

The Golden Miles



OFFICIAL BROCHURE
£9.95



I think it is an understatement to say that the Blackpool Tramway is one of Blackpool's greatest selling points. For many it is the epitome of Blackpool as a holiday resort. No trip to Blackpool is complete without a ride on a tram and it has been that way since 1885.

Blackpool has grown thanks to the tram network which now reaches to our neighbours in Fleetwood. I am a huge fan of the trams and like others have been amazed at how they have survived for so long and remain as popular now as they always were.

Since the installation of the tramway Blackpool has remained faithful to maintaining and updating the network. When others ripped up their tracks Blackpool continued to operate and invest in its trams to provide transport for holidaymakers to all areas of the town. I think it is safe to say that, had we not made this investment, Blackpool would not be the resort you see today.

That popularity is what must feed the trams for the future. As wonderful as it would be to keep the tramway exactly as it was it is not possible and we must also look to the future and make the necessary repairs and upgrades to ensure the survival of the network. Our new trams are currently being built and when they arrive in 2011 we will have 16 brand new, 32-metre long trams capable of carrying up to 80 seated passengers and able to cut journey times by 15 minutes. The investment of £101 million from the Department of Transport and the Council will see the iconic tramway brought up to date and able to serve the town for many more years but none of it would be possible without the history that has built it, a history which must be appreciated.

Councillor Don Clapham, Mayor of Blackpool

The Golden Miles

***A Celebration of 125 years of trams
in the Borough of Blackpool***



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INTRODUCTION

This Celebratory Brochure marks a landmark of which Blackpool can be proud, and an event which is recognised worldwide for its significance – 125 years of tramway operation by the oldest electric street tramway in the world. Within its pages readers will find a brief history, illustrated by photographs, drawings, postcards and ephemera to set the scene.

Blackpool Transport Services are laying on a series of events to mark the occasion, culminating in a Celebratory Procession of Tramcars on the Anniversary, September 29th, 2010. Not all the trams originally planned to take part will be there, for even the most pampered of veterans sometimes are unavailable. Others will visit but briefly before returning to continue giving pleasure to visitors at Museums who instantly recognise, and want to ride on, a Blackpool tram.

We salute these Ambassadors of the town, and wish their successors well in the years to come.



Pleasure Beach loop on **Totally Transport** day,
July 2010. (Geoff Senior)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication could not have been produced without the assistance of a great many people who have given freely of their time and been pleased to be involved in such a momentous occasion. A full list of those involved is shown on the inside rear cover but we would like to record here our especial thanks to Bryan Lindop of Blackpool Transport Services who has provided support and encouragement throughout at a time when reorganisation and the arrangements for the event itself were taking all his time, and we are grateful to him for his help.



Three of the Blackpool icons are seen together in this evocative view at the North Pier. In front of the Tower stands the newly refurbished Western Train, a centrepiece of the trams' contribution to the Illuminations, and splendidly recreated with the assistance of a £278,000 Heritage Lottery Grant which enabled the much-loved and eye-catching vehicles to be rebuilt in the Rigby Road workshops where the train had first been created way back in 1962. (Dave Cole, courtesy Heritage Lottery Fund)



The development of Blackpool as a seaside resort predates the electric trams by more than one hundred years. It is recorded that local hoteliers were advertising in the *Manchester Mercury* by 1780 and that a stagecoach service was operating between Manchester and Blackpool in 1783. Earlier in the eighteenth century, doctors had been extolling the medicinal advantages of drinking sea water and sea bathing, thus encouraging the development of seaside resorts in Britain. The rapid development of the railways in the nineteenth century brought the opportunity for many people to travel to the coast. In 1840 a line linked Preston with Fleetwood and by 1846 the rails reached Blackpool with the opening of Talbot Road station on 29th April.

Developments on the sea-front began with the opening of the new Promenade in 1856 and Uncle Tom's Cabin in 1861. The first of Blackpool's piers, North Pier, opened in 1863 and was soon followed by the building of Central Pier in 1868. By the end of the decade a further two mile section of promenade had been constructed and horse buses were then plying for hire alongside the landaus.

In 1871 an Act of Parliament legislated for four new Bank Holidays each year, and this enabled more people to have the opportunity to visit the coast. The increased demand for travel resulted in the building of a second railway line to Blackpool and the opening in 1874 of what would be named Central Station in 1878. This boom was to be short-lived, however, as a depression in the Lancashire cotton industry meant that fewer people could afford to travel, or take holidays. The effects of this depression were felt by the traders and accommodation providers in Blackpool for several years but did not stop the development of facilities. In 1875 Dr Cockers' Aquarium and Menagerie opened to the public, on Central Beach. The same year, the Winter Gardens Company was formed and by the following year they were operating a roller-skating rink, the main pavilion opening in 1878.



