surface was certainly improved when granite setts around the tracks were incorporated in the existing waterbound macadam surface.

As the portion of route beyond Slaphouse was outside the burgh, an agreement was made with Ayr County Council regarding the service of cars to Alloway — at least six per day — the maintenance of the roadway taken up by the track in accordance with the requirements of the Tramway Act, and the lighting by electricity of the road through Rozelle Wood, "at least until the last car has passed along the said road". Similar arrangements regarding road maintenance and service of cars (at least every half-hour between 8.30am and 10.00pm) were made with the County Council for the Prestwick section until Prestwick became a burgh in its own right in 1903 when these agreements were re-negotiated with its Town Council. No wayleave payments for these sections were demanded, as was often the case.



Straight stretch of single track at Meikle Stane Cottage in Rozelle Woods, looking north.



Alloway village, with Burns Cottage at the far end on the right hand side.



Car 8 passing the mecca for many tourists, the birth-place of Robert Burns. The view is as seen from the open top deck of a tram.

During the last week of July 1902, Ayr trams carried 138,483 passengers and earned £874.3.8. Obviously the Glasgow Fair holiday-makers must have appreciated the new service, the other "peak" in the year being the third week of September when the Ayr Gold Cup Race Meeting was held. Perhaps the best advertisement for the new line to the Monument was the eulogistic account of a tram trip by a satisfied traveller:

"A run on the outside of a car has given us different and more enchanting glimpses of land and sea. Unless from some private mansion, the same view is not familiar to most people as that now in their easy possession from the top of a car. The height enables passengers to trace for miles the coastline and the sea washing up by the rocks along the Greenan shore. They also get peeps 'over the garden wall', some lately gay with apple blossom. Along by Rozelle policies where to the pedestrian there is on his left a dull, dead wall, the upper deck passenger sees the plantation with ease and the pleasure grounds beyond. Fields and villas anew come into sight, and one finds admiration for their own town and its beautiful surroundings rising proportionately, and the usual exclamation one hears is not that the journey is too dear, but that it is too short."

In 1904 the Town Council obtained additional Parliamentary legislation — the Ayr Corporation Tramways Order Confirmation Act 1904 — allowing them additional powers to double sections of existing single track, widening roads for this purpose if necessary. The immediate intention was to double the portion of track between the Grammar School and Chapelpark Road, but for some reason this was not undertaken for a further eighteen years, possibly because of the problems affecting the owners of property in Carrick Road who would lose part of their front gardens in such a road widening scheme.

Of more immediate interest to the townspeople was the arrival of a new tram, No. 18. This was a four-wheel open top tram built by Hurst Nelson for a Tramway Exhibition in 1902, and furnished in a lavish style, as described by one writer:



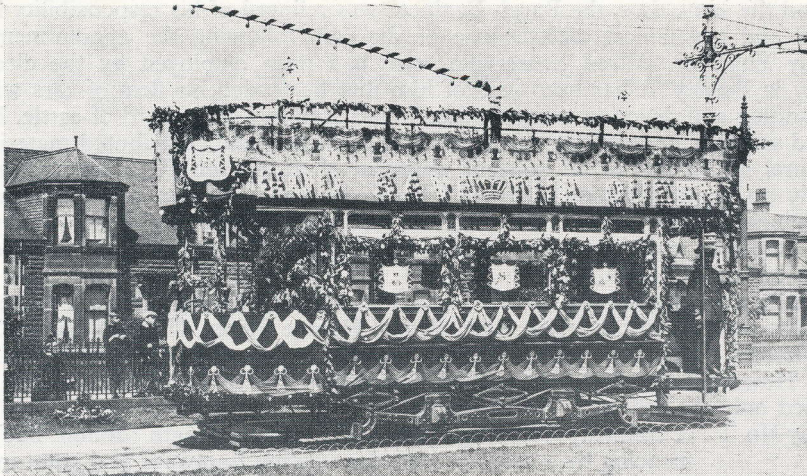
The southern terminus at Burns Monument Hotel, looking south. The monument is behind the trees on the left, but the Brig of Doon is visible behind the hotel.



All aboard for the Monument! This scene at the Town Hall was probably taken in June 1902 during the first week of working the extension.



The scene at Burns Monument terminus, probably on the same day as the view above. Edwardian high fashion is much in evidence.



Car 18 was used as the decorated car, and is seen here garlanded in honour of the Coronation in 1911 of King George V.

"Finished externally in natural varnished wood, it had such refinements as rubber matting, window curtains, and a wealth of gilt linings and transfers. A positively religious atmosphere prevailed in the lower saloon on account of the stained glass ventilators and end windows. The sun striking through these on the faces of the passengers caused the latter to resemble to a remarkable degree the iridescent hues of boiled beef."

Ayr secured this car at a bargain price and it formed part of the normal running fleet. However, it was often used for conveying special parties, and on occasions would be specially decorated for such events as the Coronation of 1911, the Armistice in 1918, and during the week of the Gold Cup each September. It lasted to the end of the system.

Early in 1905, the Manager, Major Fred Coutts, resigned to take up a similar position with the newly-formed Paisley District Tramways Company. His successor, William Grant, was Manager of the Rotherham Corporation Tramways, and it might have appeared strange that he should leave this thriving larger concern for a small undertaking. It seems, however, that his daughter's health was impaired by the atmosphere of South Yorkshire and that this was the prime influence in his decision to move to Ayr, where he was to remain for the rest of his professional life. It proved a wise move. The "ailing daughter" (now Mrs Reid) is today (February 1983) leading an active life in Ayr.



William Grant, A.I.M.E.E.,
Tramways Manager, 1905-1932.

Around the same time, the Burgh Engineer was relieved of his responsibility for the electrical and mechanical maintenance of the cars following the appointment of a Tramway Engineer, Alfred Somerville, who had been employed by the electricity authority in Paisley. It has been said of him that he tended his fleet of cars with the understanding and devotion that a farmer would give to a prize herd of cattle. He too remained with the undertaking throughout its existence, and contributed materially to the cultural life of Ayr as an amateur musician of distinction. This strong team immediately set about planning schemes for utilising the tramways more effectively to serve the new housing areas in Hawkhill and Craigie, and the new Racecourse which, in 1907, had been transferred from Seafield to its present location to the north-east of the town beside Whitletts Road.

Originally the proposal was to have a circular service, leaving the main route north of the New Bridge and traversing River Street, George Street, Whitletts Road, Craigie Road, Victoria Bridge and Station Road, returning to the main route at Burns Statue Square. However, the Ayr Corporation Tramways Order Confirmation Act, 1908, authorised only the following extensions:

- Tramway No. 1 A tramway 6 furlongs and 7.41 chains in length (double line) commencing by a junction with the existing tramways at a point in Main Street, Newton-on-Ayr at the north end of the New Bridge of Ayr passing thence in an easterly direction along River Street, George Street and Whitletts Road where that road is crossed by the municipal boundary of the Burgh at a point two hundred and fifty-nine yards or thereabouts eastwards of the eastern boundary of No. 40 Whitletts Road.
- Tramway No. 2 A tramway 4.25 chains or thereabouts in length (double line) commencing by a junction with the existing tramway at a point in Main Street, Newton-on-Ayr, opposite the entrance to the Carnegie Library passing thence in a south-easterly direction along River Street to and terminating by a junction with Tramway No. 1 in that street at a point in line with the west side of Garden Street.

A certain amount of road widening was needed in Whitletts Road near the junction with Craigie Road, but this was done on the eastern side where there was no housing. The Board of Trade had not insisted on these widenings, but the Ayr Racecourse Committee had, saying these were necessary for racegoers, most of whom would not use the trams. Later events proved their predictions wrong. The line was equipped throughout with side pole and span wire overhead, while the main route used side bracket arm suspension (except between Tam's Brig and the north end of the New Bridge, and between the Town Hall and Burns Statue Square where centre poles were used). Finally, there was a triangular track junction with the existing lines at River Street. This made it possible to run direct from the Hawkhill route to either Prestwick or the Monument, but introduced a new hazard. All open top cars had their trolley standard on the eastern side of the top deck to facilitate the considerable amount of side-running involved with so much bracket arm suspension. This meant that the cars could not be turned end for end, and any car entering River Street from Main Street would thus have to return the same way to the main route. In practice, this northern spur was very rarely used; all cars for the Racecourse route (as the Hawkhill extension was always called) running to the Town Hall to reverse there, repeating the process when returning to the depot.

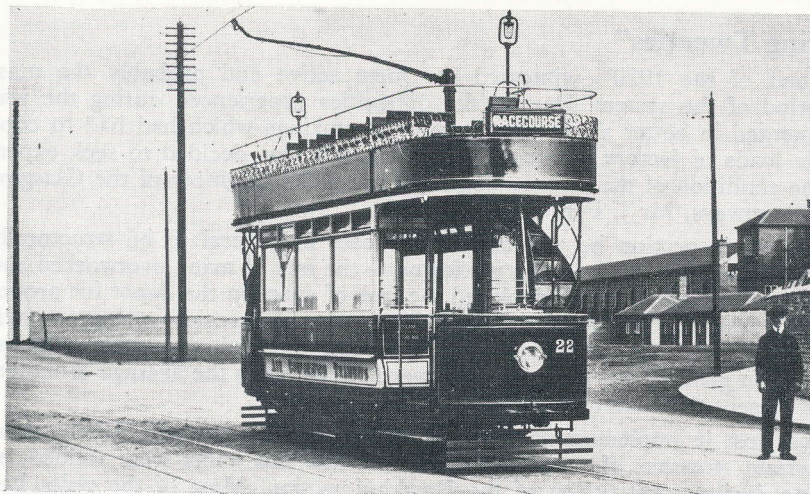
The Hawkhill branch was eventually opened on 18th August 1913, following inspection by Major Pringle for the Board of Trade. The first trial run was made ten days earlier. In readiness for the opening, two further open top cars, Nos. 21 and 22, were delivered by Hurst Nelson in June 1913. Similar to 19 and 20 (supplied in 1907), they had extended platforms and 180° stairs, with front exits to cope with heavy race-day traffic. Finally, two similar cars, 23 and 24, but with top covers, arrived in 1915. To accommodate these cars, the depot entrances had to have their pointed arches removed and replaced with square topped doors. These were the last new cars built for Ayr, the later additions to the fleet being obtained second-hand from other operators.



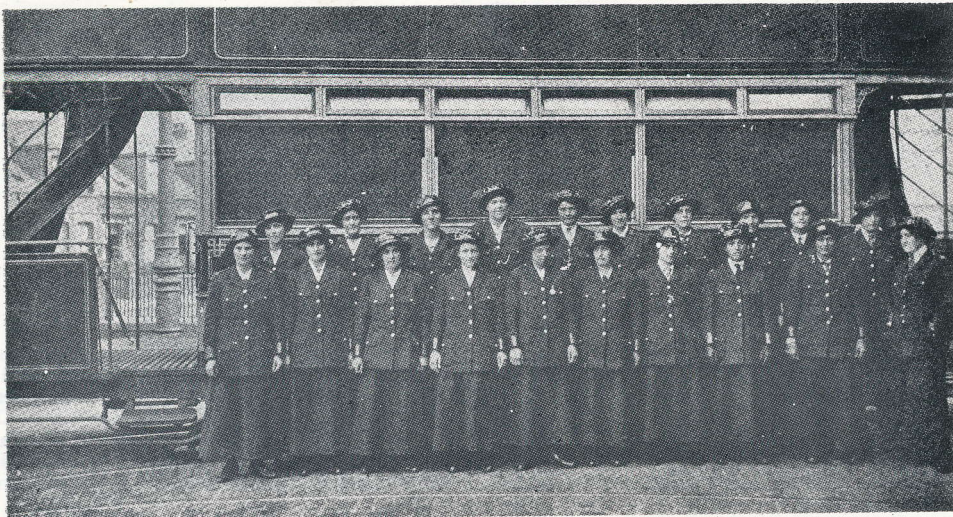
Car 3 in River Street bound for the Racecourse. The Darlington Church junction with the original line is at in the background.



Views on the Racecourse branch are uncommon. This scene is of Whitletts Road at the corner of Craigie Road. Note the span wire overhead construction.