Uncle Tom's Cabin from a postcard of around 1895. After cliff erosion by storms damaged the western side of this building, it finally fell into the sea. (Barry Shaw collection)

The new Winter Gardens Pavillion in 1878. (Ted Lightbown collection)

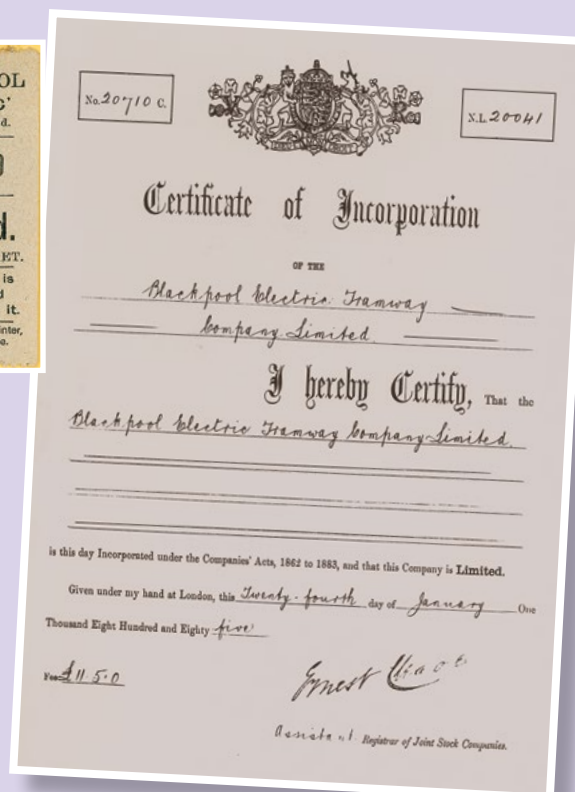


A year earlier, the North Pier had been lengthened and widened with new buildings constructed on it.

A Charter of Incorporation was granted to Blackpool in 1876 and Dr John Cocker was elected as the first Mayor. A significant event for the Promenade came in 1879 with the installation of 'arc-lights' made by the German company of Siemens. This was the first practical use of electricity for street-lighting in Britain and thousands of people came by train to see this achievement. The cables for this lighting were eventually buried underground away from the damaging effects of the sea and sand, in 1883.

The story of Blackpool's trams began in 1884 when Michael Holroyd Smith demonstrated his electric railway at the Winter Gardens and a suggestion was made that a cable-tramway, of the type operating in San Francisco, should be progressed. The method of supplying the electric current demonstrated by Holroyd Smith was through a conduit in the ground and it was this system which was chosen.

Finance for the Blackpool Electric Tramway Company was quickly raised and the first two trams were delivered before the end of 1884; these were open-top double-deckers built by the Lancaster Carriage & Wagon Company and seated 32 passengers. They were given the numbers 3 and 4. Trams 1 and 2 built by Starbuck & Co. and seating 48 followed in 1885. Another pair of double-deckers followed, Nos. 5 and 6, again from Lancaster Carriage Company but seating only 44. There were then two crossbench 56-seat cars from Starbuck, numbers 7 and 8, before two single-deck trailers carrying numbers 9 and



The Companies House file copy of the **Certificate of Incorporation** clearly shows the company name as Blackpool Tramway Company – its tickets carried the title Tramways Company as can be seen. (Companies House)
(All tickets courtesy of Brian Hughes)

Below, an early view of two conduit cars at North Pier. Number 5 is nearest the camera whilst in the background is one of the Crossbench cars, either 7 or 8. The column in the centre must be for the Siemens arc lights whose generator was on the pier. The tram's centre conduit slot in the roadway is clearly visible. (STA)

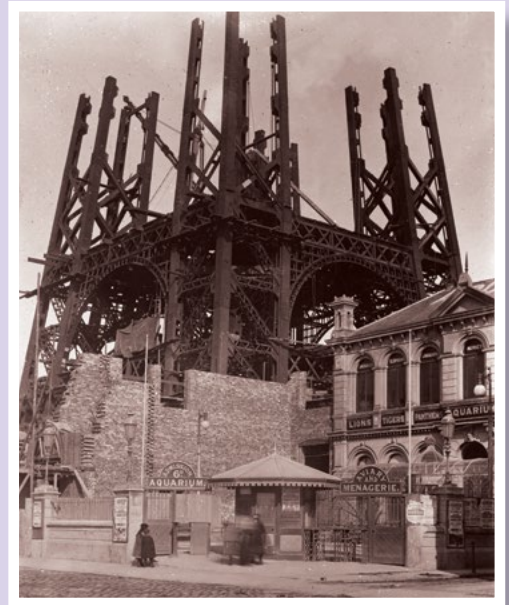


10 completed the initial fleet, all delivered by 1885. The country's first electric street tramway duly opened on 29th September 1885 between Cocker Street in the north and Station Road in the south, a distance of 1¼ miles. That year it is recorded that the population of Blackpool was about 15,000.

There was difficulty in getting approval to run the trailer cars and they ended up being used as cabmen's shelters, and being replaced in 1891 by another pair of open-top double-deckers this time from GF Milnes and carrying the same numbers. This pioneer fleet soldiered on in operating conditions which were as far from ideal as could be imagined. Since the conduit slot which housed the positive and negative return cables was underground, it provided an additional but unwanted form of drain for sea water flowing along the roadway when high tides and winds brought waves crashing over on to the promenade. This water would also carry sand and the accumulation of sand and salt water in the conduit slot caused short circuits and generally filled the area so that the collector could not pick up the current or force its way through the morass. The tram service would then be suspended, and horses would be used to haul the trams whilst the conduit slot was cleaned out – until the next high tide.