The Racecourse terminus, with the grandstand seen on the right. Car 22 is in its original condition.



The first twenty trainee women drivers at Newton Park depot in 1916.

The First World War did not result in the greatly increased traffic experienced by towns with heavy industries and munition factories, but holiday traffic remained as heavy as ever. Maintenance of cars and track was kept at as high a level as possible, despite increasing difficulties in obtaining materials and the loss of men to the armed forces. In October 1915, four women were engaged as conductors and in January 1916 began training as drivers, being sent out initially with male conductors "to impart a feeling of greater confidence to the females" (in the Manager's words). By late 1917 there were only five male drivers and four conductors left, and the service was being run almost entirely by women — drivers, conductors and cleaners. Altogether 55 employees of the Tramway Department — almost three-quarters of the total number — were on active service at some time during the war years. Ten men lost their lives, and several others were so seriously wounded that they were no longer fit for their former employment. In one or two cases they were given inside work in the depot. Ayr, as a seaside town, also had partial black-out restrictions for the staff to cope with. On Armistice Night 1918, after a frantic rush to disinter the cables and lights disused for four years, car No. 18 was hastily decorated and put into service to signify that the war had at last come to an end and that "the lamps that went out all over Europe" in August 1914 were at last being rekindled.

"The Roaring Twenties"

The first half of the 1920's witnessed the most active and probably the most successful period of the system. Despite the difficulties experienced during the war years, Ayr emerged in better shape than many undertakings which had had to cope with excessive loads of factory workers. Nevertheless, it was decided to seek expert opinion on the condition of the undertaking from the Chief Engineer of the Glasgow Corporation Tramways, Mr J. Ferguson.

After a detailed inspection he pronounced the cars in general to be structurally sound with no hog-backing or drooping platforms — the fate of many overworked and overcrowded war-time trams — but deplored the lack of space in the depot for proper maintenance. Overhead poles were suffering from severe corrosion owing to their exposure to sea air, and some track relaying was recommended, especially at cross-overs and loops. In general, the Ayr tramways were "quite up to the average of undertakings at the present time and considerably better than some".

No time was lost in implementing many of these recommendations. Most of the points and certain stretches of track were renewed, and rail joints were welded, as had been done during construction of the Hawkhill section. Most of the poles had



Burns Statue Square and Killoch Place showing centre poles.



The same corner in the twenties. Without the centre poles the road appears much wider. Car 20 before reconstruction.

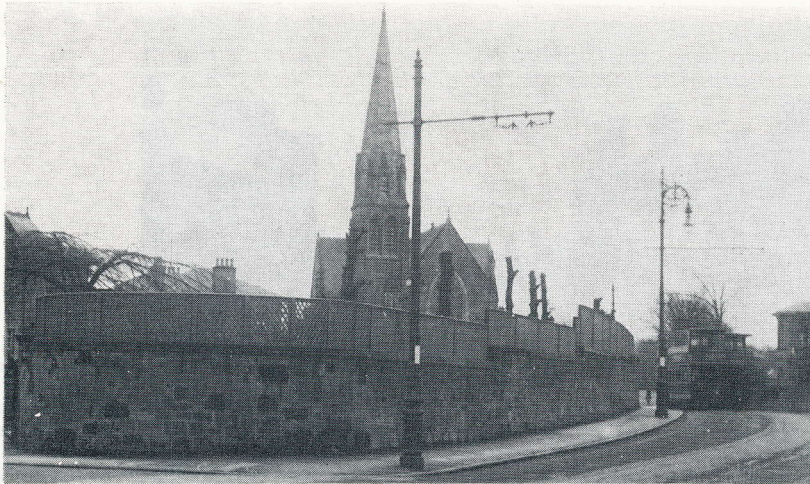


High Street at Wallace Tower, with the centre poles disused. This scene was probably taken on a Race Day in 1924, otherwise the Racecourse cars reversed at the Town Hall.

their ornate cast iron bases replaced with concrete blocks, though a few did survive not only to the end of the tramways but even until quite recently as lamp standards. The elaborate tracery on the bracket arms was removed entirely, leaving the overhead more spartan in appearance but much less expensive to maintain.

The biggest change however came in 1924 with the removal of the centre poles and their replacement with span wire suspended from side poles or wall rosettes (many of which still survive). The roads looked wider without the centre poles, an important factor with growing motor traffic, and altogether the tramways seemed to present a more modern appearance.

A further improvement was achieved by the widening of Carrick Road between the Grammar School and Carrick Avenue to permit doubling of the track as far as St Leonard's. This had been a notorious bottleneck especially in the height of summer when traffic to the Monument was very heavy, but the problems involved in getting the consent of a sufficient number of "frontagers" in Carrick Road to agree to sacrificing parts of their gardens to permit the necessary widening was a long and costly business. It entailed a two-day Public Enquiry in Glasgow before Lord Chalmers, at



Cars 23 and 24 in Carrick Road near St Leonard's Church, photographed in 1922.



Congestion in Carrick Road prior to its widening was emphasised in this specially posed scene, prepared as evidence for the Parliamentary enquiry.

which objections were lodged by several residents on the grounds of loss of amenity. The case for the Corporation was supported by, among others, the Glasgow Tramways Manager, James Dalrymple.

Eventually the Ayr Burgh Tramways Act 1922 was passed by which the householders affected were generously compensated, the tramlines were doubled as far as St Leonard's (they were actually authorised to be doubled as far as Chapelpark Road but this was never carried out), and Ayr secured a wider, much superior main road into the town from the south, something for which later generations of motorists have had cause to be grateful. About the same time, the track was doubled between the depot and Prestwick Toll, which was by this time the terminus of the "town service" running from that point to St Leonard's. As this was now entirely on double track, timing was much improved on all services, and the elimination of loops meant less strain on car bodies.

Finally, there was the rolling stock to consider. In 1920, cars 21 and 22 had been given top covers, making them similar to 23 and 24. They had been intended for the route between Ayr Station and the Racecourse, though they were also used on the main route as well. The Racecourse route, which was double track throughout, was used to capacity only about three times a year when around 60% of the fleet might be deployed to convey the crowds from the station at a flat fare of sixpence. Normal traffic was light, and as an economy, it was decided in April 1922 to purchase four small single-deck cars second-hand from Manchester Corporation. According to one report these cars arrived by sea, still in their B.E.T. livery, and were hauled along South Harbour Street to the tramrails where two cars towed them to the depot. Before entering service, in December 1922, they were converted to one-man operation with front entrance and exit, becoming Ayr's 25-28. Vestibules were soon fitted to 27 and 28, the first Ayr cars to be so fitted. These two were the ones normally in service on the Racecourse branch, now operating except on race days, from the Town Hall on a 20-minute headway. The "mousetraps", as they were popularly called, were also called on in the height of summer to help with the heavy traffic to the Monument, particularly at weekends, as an additional service from Ayr Town Hall. They would then carry a conductor because of the larger number of passengers and variety of fares needed. Unvestibuled cars 25 and 26 seem to have been used only on these special occasions or as a standby on the Racecourse route, as there is no record of any repairs or general maintenance being done on either of them after the initial conversion.

Industrial relations seem to have been good, as only one strike occurred in the thirty years of operation. This lasted for one week, between 21st and 28th February 1925, and arose over the decision of the Corporation to reduce the working week of tramway employees from 48 to 44 hours with a consequent loss in wages varying between five shillings and five and tenpence. The financial state of the tramways was causing some concern and the alternative to this economy measure would be the laying off of six men. What brought matters to a head was the failure of the management to consult the local branch of the Transport and General Workers' Union first, and to post the notice in the depot. Earlier in the same week, four employees had been dismissed for what the men considered to be "trivial reasons" but which the management regarded as serious breaches of discipline, and the offending notice brought about a general walk-out. A skeleton service of cars was provided in the ensuing week, manned by inspectors and volunteers. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Labour offered to mediate in the dispute and agreement was reached by which the proposed economies were to be introduced after proper negotiation with the Union, the notice which had caused such offence was to be removed, and there was to be no victimisation of any men who had taken part in the stoppage. A "misunderstanding" on both sides was accepted, and the generally good industrial relations restored. So ended the only strike on Ayr's Tramways. They even kept running during the General Strike of May 1926, participation in which sealed the fate of the trams in Kilmarnock!

Trials and Tribulations

The General Strike had its effect on Ayr's tramways nevertheless. The increase in coal prices forced the Ayrshire Electricity Board, which now supplied the power to the tramways, to increase its charges by approximately 75%. From this time onwards there was a deficit each year in the tramway accounts. Unfortunately this coincided with serious competition for passengers from the Railway Company who issued a cheap *return* between Ayr and Prestwick at 3d (half the cost of the tram fare) and from growing bus traffic, both long-distance from Glasgow and certain local services within Ayr itself and along the tram routes to Prestwick and Burns Monument.

The Corporation could lay down bye-laws for bus operations within its boundaries but could not prevent direct competition in true "pirate" fashion. Buses would follow a tram on the single line Monument section, overtaking it while it was held up at a loop in the hope of enticing any waiting passengers at the next tram stop. Often the two vehicles would race down the gentle slope from Rozelle gate to Slaphouse despite the hazard of the tramway standards against the estate wall fouling the running board of the overtaking bus. Car 19, the flier of the fleet, would often come off best in such encounters!

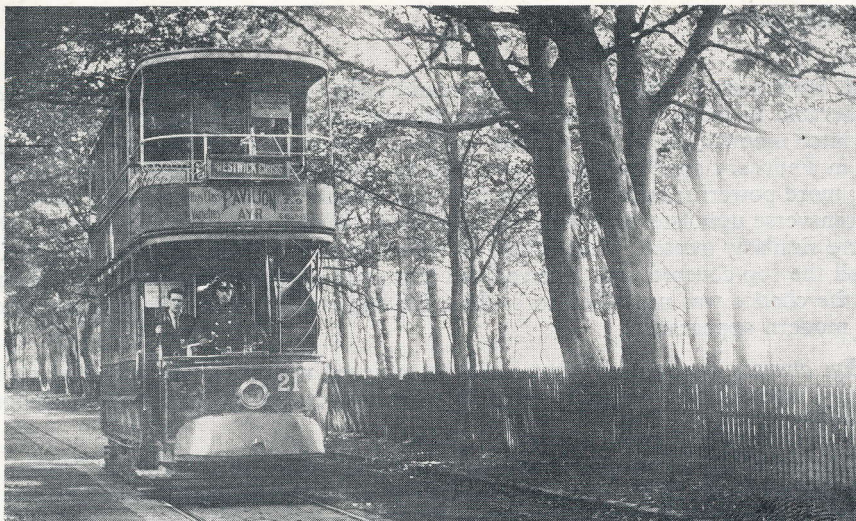
The Corporation even tried the experiment of an express tram between Prestwick Cross and Ayr Town Hall on a limited stop basis, but again the single track section militated against its success. Particularly galling was the cost of road maintenance between the tracks forced on the Corporation Tramway Department by the Tramways Act while the buses which really did wear out the road surfaces escaped any such expense.

Despite these difficulties, the trams appear to have held their own, so much so that in June 1928, two additional cars were purchased from the Dumbarton Burgh and County Tramways Company whose lines had been closed earlier that year. They entered service in time for the Glasgow Fair Holidays and were a great asset especially during the busy holiday and race periods. They were in good condition, being less than six years old, but the Ayr drivers found them heavy to handle compared with the normal cars. Their arrival showed the readiness of the Corporation to maintain and improve their tramway service and some important decisions now had to be faced.

Early in 1929 the Corporation sought a Parliamentary Order to permit them to operate buses within the Burgh, along the existing tram routes outwith the Burgh, and to other points within a five-mile radius. The Manager had drawn up plans for bus routes to take in the recently-developed housing areas at Seafield, Belmont and Castlehill, including circular services. Orders authorising replacement of trams by buses had been recently obtained by Perth and Greenock, but Ayr was unsuccessful in its application, resulting mainly from the concerted opposition of the existing bus operators. Under Ayr's terms they would lose any opportunity to run local services. The opportunity to have a municipal local bus service network for Ayr and District was thus lost. It did, however, give an extended lease of life to the trams.