Blundell Street depot was constructed in 1898 to house the growing fleet, replacing the former tram shed, and John Lancaster was appointed Traffic Manager for the new company. The tracks were owned by the Corporation and leased to the Company since under the provisions of the 1870 Tramways Act local authorities were not allowed to operate the trams themselves.

Development of the town continued and the Opera House was opened in 1889 whilst in 1891 plans for the famous Tower were unveiled, shares were issued in the Blackpool Tower Company and the foundation stone was laid. The finished Tower was completed in 1894 and officially opened in May of that year. It can be seen from over 30 miles away.



Building of the Tower in March 1892; the finished structure was opened in May 1894. It stands some 518ft above the promenade and the Isle of Man can be seen from its platform. (Ted Lightbown collection)



The Victoria Pier was opened in 1893 and was later renamed South Pier after the Central Pier, opened in 1868, changed its name from South Pier. Notice the horse drawn wagonette on the left, a competitor to the early trams. (Barry Shaw collection)

A change of owner

The Corporation took over the ownership and operation of the tramway in 1892 and John Lancaster, the former Company Traffic Manager, was appointed as the new Manager. The tramway's potential as an asset to the growing borough and also as a money spinner were clearly recognised and the need to be able to carry considerably more passengers was addressed when the next trams were ordered – the Corporation's first. They turned out to be large bogie cars from the Lancaster Carriage & Wagon Company seating 82 as compared to a maximum of 56 in the original fleet of Company cars. Bought between 1894 and 1896 they became numbers 11-14, following on from the Company's numbering system. Their arrival enabled the opening of the Lytham Road route in September 1895.

It can be appreciated that the time taken to load and then reload these large cars would have been significant at popular stops and when the time came to place the next orders in 1898, the Shrewsbury Patent design with full-width steps at each end clearly had much appeal. These cars, soon named Dreadnoughts after the large naval battleships of the time, would become as much a part of the Blackpool scene as the Tower and the piers, as a glance at any postcards of the promenade during the next 35 years demonstrates.

Alderman William George Bean founded Blackpool Pleasure Beach in 1896 and bought the 42-acre site on which the Pleasure Beach now stands. Various rides, including the



The different staircase arrangements are clearly seen in these two end views, with Conduit car 4 on the left. By good fortune both Conduit car 4 and Dreadnought 59 are preserved at the National Tramway Museum at Crich, in Derbyshire. Unfortunately neither car will be participating in the 2010 procession although the 1885 car is still in operating order.

(All drawings courtesy of Transport Artist Ian Stewart)

Central Pier and Promenade around 1899. The two Dreadnought cars are equipped with 20ft long trolley poles to reach the overhead wires strung at the roadside. The pagoda-like towers were a distinctive feature of this pier. (Barry Shaw collection)



still-popular Sir Hiram Maxim Flying Machines, were introduced to the area. The original Big Wheel opened in 1896 and the next few years saw further development of the tramways with the Station Road line, linking to the Lytham Road route, opening in 1897.

Plans for a route between Fleetwood and Blackpool resulted in the formation of the Blackpool & Fleetwood Tramroad Company, operating powers being granted by Act of Parliament. For this route depots at Copse Road and Bispham were opened in 1896 and 1897, with Bold Street, Fleetwood opening in 1898. The new tramway which opened on 29th September 1898 was on reserved track between Ash Street, Fleetwood and the Gynn, Blackpool. There were ten level-crossings and the line was protected by iron fences. Thirteen Crossbench cars bought to start the service were followed by ten 48-seat single-deck saloons with corner entrances purchased from GF Milnes. Four more arrived in 1914 and number 40 has been preserved and may appear in the celebratory procession. Similar cars still operate on the Manx Electric Railway, which until the takeover of the B&F in 1919 shared some common management.



Trams queue prudently awaiting the waves to subside. The volume of sand laden water coming over onto the promenade shows quite clearly why the original conduit operation struggled in bad weather. (Peter Elliot collection)

Moving the tram tracks westwards in 1900 gave the opportunity to widen and realign the roadway. (Barry Shaw collection)





The first two Dreadnought trams for Blackpool Corporation, Nos.15 and 16, arrived in 1898. With 86 seats these were the largest cars yet purchased, but still conduit operated. As stated earlier the conduit system had proved very troublesome due to sand and sea-water collecting in the trough. Although the people of Blackpool had been opposed to the use of overhead wires to supply the current, regarding them and the poles needed to support them as unsightly, elsewhere, this was the method in use by most other tramways.