The problems of the ageing tramway system were becoming ever more obvious. In the mid-1920's the double track between Newton Park and the New Bridge had been relaid. The Racecourse branch, which carried light traffic other than on race days, was in good shape, as were the double track sections in Carrick Road and Prestwick Road, then less than seven years old. But the section from the Grammar School to the Town Hall was deteriorating rapidly, causing excessively noisy running through the town centre, while the outer sections between Prestwick Toll and Prestwick Cross, and between St Leonard's Church and Burns Monument, would soon require complete renewal if the service were to continue.

The condition of the cars was also causing concern, particularly the state of their electrical equipment. It was estimated that at least twelve cars would need to be re-conditioned to provide the basic all-year-round service on the main routes. The four single-deck cars were considered to be reasonably efficient for the Racecourse branch,



Car 21 in Rozelle Wood near the entrance to Rozelle House. With Driver Nicolson on the front platform is (illegally) one of the student conductors taken on in summer months.

while the remaining thirteen cars were not thought worthy of reconditioning, and should be relegated to extra seasonal and race traffic. Here would appear to be an indication that some pruning of the service was being contemplated, although complete abandonment was not envisaged.

A report by the Burgh Chamberlain showed that the estimated loss per annum if the proposed improvements were made and the tramways continued would be £3,300 — about $2\frac{1}{2}$ d in the £ on the rates; alternatively, to scrap the tramways would result in an annual loss of £5,321, or 4d in the £ on the rates.

At a meeting of the Tramways Committee on 22nd May 1930, it was decided to authorise relaying of the track between the Grammar School and the Town Hall at a cost of £11,600, and to recondition six cars (in the first instance) at an estimated cost of £1,066 per car. After this decision had been endorsed by the full Council on 9th June, a Councillor who was a regular traveller on the 8.10 car from St Leonard's told Driver Nicolson that he could now be assured that the undertaking would continue for at least a further five years.

However, there was a growing feeling of resentment in the Council relating not only to the retention of the tramway system, but against the Corporation operating any local transport at all. This was encouraged by local press comments regarding the undesirability of municipal trading, with veiled references to political dogma, stating that Ayr should have no truck with such unwholesome practices (despite thirty successful years). The noise created by the cars in the centre of the town was seized on as an excuse, despite the decision to retain them. A crisis was reached at the Council Meeting on 11th August 1930 when Treasurer Galloway moved that the decision on the continuation of the tramways should be the subject of a plebiscite by the ratepayers, to be held with Municipal Elections in November. This then became a constitutional issue relating to whether policy should be decided by popular vote instead of by Council debate; the actual issue of the future of the tramways now being secondary. The vote on whether to proceed with a plebiscite on the tramways resulted in a tie — 9 all. Provost Stewart, who had supported the proposal, gave his casting vote, as was customary in such circumstances, for the "status quo". It would have been interesting to see what the result would have been had the ratepayers, as on the question of Sunday cars, been allowed to give their verdict.

Brief Respite

The advocates of tramway retention could afford to be optimistic in 1931. After considerable dislocation in High Street, Alloway Street and Beresford Terrace over the winter months, the new track was installed and what a difference it made! Then early in February appeared the first of the reconditioned cars, No. 22. It had a new truck, more powerful motors, smaller diameter wheels reducing the height of the step, and transverse upholstered seating on both decks. Within the next two months 19 and 21 were similarly treated, while others received the internal refurbishing. It is believed that all the top-covered cars received the improved seating eventually, but unfortunately the chance was not taken to enclose the ends of the top decks and give them a more modern appearance.

Ayr citizens were to see what could be achieved with judicious spending on their property, but, as the Manager urged in what was to be his last Annual Report in May 1931:

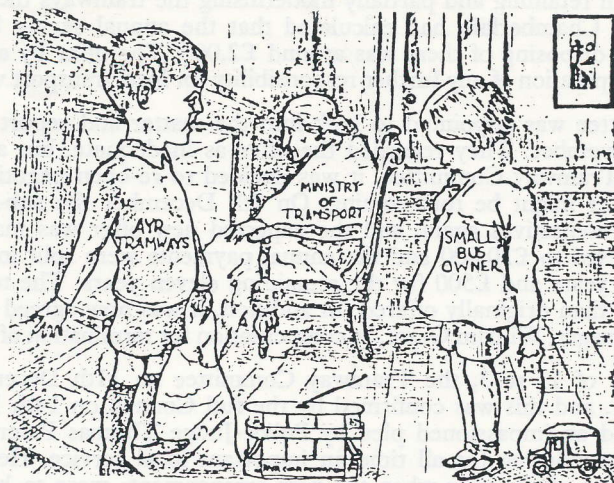
"Citizens of Ayr, especially ratepayers, should realise the Tramway Undertaking is their own property; that there are large financial commitments which must be met annually whether the Tramways are operated or not until they are debt free, that by using the tram cars they help to meet these obligations, keep them off the rates and thus by their patronage not only help us but very materially help themselves by assisting to keep the rates down ... I would appeal to all citizens to be loyal to their own undertaking and support it by making constant use of the tram cars."

The summer of 1931 was not noted for fine weather — one of only two poor summers in the 1930's — but the number of passengers carried over the six summer months totalled 3,103,985, an increase of 18,957 in comparison with the same period the previous year, bringing in additional revenue of £484.13.11 over that obtained in 1930.

This may be attributed partly to renewed interest in the tramways resulting from the improved rolling stock and quieter running through the town centre, but more probably reflects three innovations in the field of entertainment and leisure which were introduced during these months. These were the opening of Prestwick Bathing Lake, one of the largest of its kind in Scotland; the re-opening of Green's Playhouse, the second largest cinema in Britain at that time; plus the presentation of a spectacular summer show at the Gaiety Theatre, the first of the famous "Gaiety Whirl" shows, starring Dave Willis, then at the outset of his career as one of Scotland's best-loved comedians. Encores would frequently delay the ending of the Second House, but members of the audience with trams to catch had no worries on that score. A familiar figure at the stage door was the Duty Inspector who would then see that the last cars to Burns Monument and Prestwick Cross were held at the Wallace Tower stop in High Street whenever the show looked like over-running its time.

In this way, and many others, the tramway undertaking was seen to serve the community well, but unfortunately the section where traffic fell most noticeably was between the Town Hall and St Leonard's, an area which included the most prestigious residential area in Ayr. Not only were residents in that part most likely to be owners of private cars — no parking problems then in the town centre — but they were within easy walking distance of shops and offices and had little need to use public transport at all. Yet it has been proved that most tramway systems relied for their success and profitability on the patronage of middle class suburban passengers and, above all, on their general support of municipal transport.

As has been noted already, a large body of opinion in that politically influential area was not only indifferent to the prospects of the local transport concern but actively hostile to its continuation as a municipal service.



"Now look here young un — you mus'n't follow me around like that — go somewhere else!"
 "Sha'n't — I'll tell Grandma about you?"

The problem of bus competition as seen by the Ayr Advertiser's cartoonist C. H. McNaught on 10th January 1929.

The End of the Line

The demise of a tramway system can take various forms. In most cases it is anticipated over a lengthy period, and becomes apparent in the gradual rundown of services, until in some cases only a token service is operated to satisfy legal requirements. Track and vehicle maintenance deteriorates as only the minimum expense is sanctioned, and frequently some pruning of services or closing of sections precedes the final abandonment.

Nothing of this kind happened in Ayr where, until mid-November 1931 it was assumed that the system would continue into 1932 and beyond, possibly in an attenuated form with some reduction in route mileage and rolling stock. Certainly no one was prepared for the announcement on 13th November that an offer for the purchase of the undertaking had been received from the Scottish Motor Traction Company Limited, Edinburgh. The proposers asked the Corporation not only to hand over the operation of their existing services to the Company, but to agree not to compete with the Company nor to permit any other operator to do so within their area, and further to oppose any such application by any other operator. In return, the Company would "substitute first class buses for the tramcars" and "would maintain a bus service at least as good as that presently maintained by the Tramways, and at *the same rates*". The purchase price was proposed at £15,000 as a down-payment followed by annual payments of £1,500 for a 21-year period ending in 1953. The take-over date was to be 1st January 1932.

There was more involved here than just the abandonment of the tramways. Kilmarnock and Perth had already closed down their tram systems but had retained control of public transport by running their own buses. Neither Greenock nor Dumbarton trams had been municipally owned. The precedent, and an important one, was Kirkcaldy, where earlier in the same year, the Corporation Tramways had been acquired by Messrs W. Alexander & Sons of Falkirk, a subsidiary of the S.M.T., on conditions similar to those offered to Ayr. This was a year of economic crisis in Britain. The Tramway Debt borne by Ayr Corporation still stood at £54,040 and would continue to increase, though by a lesser rate than if the Corporation were to abandon the trams and substitute a municipal bus service instead. This had been the

deciding factor in retaining and partially modernising the tramways the previous year, when the Town Chamberlain had calculated that the annual saving by keeping the trams as against disposing of them was around £2,000. The offer by an outside body to relieve the Corporation of any further responsibility for local transport was tempting.

A sub-committee was appointed to look into the matter and report back, which it did on 23rd November. They regarded the offer as inadequate, but at a subsequent meeting of the Tramway Committee, it was decided to re-open negotiations to see if an improved offer might be forthcoming. On 7th December the sub-committee met the S.M.T. representatives again, and the expected new offer was made. The initial payment was raised to £20,000 and the annual payments were split into two: £2,500 for the next ten years and £500 for the remaining eleven years. The total sum would be £6,000 more than originally offered. In addition, it was now agreed to pay £500 to the tramway Manager, William Grant, as compensation for termination of his services.

By a majority of 11 to 3, the Tramway Committee on 11th December agreed to accept this offer, and this was confirmed by the full Council on 14th December after some debate and an impassioned plea by Police-Judge Thomas Paterson for further delay before surrendering for all time an important local service. He emphasised in particular the time of the year when the new arrangements were to be implemented. The phrase "a service of buses at least as good as that presently maintained by the tramways" need not take into account the greatly extended summer and race day services.

His words carried no weight with the meeting, apart from his two Labour colleagues, and the local press seized on the opportunity to stigmatise his views as an example of "the socialist element tied to the fetish of municipal ownership and management", and concluded by saying:

"For the Town Council the lesson to be learned is that for the future they should bear in mind the folly of the tramways and determine to steer clear of municipal trading for which they are demonstrably not fitted."

Despite these castigations, Thomas Paterson, whose main interest was in municipal housing, was to remain a much-respected councillor for a further twenty-three years, and in 1963 received the Freedom of the Burgh for his outstanding services to local government. Yet he always regretted the fact that so many of his fellow councillors were too ready to accept without question the administrative arrangements negotiated by the efficient and long-serving Town Clerk, P. A. Thomson, and cited the disposal of the tramways in the incredibly brief period of six weeks as probably the most notable example of this attitude.

The S.M.T. Company, anticipating success, had brought to Ayr on the day of their successful negotiations, four types of double deck bus to show that these vehicles could be operated safely on Ayr's streets, as all the privately-owned local buses were small single deckers. Moreover, one of their chief negotiators, Mr J. C. Sword, managing director of the Midland Company (an S.M.T. subsidiary which already operated a bus service to Ayr) had already decided to move from Airdrie to Ayr to supervise the new concern, the nucleus of the later Western S.M.T. Company with its near monopoly of bus services in South-West Scotland. As with Kirkcaldy, the tramways of one town were to be the means of establishing a road transport empire extending over a considerable area.

Meanwhile the Ayr trams provided their normal winter service over the Christmas season, with a temporary suspension of services on 30th December when wires were brought down in New Road and the overhead squad performed its final service for the "live" undertaking. For the last three days, the Racecourse service reverted to a double-deck car when the four "mousetraps" were removed to the L.M.S. Railway Goods Depot on the North Harbour to allow more room in the depot for the S.M.T. buses.