After considerable discussion, including concerns, unfounded but apparently plausible and supported by the Board of Trade, about the danger of high winds bringing down the overhead wires common sense eventually prevailed and the BoT approved the conversion to overhead current collection on 21st June 1899 subject to the use of bracket arms. The trams were then modified for this new system over the Winter of that year. For a few months both conduit and trolley-pole cars were in use at the same

Talbot Square around 1905, with Yates Wine Lodge prominent in the centre, and a Marton Box car for Marton on the right in the picture, and a Lancaster Carriage Company car heading for Layton Cemetery. The Town Hall spire has been trimmed out of the picture – it lasted as a distinctive landmark until 1966. (BTS)



time until all the fleet had been modified. In 1900 the tramway was extended along the new North Promenade to the Gynn, opening in May, and another ten Dreadnoughts were delivered in that year, becoming Nos. 17-26. These cars from the Midland Railway Carriage and Wagon Company were even larger than their predecessors with seating for 93 passengers, the highest to that time in Blackpool.

A start was now made on expanding the tramway to serve parts of Blackpool away from the promenade, the route to Marton opening on 23rd May 1901, where a new depot was constructed. Fifteen new trams were delivered that year, Nos. 27-41, again from the Midland Carriage Company, but this time 4-wheeled open-toppers for the Marton route. Number 31 from this batch has been preserved in its later guise as an open-top bogie car and will feature in the celebratory procession. Another electrical innovation came to Blackpool in 1901 when the Alhambra Company installed an escalator which they had seen at the Paris International Exhibition.

National events were to the forefront when Queen Victoria died in 1901, and the Coronation of Edward VII took place the following year; to celebrate this occasion some trams were specially decorated. Expansion of the tramway continued and another twelve cars, Nos. 42-53, arrived that year this time from Hurst, Nelson of Motherwell giving the cars their name – Motherwells. It was in this year that Charles Furness was appointed as Borough Electrical Engineer. By the end of the year eight more Dreadnoughts arrived, numbered 54-61, and a new route to Layton was opened on 19th June.

The first motor speed trials were held on the promenade in 1904 – the year Blackpool became a County Borough – when a hair-raising record of 84mph was recorded. Between 1902 and 1905 work was undertaken to widen the promenade and the tramway was laid out on a segregated track, eliminating the last sections of single track and giving exclusive right-of-way from South Shore to Talbot Square. The Royal Pavilion, Blackpool's first purpose-built cinema, opened in 1909.

North Pier with two of the Dreadnoughts seemingly well laden. Their long trolley poles are just discernable. The frontal layout of the pier has changed several times over the years and now incorporates a bespoke tram enthusiast's emporium. (Barry Shaw collection)



HOTEL METROPOLE AND PROMENADE, BLACKPOOL.



One of the large Lancaster Carriage Company cars seen from Talbot Square. The Hotel Metropole stands as it still does today – right in the line of the tramway; many have been the times when the Tramway Managers sought to get round the other side of it. Bovril adverts were carried on many cars but advertising was discontinued from March 1919 on the Corporation's trams. This ban would encompass the B&F cars when they came into Corporation ownership, though trams from both fleets would continue to carry their advertisements until the various contracts expired. (Peter Elliot collection)

North Promenades, Blackpool



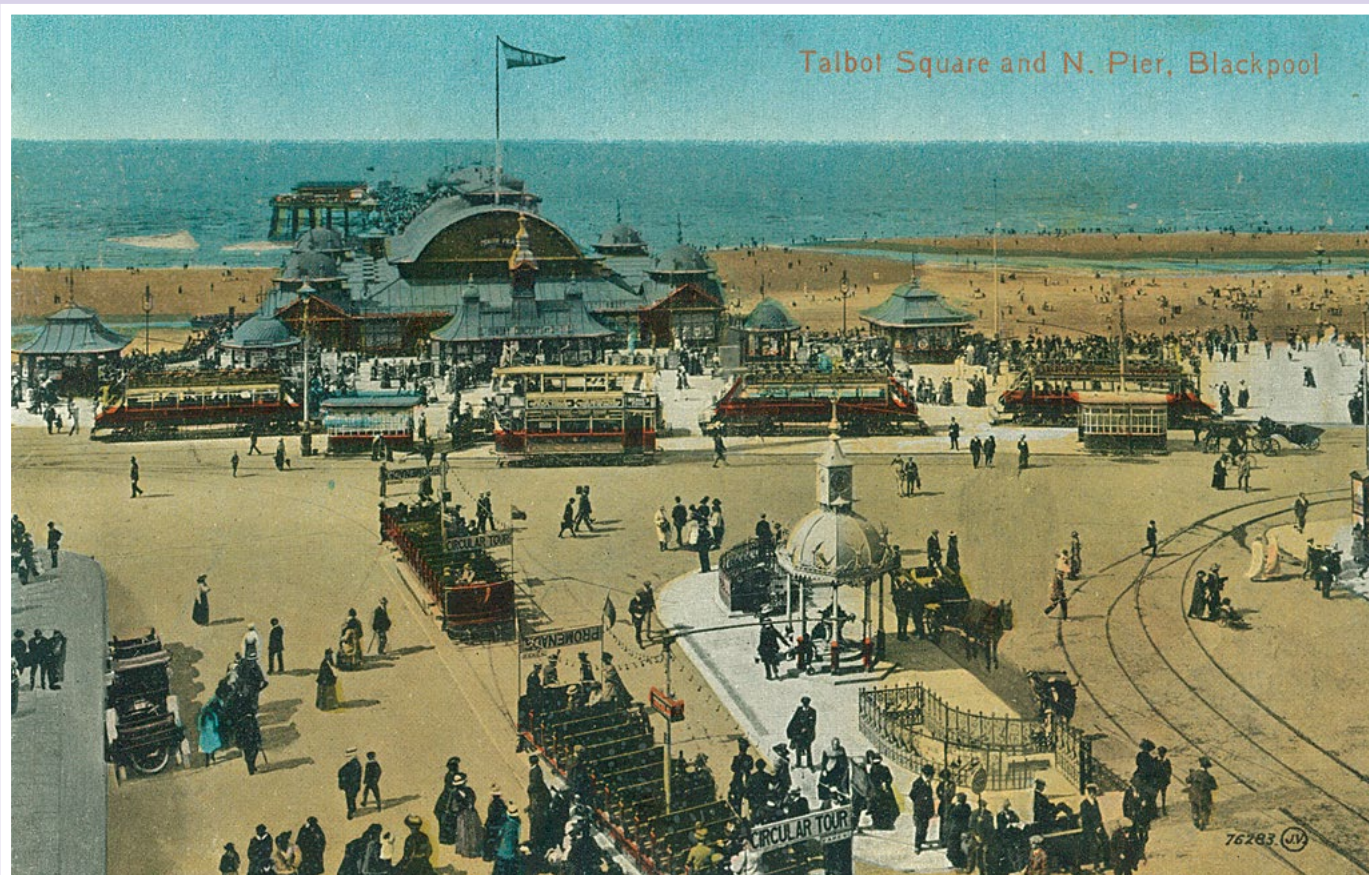
A Dreadnought drops down to the Metropole, the double tracks sharing the roadway with what little other traffic there was at the time. The roadway would be widened in 1923 to allow the trams to have their own right of way to the Gynn, as they do to this day. (Peter Elliot collection)