On Hogmanay the end of the line was reached. Although there was no official ceremony, the "last car" was the 11.25pm from Burns Monument to Newton Park. It was the most recently renovated car, No. 23, driven by Driver William Morrison, with Arthur Chapman as conductor. It was crowded with passengers and was greeted by large numbers at the Town Hall where, as was then customary, people assembled to bring in the New Year. It then set off, cautiously, round the corner into New Bridge Street and over the River Ayr towards the depot, where some difficulty was found in resetting the trolley pole on the wire at the crossover. Driver Robert Gibb, who had driven the first car in the opening procession in 1901, was given the honour of taking No. 23 into the car shed. It was only then that it was realised that the last car from Prestwick Cross had still to appear. It should have been in before the Monument car, but on this occasion, according to its conductor, the late James Diamond, they deliberately ran slowly to be the last car home, whatever the official report might be. Eventually it arrived in the depot yard and it was left to the brakeman, Donald Hogg, to drive it into the shed. It was No. 9, one of the original batch, and certainly the last car under power. It was already 1932, and most of the tramway employees had had their services terminated as from midnight, with one week's wages in lieu of notice. The conductors of the two "last cars", Arthur Chapman and James Diamond, held on to the brass handles used to operate the destination indicators of their respective cars, and many years later they presented them to the author.

Conclusion

New Year's Day, 1932, was strangely quiet, with the familiar sounds of the cars silenced for ever. Blue S.M.T. buses, single deckers, as the double-deck type did not appear until the middle of February, were providing the services along the tram routes although the Racecourse buses were operating from Burns Statue Square because of turning problems at the Town Hall. Private bus operators who provided services out-with the former tram routes were able to continue for some time — Young's were providing the Glenburn to Doonfoot service until 1934 — but it was part of the agreement that the Corporation were neither to engage in public transport within the burgh boundaries nor to sanction any fresh application by any other operator to provide local services. As early as 8th January, the Ayr and District Motor Services Ltd, who ran an extensive up-country service, were debarred from running any buses purely in Ayr. The days of genuine "private enterprise" were evidently numbered.



The last rites. Cars being dismantled in March 1932 at the new depot.

The tramway's affairs were quickly wound up. Employees who were not taken on by the Bus Company were given one week's wages as an "ex gratia" payment, while it was agreed that four men, all over 50 and with more than 20 years' service, should receive a bonus of £1 for every year of service. They were R. Gibb, Driver (30 years), W. Hogg, Driver (29 years), A. Cuthbert, Driver (27 years) and H. Rainie, Trolley Head Repairer (20 years). William Grant, the Manager, who received from the S.M.T. Company a "severance payment" of £500, was given a further gratuity of £200 by the Corporation. The Engineer, Alfred Somerville, and the Traffic Superintendent, Joseph Brown, had their services retained by the Company, but Mr Somerville did not remain for very long with his new employers and returned to the electricity undertaking at Paisley, though continuing to live in Ayr. Mr Brown was appointed by the Company to manage the Ayr local services, and the former Tramway Office at the Town Hall was retained for this purpose. In March, the cars were dismantled in front of the "new" depot, which had been retained as a car store up to that time.

Finally, on 1st April, the Tramway Committee was convened for the last time to approve final accounts and accept William Grant's formal resignation with effect from 15th April, when he planned to retire to Blackpool. The Committee agreed to record in the Minutes an appreciation of his services over the previous 27 years.

There were, however, some unexpected consequences for the Corporation resulting from the sale of the tramways.

Firstly, on 15th November 1930 the Corporation had negotiated an advertising contract of six years' duration with John Menzies Ltd, for advertising on all passenger cars. Menzies claimed compensation of £539 on account of breach of contract. On the advice of the Town Clerk, the Finance Committee on 5th May agreed to settle the claim by a payment of £400.

Secondly, the Ayrshire Electricity Board also presented a claim for compensation. An agreement had been signed with the Corporation (on 11th May 1931) to supply power for the tramways for an initial period of six years, up to 15th May 1936. From that date thereafter it could be terminated by either party on one year's notice being given, but, according to the Minute of Agreement,

"provided always that such notice shall not be given so as to terminate the supply before the expiration of six years from the date of the commencement of the supply."

The Board demanded compensation of £2,200 per annum. After obtaining Counsel's opinion, on 8th July the Electricity Board agreed to accept £5,000 in full settlement, provided payment was made immediately. On 11th July the Finance Committee agreed to settle on these terms.

The third consequence was potentially the most serious and embarrassing. Both ends of the main route extended beyond the Burgh boundary, on roads belonging to Ayr County Council, although the tramway track was Burgh property. Under Section 28 of the 1870 Tramways Act, it was stipulated that when a tramway was abandoned, the operators had to "restore the portion of the ground upon which such tramway was laid to as good a condition as that in which it was before such tramway was laid thereon". The Town Council's Works Committee, at its meeting on 9th November 1932, resolved to stick to the letter of the law and accept only the cost of restoring the roadways in Prestwick and between Slaphouse and the Monument to their 1901 condition, i.e. as water-bound macadam, the County Council to resurface the road at its own expense. Moreover, the Burgh had no intention of continuing to light the road through Rozelle Wood as it had been doing since 1902. The upshot was that the County raised an action in the Court of Session, in December 1932, against Ayr Corporation and the Scottish Motor Traction Co. Ltd, calling in question the legality of the 1931 agreement on the ground that Parliamentary powers had not been obtained to abandon the tramways, as was required under the Acts of 1899, 1904, 1908 and 1922. To add to the Burgh's troubles, S.M.T., who were named as an "interested party", declined to appear as defenders, even though their licences to operate in Ayr could be revoked by the Traffic Commissioners should the action be upheld. The

Town Clerk found himself in the awkward position of having to acknowledge that the S.M.T. Company could be considered as backing out of their agreement. The consequences for the Burgh and its 21-year agreement with S.M.T., should the whole deal be invalidated, were considerable from a financial standpoint. There was little real danger of this happening, since the action had been raised primarily over claims for road restoration costs. Eventually, in March 1933, the Court action was abandoned when Ayr's offer of £3,300 towards these expenses was accepted.

Rarely can the closure of a tramway system have been accompanied by such unforeseen consequences. If, like Macbeth, Ayr Corporation had taken the view that "if it were done when 'tis done, then 't were well it were done quickly" in disposing of a municipal asset, there must have been occasions in the following two years to wonder what the next "knocking at the gate" might portend.

It is interesting to speculate on what might have been the future for the trams had the deal with S.M.T. not been concluded. There are some indications of how the system might have fared. The relaying of the High Street track, along with the power supply and advertising contracts signed, indicate that some form of tram service might have survived until 1936, but it is unlikely that any further large-scale expenditure would have been authorised. Tramway systems were often continued until the track wore out, this being the most advantageous time, economically, to abandon the system. The section between the New Bridge and Newton Park had been relaid in 1924, and the doubled portions in Prestwick Road and Carrick Road and the Racecourse section were all in sound condition. But the single-line sections beyond Prestwick Toll and St Leonard's Church had never been renewed and were deteriorating rapidly. The Monument section, despite its popularity in summer, was not economic for eight months out of the year. Many of the cars, heavily patronised in summer and on race days, were in poor condition and not worth reconditioning. It would seem therefore that the fleet would have been considerably reduced, the reconditioned top-covered cars, the four single-deckers and four or five of the best open-top cars being retained. The Monument section would have been cut back to St Leonard's or possibly Chapel-park Road by the end of 1932 and the Prestwick section soon after, leaving a basic town service between Prestwick Toll and St Leonard's. Even the Racecourse branch might have been closed in view of its light traffic on all but a few days each year. Renewed attempts would have been made to obtain powers to run Corporation buses to serve the housing areas away from the tram routes, and eventually to supplant the trams, and under the provisions of the 1930 Road Traffic Act these could well have been successful. As it was, the tram system remained intact and with its full complement of cars up to the end. Indeed, for the last nine months of its existence it was in better shape than it had been for some years.

However much the demise of the trams may have been welcomed by the local press, it was a shattering experience for those most involved, the tramway employees. At a time of unprecedented unemployment, many were thrown out of work with no compensation other than a week's wages in lieu of notice (apart from the four mentioned earlier). The man who must have felt it most of all was William Grant, who had been in charge for 26 years and who now saw his labour force summarily dispersed. He had been in indifferent health during the previous two years, but the sudden end of the system he had managed with dedication was the final blow. He moved to Blackpool and acquired a small business, but died within a year of his retirement.



Three different types of car in the High Street during the last year of operation. The car on the left is number 18, the "Exhibition Car".

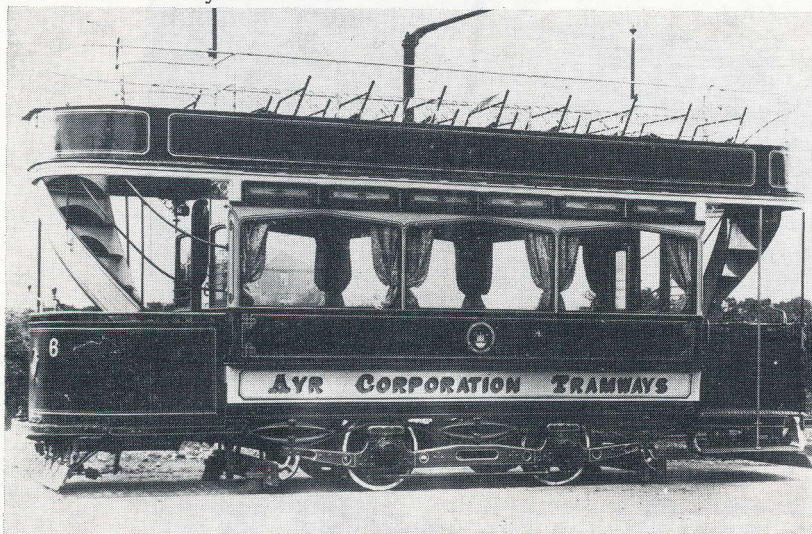
APPENDIX I

ROLLING STOCK

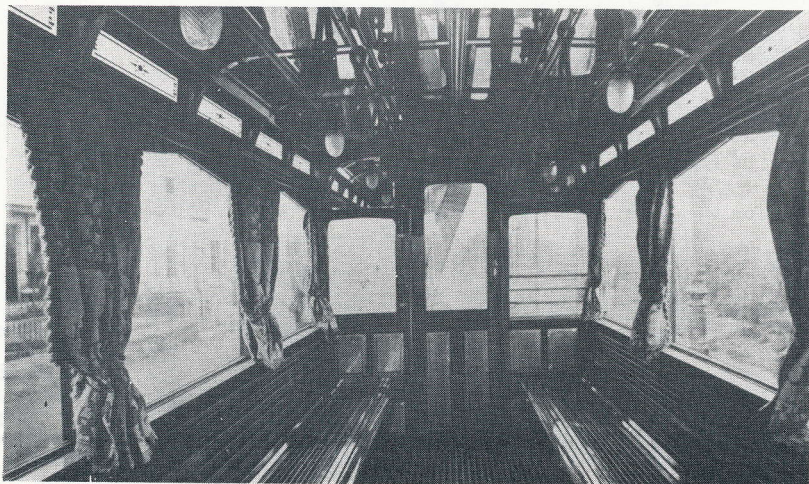
Cars 1-10

These were the original cars supplied by Hurst Nelson & Co. Ltd of Motherwell for the opening in September 1901. All were four-wheel, double deck, open topped extended canopy cars with reversed stairs. The saloon was 16ft 0ins long with three windows each with Hurst Nelson's typical "Tudor-arch" top. The sides, ends and ceiling were panelled internally in oak, ash and sycamore, and tapestry curtains were fitted to the side windows. Seating inside was for 22 passengers on longitudinal seats of polished wood. The cars measured 27ft 0ins over the fenders, by 6ft 10ins overall width. Top deck seating was for 35 passengers, mostly on "New London Dry" seats of a special type which tipped up when vacated so as to — in theory — remain dry in rain.

The cars were the first to be built using Hurst Nelson's patent cantilever truck, manufactured from pressed steel sections, of 6ft 0ins wheelbase. Roller bearing axle boxes were fitted but these soon gave trouble and were replaced — at Hurst Nelson's cost — by conventional plain brass bearing axle boxes in June 1902. Wheels were 30in diameter of chilled steel. These also gave trouble and were soon replaced by the more usual steel tyred wheels.



Official view, taken by the builders of car number 6.



Interior view of the lower saloon of the same car. The curtains did not last long!

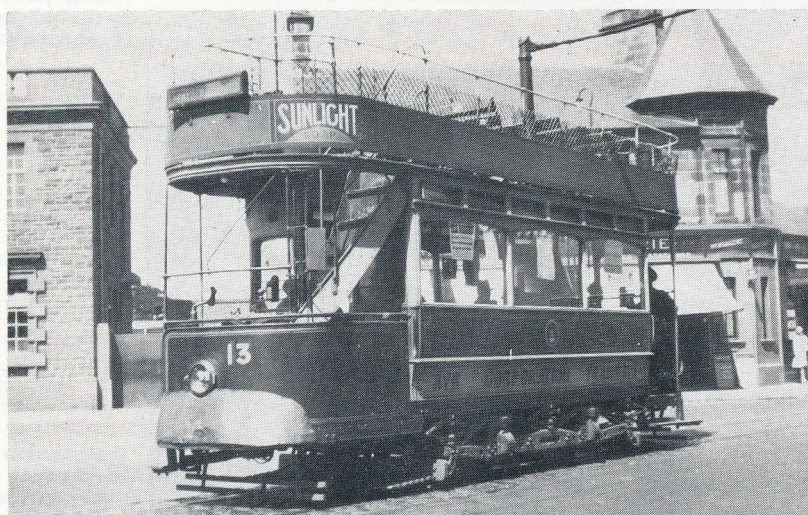
Each car had two British Thomson-Houston GE52 motors rated at 20 horse power at 500 volts, plus B.T.-H. B18 controllers.

Nine cars were fitted with the "Fisher" life guard — invented by Mr Peter Fisher, manager of the Dundee tramways. The tenth car had a Hudson life guard. These were shortly replaced by the "Tidswell" type. The trolley standards were side mounted on the "landward" side of the car.

It has been stated that some cars were rebuilt with 180° turn stairs, but most — if not all — ran without alteration until the closure of the system.



Pre-First World War view of car 14 at Prestwick Cross terminus.



Car 13 at Prestwick in 1929. The sloping guard on the dash was to prevent "hangers-on" standing on the fender.

Cars 11-16

Supplied by Messrs Hurst Nelson in May 1902 in time for the opening of the extension to Burns Monument, these cars were in most respects similar to the first ten.

They were, however, fitted with "normal" 90° turn stairs and could accommodate 37 passengers on the top deck. Trucks were the Hurst Nelson "cantilever" type, motors GE52 and controllers type B18. Tidswell lifeguards were fitted. Number 12 was used on occasion as the decorated car.

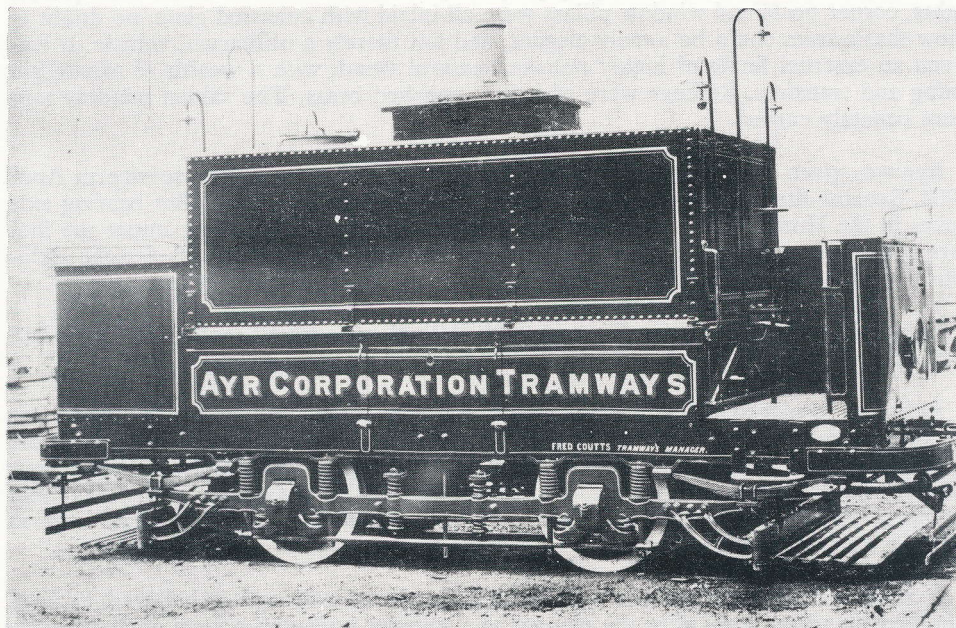
In 1928 cars 11 and 12 received Hurst Nelson 21E type, 6ft 6ins wheelbase trucks, purchased from Kilmarnock Corporation after the closure of that undertaking. They had previously seen service under Kilmarnock's 11-14 group of cars. Ayr car 14 received a similar truck, either also ex-Kilmarnock or that formerly under Ayr 19.

Car 17

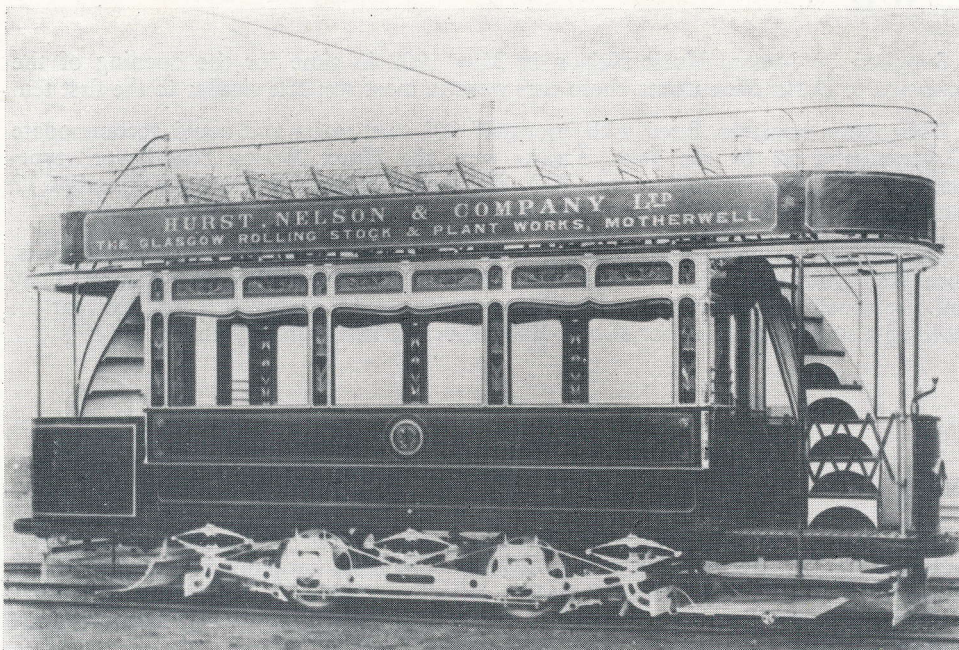
Water car purchased from Hurst Nelson in April 1903. The body consisted of a rectangular water tank of 1,250 gallons capacity with short uncanopied platforms. It was mounted on a Brill 21E truck of 6ft 0ins wheelbase with 30 inch diameter wheels. Motors and controllers were as supplied for the passenger cars, viz. GE52 motors and B18 controllers.

Brackets for fitting a snowplough were provided, and in 1909 Alundum blocks were added so that the car could be used for rail grinding.

It was seldom seen on the streets as most of its work took place at night after ordinary services were over. Apprentices were often told — when still raw — to go and clean the windows on car seventeen!



Official view of car 17, a combined water car, snow plough and, latterly, rail grinder.



This was Hurst Nelson's exhibit at the London Exhibition in 1902. It became Ayr's No. 18.

Car 18

This remarkable tram was constructed by Hurst Nelson for display on their stand at the 1902 Tramways Exhibition in London. While similar in overall dimensions to cars 11-16 it was finished, for display purposes, in a most lavish manner. The quarter lights, corner posts and window pillars were all inlaid with coloured glass, no doubt to show that a tram could be a truly elegant, and not merely a utilitarian, vehicle. It was given an external finish of highly polished natural wood, with a wealth of ornate gilt lining and transfers. Railings were of highly polished brass. The saloon window tops were ornately curved.

Ayr was given the opportunity to purchase this car, and it entered service in April 1904. Several alterations were made before it was despatched. The roller bearing axle boxes in the Hurst Nelson cantilever truck which had proved a failure under the first cars were replaced by plain bearings, and the demonstration lifeguards for the Exhibition (a different one at each end) were replaced by Ayr's standard type.

Equipment was as in the earlier cars, with B.T.-H. type GE52 motors and type B18 controllers. Seating capacity was for 37 outside and 22 in the saloon.

Although it played a full part in normal service, it was frequently in demand to convey special parties or visiting delegations. It was on many occasions used as the "Decorated Car" when, festooned in multi-coloured lights and drapes, it would tour the system. It was decorated for the Coronation of King George V in 1911, and regularly during the September Race Meetings when the "Shows" were held in Newton Park, behind the depot.

It remained the pride of the undertaking up to the end and is believed to have survived for many years after the closure as a summer house on a farm at Stair, some ten miles outside Ayr. It is a reflection on the attitudes of the 30's that no attempt was made to preserve this unique example of the tram-builder's art.



Car 19 at the Newton Park Depot, as delivered in open top condition.

Cars 19-20

Double deck, open top, extended canopy cars with three flat-topped saloon windows supplied by Hurst Nelson in June 1907. They had 180° turn stairs and seating for 22 inside and 35 outside.

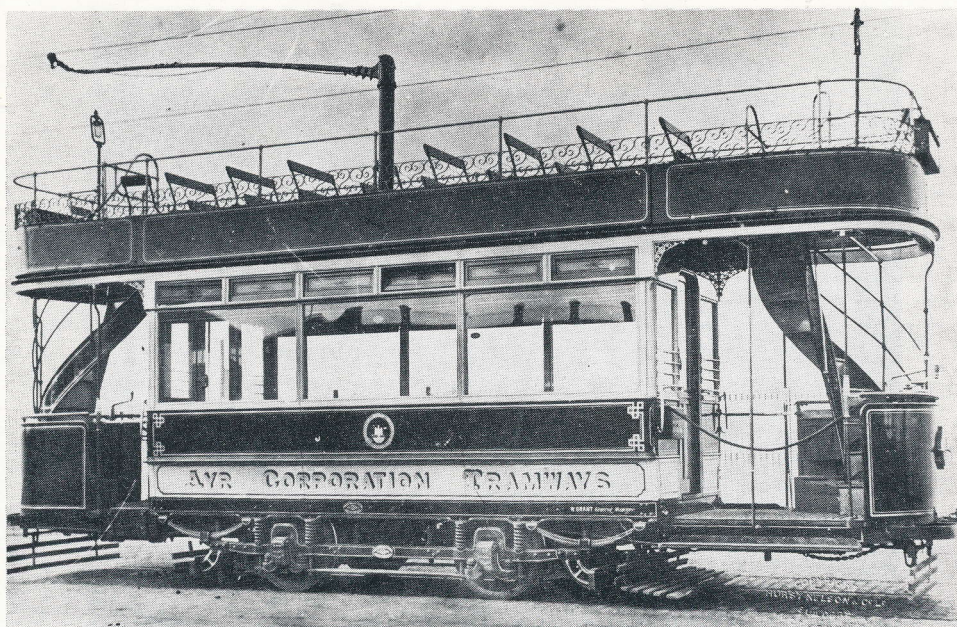
They were mounted on Hurst Nelson standard 21E-type trucks of 6ft 6ins wheelbase and had, as all the earlier cars, the GE52 motor and B18 controller.

The bodies were of a more robust construction, and top covers, supplied by Hurst Nelson, were fitted to both cars in 1925 (increasing upstairs seating to 36).

Early in 1931 car 19 was mounted on a Brill 79E2 truck of 8ft 0in wheelbase and 24in diameter wheels. This had 60hp English Electric type DK105 motors, and electric track brakes, which gave a markedly greater rate of acceleration and quiet running. In this form it was well-known as the "flier" of the fleet. Car 20 received B.T.-H. 509/M1 (50hp) motors and B.T.-H. B510 controllers in 1930.