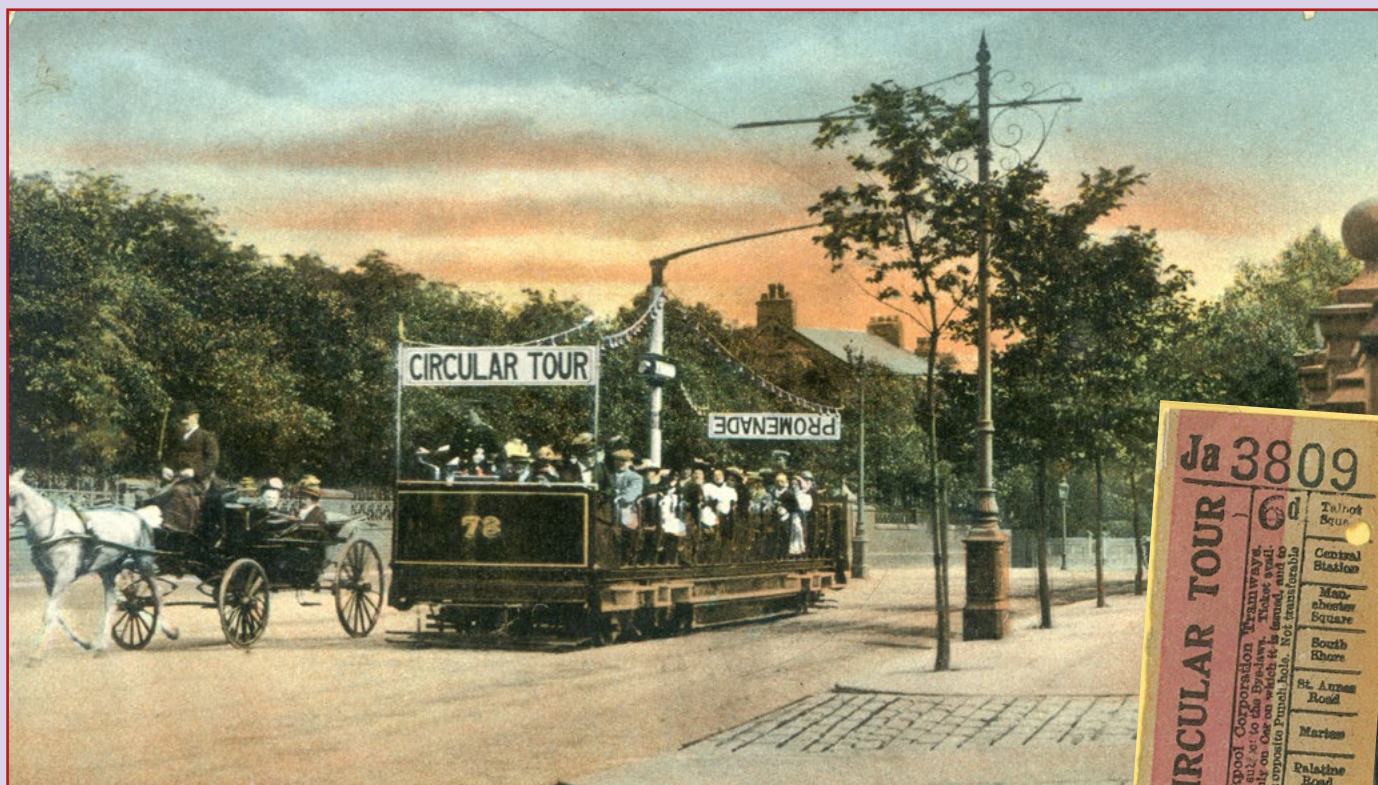
The Gynn terminus showing a Corporation Dreadnought and one of the Tramroad Company's open sided cars. Compare this with the view on page 18.