Finally the driver's platforms were vestibuled, and both cars fitted with transverse seats, upholstered in moquette in the lower saloon and in maroon leather on the upper deck.

Had the open ends of the top deck been enclosed at the same time, this modernisation would have matched the large scale work then being undertaken by Glasgow to modernise its tramcar fleet. Unfortunately Ayr was to experience this improved standard (in conjunction with the relaid track in the town centre) for less than a year.



Car (either 21 or 22) as delivered, showing the extended platforms and front exit arrangements.



Car 22 at Prestwick in 1929 after addition of top cover and vestibuled platforms. The driver is looking out through the front exit.

Cars 21-22

Double deck, open top, extended canopy cars similar to numbers 19 and 20, but with platforms extended to allow for an additional exit under the stairs. They were delivered from Hurst Nelson in June 1913 in readiness for the opening of the branch to the new Racecourse in August. Seating was, as before, for 22 inside, but top deck seating was increased to 39.

Trucks were again the Hurst Nelson standard 21E-type, but with the wheelbase extended to 7ft 6ins. The same motors, GE52, and controllers, B18, were fitted as on all earlier cars.

The Board of Trade insisted on two alterations to the original construction. The original fixed step to the front exit had to be replaced by a folding step, and the chain across this access was replaced by an interlocked bar.

Three window top covers were supplied by Hurst Nelson in 1920 when the top deck seating was increased to 40. Driver's platforms were vestibuled after 1926.

Early in 1931 both cars were reconstructed with upholstered transverse seats to upper and lower decks, and mounted on new Brill 79E2 8ft 0ins wheelbase trucks plus DK105 60hp motors. Car 22, which had been the notorious "slowcoach" of the system, was the first car to appear in its new guise, in February 1931.



Car 23 or 24 in original condition. Note the route board and the bamboo pole carried below the rocker panel.

Cars 23-24

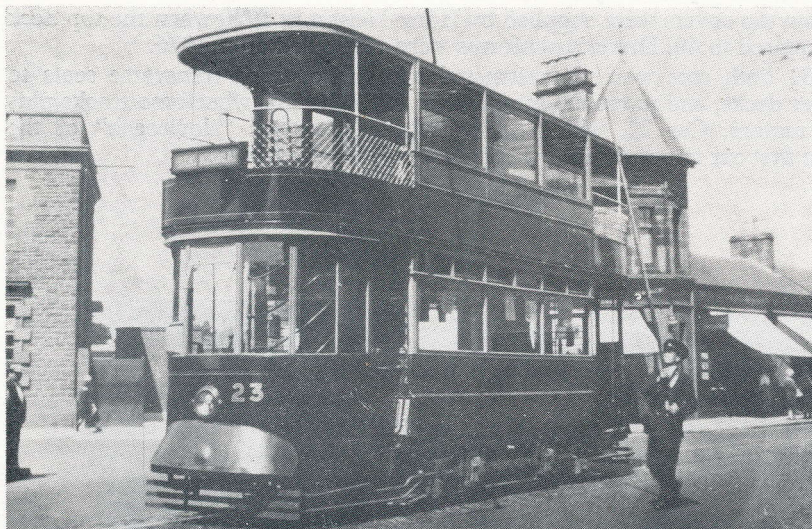
These were the first cars supplied by Hurst Nelson to Ayr as top covered, and entered service in 1915 after a delay resulting from the disastrous fire at the manufacturers' works on 27th April 1914.

They were double-deck, top covered cars (both saloons with three flat-topped windows) and, like cars 21 and 22, were built with front exits for use at race meetings when two conductors might be carried. Seating was for 22 inside and 40 on the upper deck.

Trucks and equipment were supplied as for the earlier cars, except that the 7ft 6ins wheelbase truck was fitted with GE58 (25hp) motors, no doubt to cope with the additional load of the top covers.

In 1926 both cars had the driver's platforms vestibuled and both received upholstered transverse seating in 1931. Car 24 also received the new truck and electrical equipment as fitted to cars 19, 21 and 22.

Car 23, which was the last car from Burns Monument on the last night, had its lower deck purchased by the minister of St James' Church, at Tam's Brig, Ayr, for use as a garden shelter, complete with one vestibuled end and some of the upholstered seating. In this form it survived for some years after the Second World War.



The bamboo pole in use to turn the trolley — at Prestwick terminus in 1929.

Cars 25-28

Single deck, five window saloon cars with monitor roofs, purchased from Manchester Corporation in 1922 for conversion to one man operation to cut running costs on the Racecourse route.

Originally constructed by the Brush Electrical Engineering Co. Ltd of Loughborough in 1899 for the Oldham, Ashton and Hyde Electric Tramway Ltd (a B.E.T. subsidiary), they were from a series numbered 1-26. This particular tramway was split between several local authorities in 1921 and Manchester Corporation (while not owning the cars) organised the sale of numbers 10-17 which had become the property of Denton U.D.C. (cars 10-13) and Audenshaw U.D.C. (cars 14-17). Which of these cars came to Ayr is not recorded.

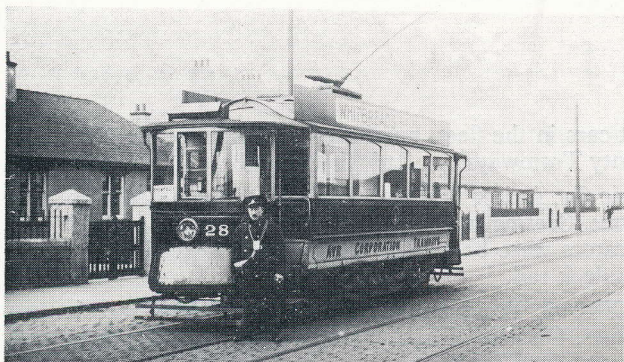
The cars had 18ft saloons, seating 26 passengers and measured 27ft overall length by 6ft 5ins overall width.

The purchase price dropped from £350 asked in April 1922 to the £120 each (plus £30 carriage) paid in May. The cars were on Peckham cantilever trucks, 6ft 0ins wheelbase, with GE52 motors, and they were put in service in December 1922.

Hurst Nelson supplied materials to convert all four cars to front entrance one-man operation, and in 1923 also supplied and erected driver's vestibules on cars 27 and 28. New controllers (type K10?) were also fitted to these cars at this time. Car 27 retained its original roof mounted headlight with its fleet number in the centre of the dash, but the others had the headlamp repositioned in the centre of the dash with the fleet number offset at "two o'clock" to it, in common with the other Ayr cars.



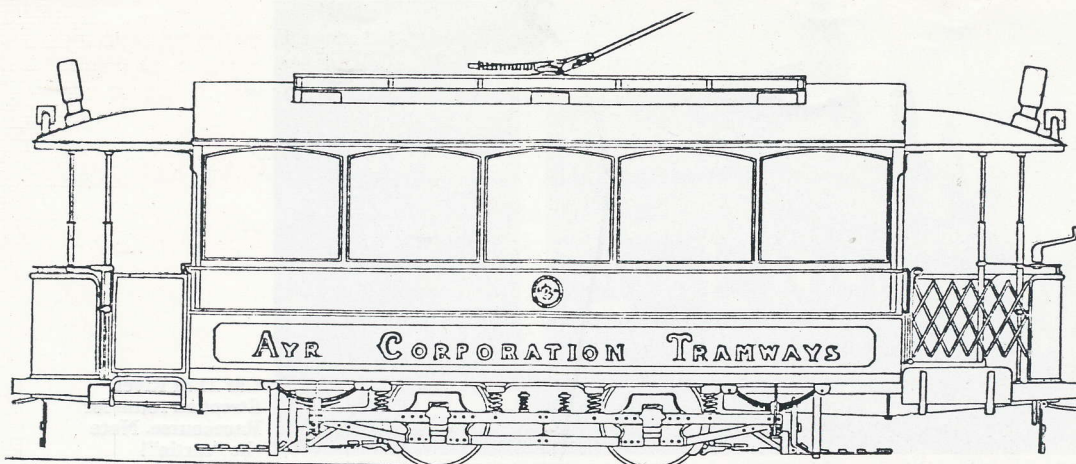
Car 27 in River Street en route for Racecourse. Note the "cartie"!



Car 28 with Driver (and Conductor) T. Sloan, possibly in the last year of operation.



Car 27 on the New Bridge, with the Carnegie Library in the distance. This was the only Ayr tram to carry the number in the centre of the dash.



This drawing gives an indication of the appearance of unvestibuled cars 25 and 26.
The headlamps were actually on the dash.

Cars 29-30

These were the largest and newest cars in the fleet, purchased second-hand in 1928 from the Dumbarton Burgh and County Tramways Co. Ltd (their numbers 31 and 32).

Built in 1921 by the English Electric Co. Ltd of Preston, they were double deck top covered cars with four window saloons. Seating was for 30 passengers inside and 42 on the upper deck. Destination indicators were below the canopy roof instead of the usual Ayr position level with the top deck rail.

They were mounted on English Electric Peckham P22 trucks of 8ft 6ins wheel-base with two B.T.-H. GE200K motors. On arrival in Ayr the trucks were regauged from Dumbarton's 4ft 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ ins to Ayr's standard 4ft 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins.

The driver's platforms of car 30 were vestibuled in 1930, and in 1931 they received upholstered seating to both saloons. They handled race and holiday traffic very well, but drivers found them heavy and awkward to handle compared to the other cars. These two cars did, however, see a further lease of life, with a third owner. They were sold after closure of the system to South Shields Corporation for £125 each. There car 29 entered service without alteration (but repainted) in May 1932 as South Shields number 57, while Ayr 30 was subjected to a transformation by being rebuilt as a totally enclosed car with completely reconstructed top deck and new electric equipment, appearing in May 1933 as South Shields number 16. The difference in the car was most pronounced, and the end result was a modern tram, which could easily have graced the streets of Ayr had the tram improvement programme continued.

South Shields for a time named their cars to create interest in the modernised system and 16 was "Vespasian" after a Roman Emperor with local connections, and 57 became "Charles Allen Henderson", then Chairman of the Tramways Committee. The names were removed in 1934 following the appointment of Mr E. R. L. Fitzpayne as Tramway Manager. (He returned to Edinburgh as Deputy Manager after only fourteen months in South Shields.) Car 57 (later 34) was scrapped before the Second World War, but 16 gave its final owners some fourteen years of service, being scrapped following closure of the South Shields tramways on 31st March 1946.

Other Vehicles

The most unusual of these was Ayr's "horse tram". Although no record can be found in remaining documentation in Ayr, the sale is recorded by Glasgow Corporation Tramways in December 1903 of former horse tram number 440 for £5 to the Ayr tramways.

That the vehicle saw tramway use is substantiated by the recording in the Board of Trade Annual Returns for year ending 31st March 1904 and 31st March 1905, in the Ayr tramways statistics of one "non-electric tram".

It could have been for possible trailer operation, but again there is no reference in Ayr minutes or the Board of Trade files. It will need somebody with a very long memory to resolve this mystery.

Ayr also had tower wagons for attending to repairs of the overhead. The original was horse drawn but in 1920 a motor tower wagon, SD6088, was purchased.



One of the two cars purchased from Dumbarton, at Burns Monument terminus, before being vestibuled.



How Ayr's trams could have appeared. As South Shields No. 16 (ex-Ayr 30, ex-Dumbarton 32), it ran as an enclosed car until 1946.

Truck Sales

The two cars sold to South Shields were not the only relics of Ayr's trams to see further use. Three of the Hurst Nelson Brill type trucks were purchased by Edinburgh Corporation who were trying out various types of trucks at this time. The wheelbase was 8ft 0ins so these were probably the three new 79E2 trucks purchased by Ayr in 1931 and formerly under cars 19, 21 and 22.

The best of the three (which had slightly differing brake gear) went under Edinburgh car 50 in May 1932, the other two being used on cars 25 and 27 from September 1932. All were out of use by early 1934.