(Barry Shaw collection)



Photographs taken from the Town Hall or elsewhere in Talbot Square made excellent postcards and none better for our story than this view taken around 1912 and showing three Dreadnoughts, a top-covered Marton Box car, and three Toastracks on Circular Tour duties. (Peter Elliot collection)



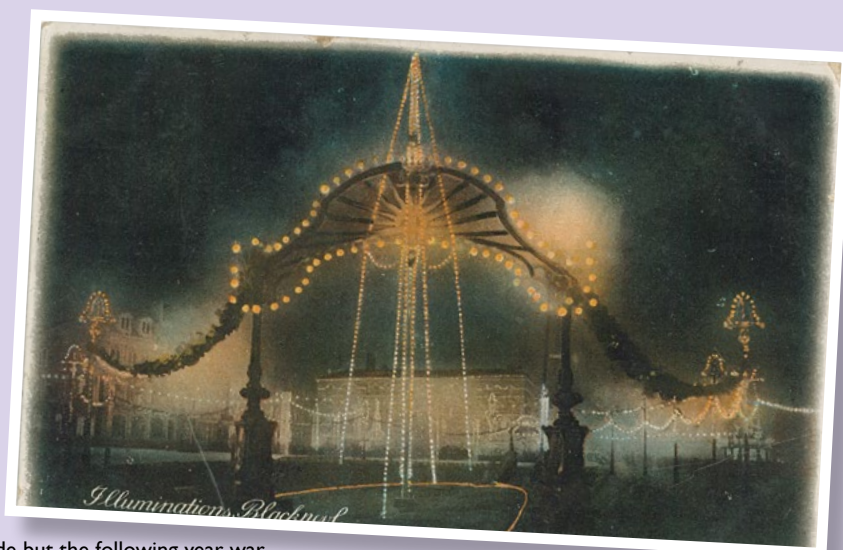


John Lancaster died in 1910 and Charles Furness was appointed Manager in addition to his duties as Borough Electrical Engineer. Increased patronage of the Pleasure Beach resulted in a four-track layout being adopted at that end of the line during that year; this allowed four Dreadnoughts to clear some 440 passengers at one fell swoop. All of the trams were still open-top but in 1911 the twelve Motherwell cars (42-53) were fitted with top covers and seven new de-luxe double-deckers were delivered, Nos. 62-68, the first three being four-wheelers. These were followed by the first of the famous Toastracks, Nos. 69-92, and Circular Tours commenced that year.

The fifteen Marton box cars (27-41) were fitted with top covers in 1912, the year the first Illuminations took place, but in 1914 'The Lights' were suspended along with the Circular Tours because of the War. That same fateful year saw the extension of the sea wall from the Gynn to Bispham whilst three years later the Borough boundary was extended to take in Bispham with Norbreck.

The first illuminations were modest affairs, being lit in May and September 1912, on Princess Parade only. However, in 1913 they were extended to the full length of the Promenade but the following year war put paid to them and it would be 1925 before they returned. Their effect on the revenue of the tramway that year was stunning, over one million extra passengers using the Promenade trams whilst the lights were switched on. (Peter Elliot collection)

The Circular Tours on these new open trams were a great success – more trams would be built, at Rigby Road, during the later 1920s to cater for the brisk demand. This sylvan scene is on Whitegate Drive and it was the custom to photograph each car, with its passengers clearly in view, and then to have prints on sale for purchase soon afterwards. Photography was still a novelty for many people and roving cameramen would patrol the Promenade taking snaps of the passers-by – giving them a ticket and the advice "prints ready at 4pm on the pier", or words to similar effect. (Barry Shaw collection)



Victoria Pier and Promenade, Blackpool



A solitary motor car can be seen amongst the horse drawn carriages, Dreadnought trams and new Toastracks on the Circular Tour in this view at Victoria Pier. The three track layout leading north into a short stretch of single line is noteworthy. (Peter Elliot collection)



Circular Tours were both popular and lucrative, and the success of the toastrack trams prompted conversion of single-deck buses to perform the same function, though obviously not on the same route. The Corporation had by now taken note of the stylish advertising and promotional material the former Tramroad Company had used. (BTS both items)



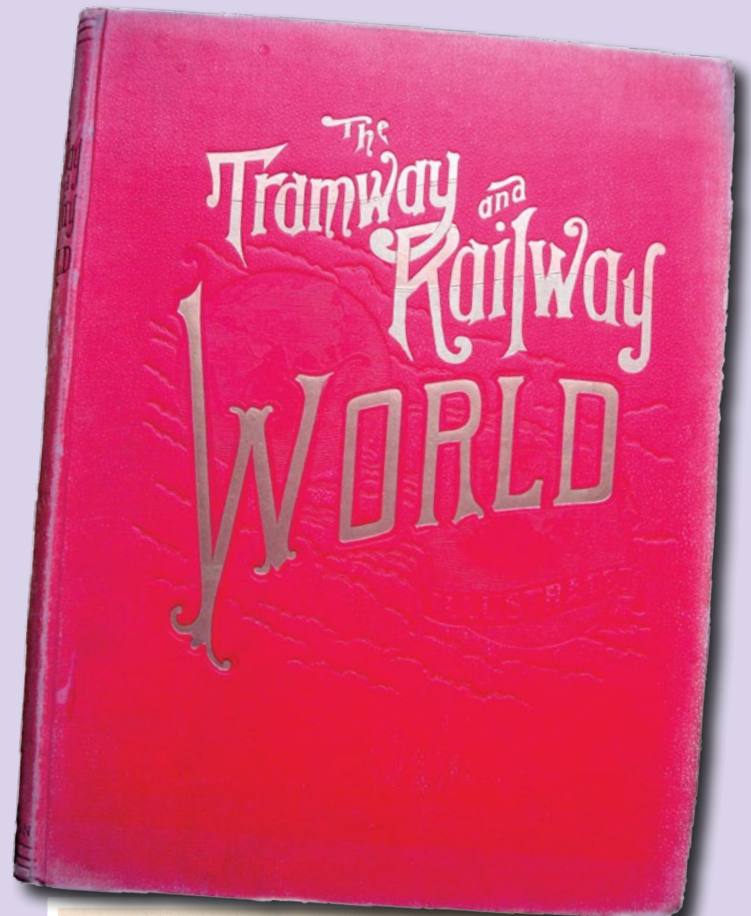
During the Great War the Department's workforce, by then augmented with women to stand in for men away in the forces, were involved in the production of munitions. Vast numbers of shell cases were produced and the profit from this exercise was used to fund the building of the Cenotaph during the 1920s.

Charles Furness presented a major report to the Council in November 1918 and although not all its proposals were adopted, it paved the way for the future of the undertaking very significantly. He put forward the proposed unification of the three tramway systems, adding Lytham St Annes and the Blackpool & Fleetwood Company lines to the Borough's own network. In doing so he foresaw the need to provide integrated transport for the Greater Blackpool area. Whilst Lytham decided to remain alone, the Company lines were taken over soon afterwards as we shall shortly see.

He also proposed the creation of central workshops with modern machinery and paintshops, a new depot, and replacement of the older cars by more modern ones. It was a bold and far-seeing plan, designed to see the Borough's tramways through the next 20 years, and would require acquisition of additional land and expenditure of some £800,000 without the Lytham St Annes element, since the value of that undertaking had not then been established.

The availability of the aircraft hangars erected to enable wartime munition production was fortuitous and their acquisition was quickly ratified, along with the additional land required. Unfortunately there was division within the ranks, for whilst Furness was keen to upgrade and extend the tramway there were those in the Council who were firmly convinced that the way forward lay with the new motor buses. Until the late 'twenties, whilst new buses were placed on order, no new trams were authorised. Rebuilding of older cars in the new workshops therefore became a vital part of the strategy of improving the fleet, and the degree of rebuilding was considerable, leading to the creation of what were in effect new cars. It was this policy which created the Standard trams which served the town for the next 50 years.

Whilst there can be no doubt that although parts of the scheme were put on hold in the 'twenties due to the parlous state of the Nation's economy, much of the rest of what he was proposing was blocked by the council in an on-going and often bitter battle, fuelled by the losses which the buses would accumulate and the charge that Furness was not competent to be in charge – of which more later. The balance of his proposals would be awaiting fulfilment in the



BLACKPOOL TRAMWAYS UNIFICATION.

A REPORT BY MR. CHARLES FURNESS,
Borough Electrical Engineer and Tramways General Manager.

The proposed unification of the several tramway systems of Blackpool is the subject of a report which has been recently prepared for the Blackpool Corporation by Mr. C. Furness, borough electrical engineer and tramways general manager. The report is of so much interest and importance, not only to the local authority concerned but to all those who realise how necessary is the connecting up of adjacent tramway systems, that we give it in full.

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE PROPOSED UNIFICATION OF			
Blackpool Corporation Tramways ...	21½	miles	single track.
Blackpool and Fleetwood Tramways...	15	"	"
Blackpool, St. Annes, and Lytham			
Tramways	11½	"	"

Total miles single track ... 48

"The prosperity of Greater Blackpool in the future will in no small measure depend upon the transportation facilities provided by the Corporation in enabling its residents and visitors to travel with ease and comfort to and from any part of the borough over the municipalised tramways of the Blackpool and Fleetwood Tramroad Company, and the Blackpool, St. Annes, and Lytham Tramways."