Livery

The description of the cars in the article regarding the system in the "Light Railway and Tramway Journal" of October 1901 refers to the cars being "tastefully painted and varnished, the prevailing colours being dark chocolate relieved with gilt and white lines on the lower part while the upper part is a warm primrose with vermillion lines. The armorial bearings of the Royal Burgh of Ayr find an appropriate place on the main side panels".

The chocolate colour has been called dark maroon and may have varied over the years. It was applied to the waist and dash panels and to the decency panels on the upper deck. The waist panels had a "Greek key" in the corners of the lining out. The primrose or cream was used on the rocker panel, the window pillars and the stair stringers. Lettering and numbers were in gold, shaded in two tones of blue.

Car numbers were (except as noted car 27) carried, rather unusually, at "two o'clock" from the headlamp, this possibly being for ease of recognition by inspectors from the kerbside. Numbers were in gold and several styles appear, as can be seen in the various photographs.

Car 18 has already been referred to. It is believed that it retained its "polished wood" livery to the end. The rocker panel was finished in a similar manner, but stairs and window surrounds were cream, as on the other cars. The Scottish Lion crest which enhanced the waist panels at the 1902 exhibition was replaced by the Ayr Coat of Arms. Lining out was more elaborate than on the other cars.

Advertisements were painted on the sides and ends of the decency boards round the top deck only, and remained the same on some cars for years.

Destination Information

According to Hurst Nelson's Order Book, the first cars were supplied with the following destinations on their blinds: BURNS COTTAGE, BURNS MONUMENT, BURNS STATUE, PRESTWICK CROSS, ST LEONARD'S CHURCH, GRAMMAR SCHOOL, NEWTOWN (sic) STATION, TOWN HALL, PRESTWICK TOLL, CHAPEL PARK ROAD, DEPOT.

Subsequent additions were: RACECOURSE (in 1913), NEWTON PARK (in place of DEPOT in 1922) and AYR STATION (in place of BURNS STATUE). GRAMMAR SCHOOL, NEWTOWN STATION and CHAPEL PARK ROAD dropped out, though the last was added to all screens again in 1928. There was also SPECIAL CAR, RESERVED and FOOTBALL MATCH, the last two showing, as in so many other ways, the influence of Glasgow practice.

The single deckers had a four-sided block at each end of the roof with AYR STATION, TOWN HALL, NEWTON PARK, RACECOURSE, but RACECOURSE seems to have been permanently displayed. No doubt a temporary board was used if they operated on any other service.

APPENDIX II

TRACK, POWER SUPPLY, DEPOTS, ETC.

Track and Overhead

For the initial construction, rails and special track work at the depot were supplied by the Lorain Steel Company of Ohio, U.S.A. They were delivered a mere six weeks after the order was placed and it was stated that "... the exact fit of the parts when they were put in place gave the liveliest satisfaction".

Some points and crossings were by Askham Bros & Wilsons Ltd of Sheffield. Rails were supplied in 45ft lengths, weighing 90lb per yard. Track centres were 8ft 1½ins on normal double track and 10ft 9ins where centre poles were used. The contractor for trackwork was Messrs D. Murray of Glasgow.

Double track was constructed between the depot at Newton Park and the Grammar School, the remainder of the line being single track with passing loops — all inter-visible except between Grammar School and the then terminus at St Leonard's Church, where a Saxby & Farmer signal was installed. The only gradient of note on the line was 100 yards at 1 in 27 where the line rose to cross the railway at "Tam's Brig".

The overhead, of hand drawn copper, was supported on centre poles between "Tam's Brig" and the "New Brig" and from the Town Hall to Miller Road. Elsewhere side bracket poles were used (on the east side of the track) with bracket arms varying in length from 8ft 4ins to 17ft 0ins. The poles were designed by the Burgh Engineer and the cast iron bases had the town's Coat of Arms incorporated, while the bracket arms sported much elaborate wrought iron work. There were 43 centre poles and no less than 131 side poles. The contractor responsible for overhead erection was Lowden Brothers of Dundee. The Racecourse branch used span wire construction.

The overhead was divided into sections of approximately half a mile in length and was supplied with power (at the standard 500-550 volts d.c.) through underground feeders laid by the Callender Cable Company. Feeders for the extension to Burns Monument were put in at the outset to avoid re-excavation later.

Most of the ornamental tracery on the poles was removed around 1920, owing to severe corrosion, although the distinctive Ayr finial remained. In 1924 the centre poles were replaced by span wires. Trolley reversers were installed, at Burns Monument, St Leonard's Church, Racecourse and the Depot in 1924, and at Prestwick Toll in 1931.

Power Supply

The Council's existing generating station in Mill Street, opened in 1896, was extended to cope with the additional demand required for the tramways. Three additional multi-polar generators were supplied by Bruce Peebles & Co. of Edinburgh, two of 200kw output and one of 240kw. These were driven by Belliss & Morcom steam engines, vertical direct acting compound type, two of 290bhp, the other of 350bhp. Two Stirling boilers were required to service these, water being drawn from the adjacent river. Coal was carted from the nearby railway sidings.

It is interesting to note that when the d.c. current for the tramways was supplied, the whole lighting supply to the centre of the town was altered from a.c. (which it had been since 1896) to d.c. A.C. was retained "for lighting the outlying parts of the town, but this will probably soon be superceded".

Power was charged at 1½d per unit for the first 200,000 units and at 1d per unit thereafter. The charge remained static for many years until after the First World War.

Under an Electricity Supply Order of 1924 the Ayrshire Electricity Board was set up. This was deemed to have taken over, as from 15th May 1923, the municipal electricity undertakings of Ayr and Kilmarnock. The new Board consisted of 12 members, six from Kilmarnock Town Council, four from Ayr County Council and only two from Ayr Town Council.

Soon after formation of the Board a new 20kv overhead power transmission line was constructed from the large Kilmarnock Power Station to Ayr, and the steam plant in Ayr became disused. The Power Station has since been demolished.

Services

Services operated in the early days were Prestwick Cross—Burns Monument; Prestwick Cross—St Leonard's Church; Newton Station—Grammar School. On Race days, a special service operated to Chapel Park Road for Seafield Racecourse, but this was discontinued after 1907 when the new Racecourse in Whitellets Road opened. Grammar School ceased to be a terminal point in 1907, all cars turning either at Burns Statue Square or proceeding to St Leonard's. Newton Station services were extended after 1915 to Prestwick Toll. In later years the following services operated in summer: Prestwick Cross—Burns Monument—every 15 minutes (morning), 10 minutes (afternoon), 30 minutes (evening), subject to augmentation when traffic demanded it, e.g. evening concerts at the Tea Garden; Prestwick Cross—St Leonard's Church—every 10 minutes (from 1929 often extended to Chapel Park Road); Prestwick Toll—St Leonard's Church—every 5 minutes; Prestwick Toll—Burns Monument—every 10 minutes; Town Hall—Racecourse—every 20 minutes. Additional services were run from Newton Park to Burns Statue Square, and on Saturday nights in summer, between Newton Park and Town Hall.

After 1914 the Racecourse route (which originally operated from Ayr Station) was cut back to the Town Hall, except on race days and for some football matches.



Night shift staff in March 1910, photographed in front of car 18.



Depot staff of the 1920's.

Depots

A small brick building was erected at Bellesleyhill Road, Newton Park, capable of accommodating 15 cars. It had three tracks, each with a pit, and was entered through two arched doors. A small repair shop was provided, but many of the heavy repairs were undertaken by employees from Hurst Nelson's works in Motherwell. In addition, there were stores, mess rooms and offices.

A three-track addition was built, similar to the original building, in 1902 to house the expanding fleet, and the opportunity was taken to provide a small paint shop.

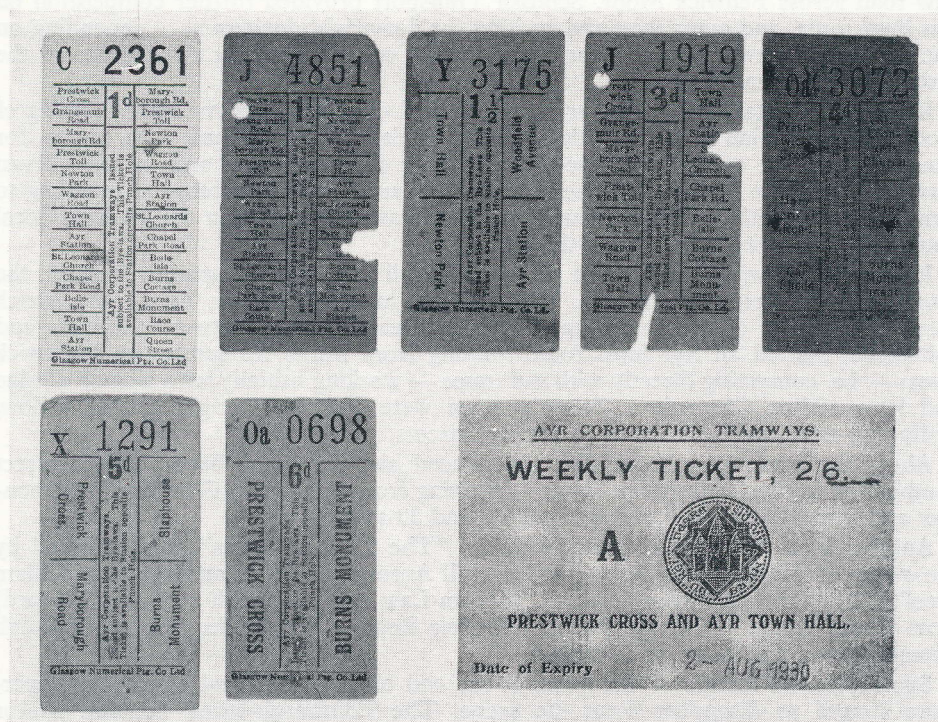
Later, in 1923, following the Report of J. Ferguson, an additional depot was built, to the north of Bellesleyhill Road. This was also brick built, and had four tracks.

All of these buildings survive today, in a fairly recognisable state, but now serving today's mass mover, the motor car.

Fares

Initially the fare structure ranged from $\frac{1}{2}$ d to 3d in increments of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. By 1920, the maximum end to end fare had become 6d. In 1919 the special fare of 6d from Ayr Station to the Races was introduced and remained unchanged until the end of the system (surviving on special race buses until the 1960's!). During the '20's the $\frac{1}{2}$ d fare was revived for scholars but intermediate $\frac{1}{2}$ d stages disappeared until 1928 when, with increasing bus competition, they were re-introduced, along with special weekly, monthly and yearly tickets and a 4d return from Town Hall to Burns Monument (single fare being 3d). These rates survived to the end of tramway operation.

There were also special fares, single and return, for workmen, and discounts were allowed on books of tickets. For a period, tokens were also issued at reduced cost. A conductor might find himself carrying on his ticket rack, no less than 17 different tickets!



A selection of Ayr tram tickets. top, 1 to r: 1d white, 1½d yellow, 1½d yellow, 3d pink, 4d orange; below: 5d buff, 6d slate, and 2/6d weekly ticket for August 1930.

APPENDIX III

BUS SERVICES IN AYR

(with additional notes by Robert M. Grieves)

After the First World War and in the early 1920's several small firms and one-man businesses ran open charabancs in and around Ayr, mostly on excursions or for private hire.

On Market days and Saturdays these vehicles would be operated from their respective outlying villages into Ayr. Two typical operators were Watson of Joppa, who ran an Albion charabanc from Coylton, and Scott of Tarbolton, with Halleys — one of which was named "Ivanhoe".

Regular timetabled services in the area were pioneered by the Scottish Transport Company and Ayr & District Motor Services (from 1923). The "Transport" used rather cumbersome solid tyred Tilling Stevens and Leylands on routes from Ayr to Dalmellington and to Kilmarnock, while the "District" served the Cumnock area, mainly using Commer vehicles.

Ayrshire Pullman followed with American built Reos and Brockways running to Girvan and later to Newton Stewart, and claimed the distinction of operating the first pneumatic tyred bus in Ayr. McGill's Carrick Pullman ran from Crosshill into the town, while Percy Hull's motor service served Annbank. The long run from Airdrie to Ayr was operated by Currie & Thomson of Calderbank. (This service has recently been withdrawn following economy measures imposed by Western S.M.T.)

Two other well known Companies of the 'twenties and early 'thirties were O'Hara's Southern bus service from Newton Mearns, and John Sword's Midland buses from Airdrie. Both operated on the direct route to Glasgow by Kilmarnock and the then new road across Fenwick Moor. Scottish Transport provided further competition on this busy route, and many were the exciting (or downright dangerous — depending on one's point of view) races for passengers which ensued amongst the drivers of the three competing companies.

It seemed inevitable that Ayr's trams would feel the pinch with the mushrooming of motor bus operation from the mid-twenties. Initially there seemed little reason for concern, since the only buses were those on long distance routes such as the Girvan service of Ayrshire Pullman. As the buses were usually full of passengers travelling to destinations outwith the burgh boundary, there was no effect upon the basically local nature of the service provided by the trams.

However, following the start up of several small local bus Companies in 1928, the trams suffered direct competition. For example, in 1928 William Young of Carrick Street (a member of the family operating the present service between Glasgow and Johnstone) started an Ayr local route running from Burns Monument to Prestwick Cross — i.e. competing directly with the trams — working initially with a small Dodge and later adding Chevrolets. Young's buses were painted a bright canary yellow, adding an extra touch of colour to the Ayr streets.

About the same time, Frank Kerr introduced his "Ayrways" buses, also in direct competition to the Corporation trams — running from Prestwick (Glenburn) to Doonfoot and Burns Monument, using small 14- and 20-seat Guys.

Another local bus service, proudly named "The Land o' Burns", was operated by the owner of the Glen Tea Rooms in Longhill Avenue, while yet another was William Steel's "Ayr Suburbs Motor Service". William Law operated (with a 14-seat Bedford) from Burns Statue — George Street — Walker Road — Heathfield, also a Mr Rolph operated from the Statue to Glenburn.

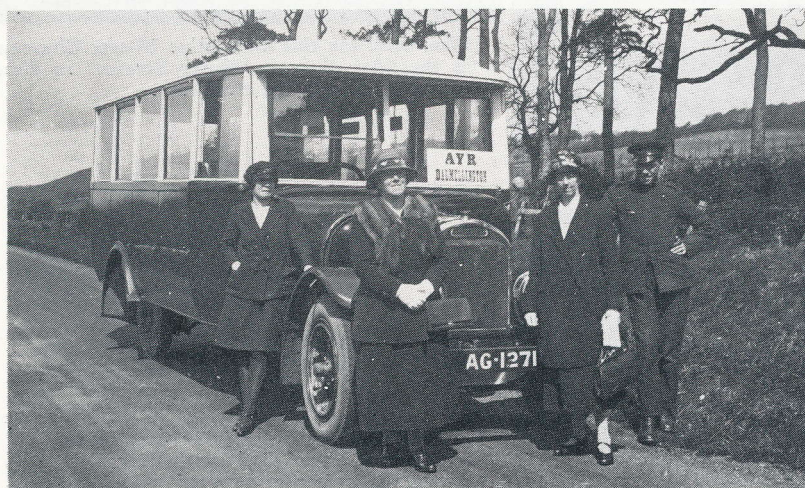
Soon after the demise of the trams at the end of 1931 the local private bus operators started to disappear from the scene. The Edinburgh-based Scottish Motor Traction Company, who provided the tramway replacement services, soon bought out the remaining competitors on the Ayr local services.



Solid tyred Albin charabanc owned by Watson of Joppa (SD571). It ran from Coylton into Ayr on market days and Saturdays.



Driver John Easdale stands proudly beside his solid tyred Commer, belonging to Ayr and District Motor Services. The bus followed the tram route from Alloway, where it was photographed, to Ayr.



Ayrshire Pullman operated this American built Brockway bus to Dalmellington, and also on a route to Girvan.

The S.M.T. Company eventually provided a fleet of brand new double deck Leyland Titan TD2 buses for the tram replacement routes. No doubt these initially proved a novelty for the citizens hitherto accustomed to ageing trams and small single deck buses.

In 1932 the Western S.M.T. Co. Ltd was formed, with headquarters in Kilmarnock, as the South-west Scotland area subsidiary of S.M.T. of Edinburgh. Today Western Scottish (as it now is) still provides local transport in Ayr. After half a century of double deck operation, the mainstay of the local bus services is again vested in single deck buses.

The main local operators in the period 1928-1931 were:

William Young Ltd: Glenburn to Doonfoot, Glenburn to Monument, Burns Statue to Heathfield via Racecourse (service taken over from George Law in November 1931); ultimately 27 buses.

Percy Hull (9 buses) and George Rolph (1 bus) operated a combined service between Glenburn and the Monument; taken over by S.M.T. in 1932.

Frank Kerr ("Ayrways"): Castlehill to Dundonald, Prestwick to Monument; ultimately 13 buses, mainly 20-seaters; sold out to S.M.T. on 31st December 1931.

Hugh Fingland (2 buses), William Steel (1 bus), and Messrs McGavin, McCardle and Hunter also ran buses apparently on an "ad hoc" basis.

By April 1932 all these operators had ceased trading except for the "yellow" buses of William Young Ltd, who continued to provide a service between Doonfoot and Glenburn and from Burns Statue to Heathfield until they sold out to Western S.M.T. in 1934.

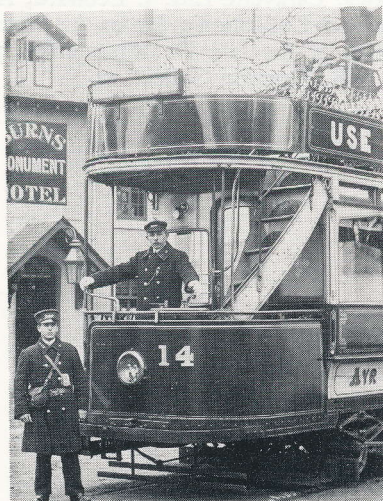


Wm. Steel ran this diminutive 14-seat Chevrolet as the "Ayr Suburbs Motor Service" in direct competition with the tramways.

The S.M.T. Co. provided, in 1932, a fleet of these Leyland Titan TD2 double deck buses on the former tram routes.

TRAMWAY STATISTICS

Year Ending 15 May	Passengers Carried	Total Revenue £	Working Expenses £	Profit on Operation £	Surplus (Deficit) after deduction of Loan Payments and Depreciation From 26/9/01
1902	1,897,540	6,974	3,657	2,121	▲
1903	3,201,586	14,161	7,215	6,946	
1904	3,316,380	14,328	7,621	6,600	
1905	3,578,650	15,159	8,291	7,049	
1906	3,551,538	15,469	8,360	6,892	
1907	3,603,789	15,400	8,449	6,834	
1908	3,660,038	15,322	8,676	6,645	
1909	3,610,537	15,081	8,895	6,185	
1910	3,588,628	15,007	8,571	6,435	
1911	3,670,746	15,654	8,620	7,000	
1912	3,739,237	15,914	8,802	7,081	
1913	3,880,850	16,457	9,163	7,258	
1914	4,238,494	19,552	10,570	8,715	
1915	4,019,771	17,984	10,980	7,004	
1916	4,352,113	19,285	11,828	7,456	
1917	4,596,906	21,074	12,842	8,232	▼
1918	5,273,518	24,562	14,416	10,146	£2,118
1919	4,745,592	30,731	19,379	11,352	£1,206
1920	5,489,832	36,134	29,268	6,865	(£3,227)
1921	5,674,111	39,390	34,364	5,025	(£4,272)
1922	5,226,547	36,563	27,464	9,099	£1,261
1923	5,304,508	35,847	24,164	11,682	£1,048
1924	5,401,612	36,064	24,070	11,994	£5,140
1925	5,261,664	34,654	25,304	9,350	£2,098
1926	5,202,031	35,217	26,317	8,900	£1,653
1927	5,263,525	34,197	24,934	9,263	(£1,507)
1928	5,743,663	31,331	25,160	6,788	(£4,142)
1929	4,985,553	25,991	23,907	2,916	(£6,899)
1930	5,662,438	29,960	24,326	5,634	(£4,222)
1931	5,282,807	27,531	21,361	6,170	(£3,450)
1932	3,630,704	20,617	17,541	3,076	To 31/12/31 only



The original style of uniform, suggesting a Dundee influence.



Later, a Glasgow style of uniform in green serge was adopted.

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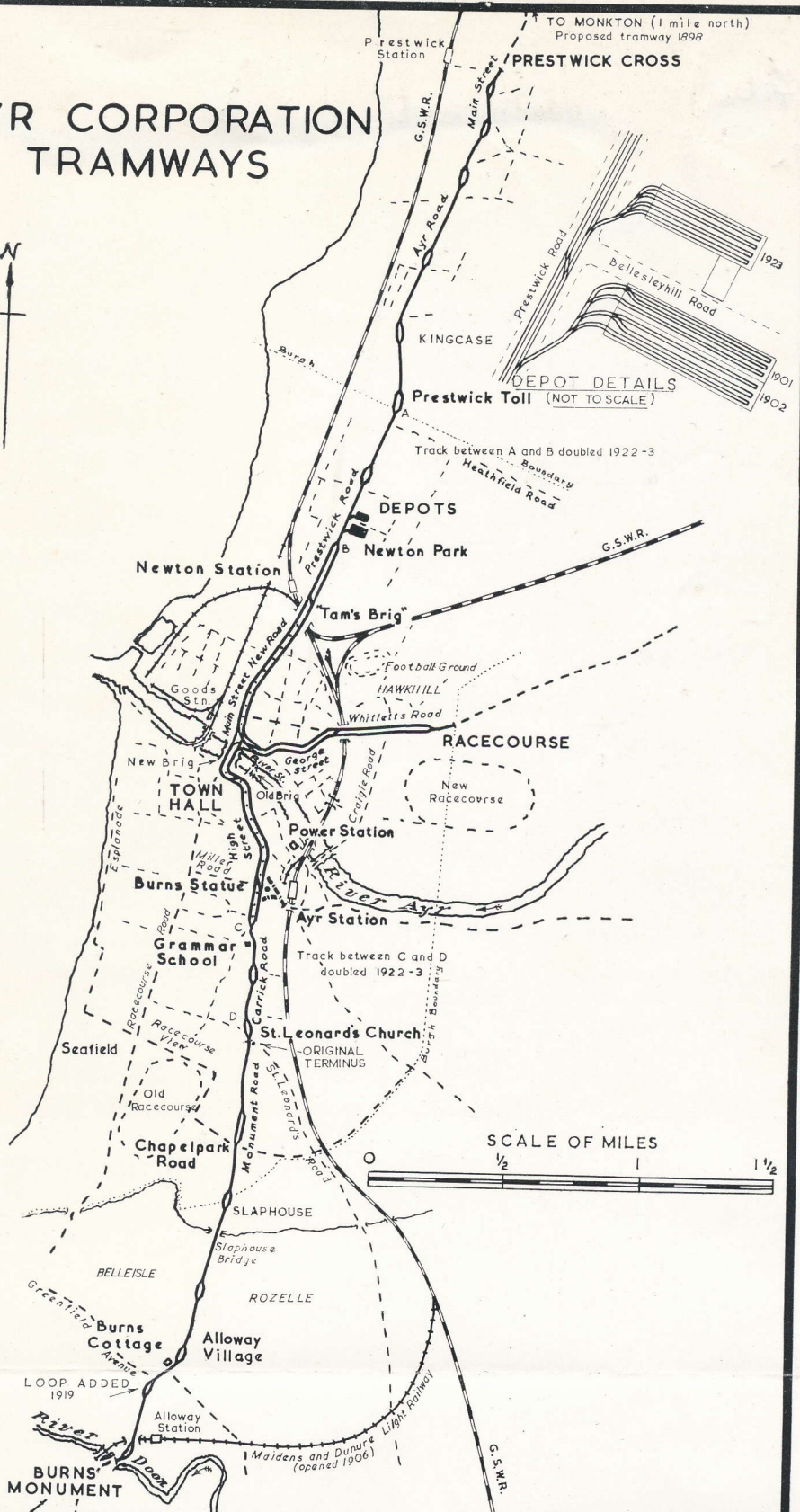
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