"The capital expenditure on the tramways undertaking of the Corporation for the year ending March 31st, 1918, amounted to £317,000, and with the additional capital commitments of £270,000 for the property of the Blackpool and Fleetwood Tramroad Company, and the prospective purchase at its material value of the tramways of the Blackpool, St. Annes, and Lytham Company in the year 1921, together with the developments proposed in connection with our own tramways, viz., the extension of the promenade track southwards to link up with the St. Annes lines at Squire's Gate; the extension of the New Road route to Hoo Hill; the linking up of the Fleetwood lines at the Gynn; the provision of new car repairing and engineering workshops and administrative offices at Rigby Road and the purchase of new rolling stock, etc., will bring up the capital expenditure of the tramways for the operation of a unified system to approximately £800,000 within six years of the scheme receiving the sanction of the Board of Trade.

"A new tramways depot, with car repairing workshops and engineering plant of modern construction, will be required, and I have made a preliminary survey of Rigby Road Highway Yard, and consider this site an ideal one for an up-to-date central tramways department capable of dealing with the transportation business of the borough and district for the next 20 years, and recommend that at least four acres be rented or sold to the Tramways Committee for the purposes of this development."

early 'thirties when things improved. In contrast the industry's trade journal – *The Tramway & Railway World* – considered the Report so important it printed it in full, and extracts are included here.

The only second-hand trams purchased by Blackpool came in this immediate post-war period and were six Milnes open-top bogie cars, Nos. 93-98, built in 1901 and bought from London United Tramways where they had become surplus and had been placed in store.

After the War there was a gradual return of men from the forces, and the departure of women who had been doing their work or producing munitions for the war effort.

More significantly, so far as the long-term situation of the tramway was concerned, the 21-year lease on the tracks within the Borough boundary used by the Blackpool & Fleetwood Tramroad Company along Dickson Road between North Station and the Gynn Inn was due to expire and in the light of the Furness Report (and perhaps prior to that Report) Blackpool did not intend to renew it.

Thwarted in his desire to order new trams to replace those which were worn out, or just no longer suitable for the demands being placed on them, Charles Furness took advantage of the new workshops – one thing he had been allowed to proceed with – and under the guise of repairs and rebuilding put top covers on some cars, lengthened and top-covered others, and converted four-wheelers to bogie cars. It is to his lasting credit that from this exercise the famous Standards were to be born, cars which were solid, reliable, and still running when more modern replacements had had their day.

Two of his bogie creations are seen here: Car 43 was a former Motherwell car, delivered in 1902 as an open-topper but now with enclosed upper saloon and open balconies. Number 30 had been delivered in the previous year as one of 15 Marton Box cars and has had a similar exercise carried out. Sister car 31 survives in open-top form and will travel from the Beamish Museum in North East England to join the procession and celebrations.

Electric Tramcar Handbook

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By W. A. AGNEW.

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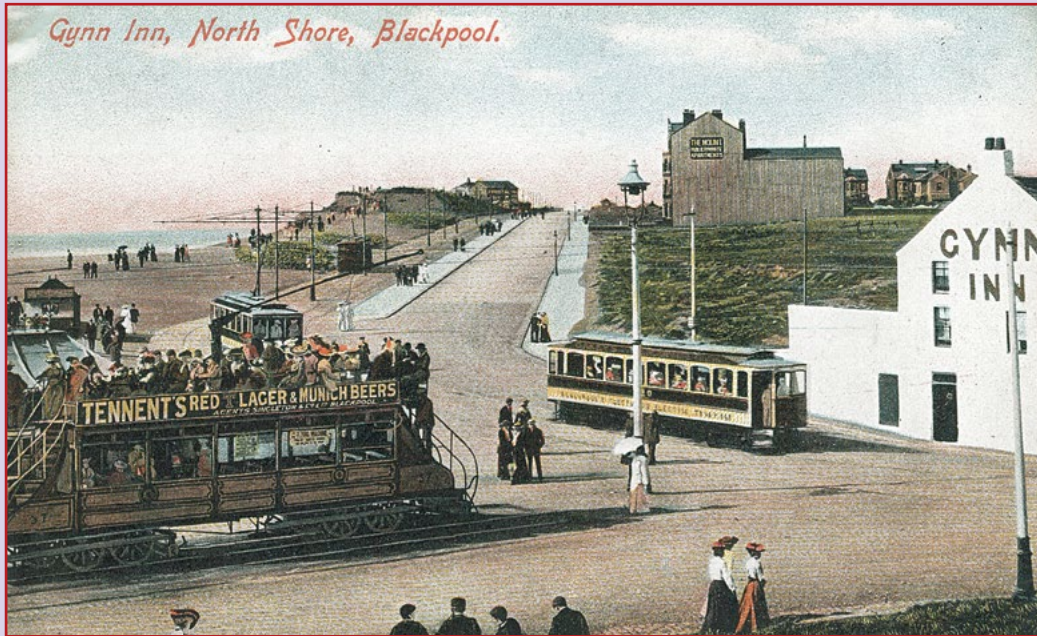
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extracts and advertisements from
the Senior Transport Archive.



Tramroad take-over

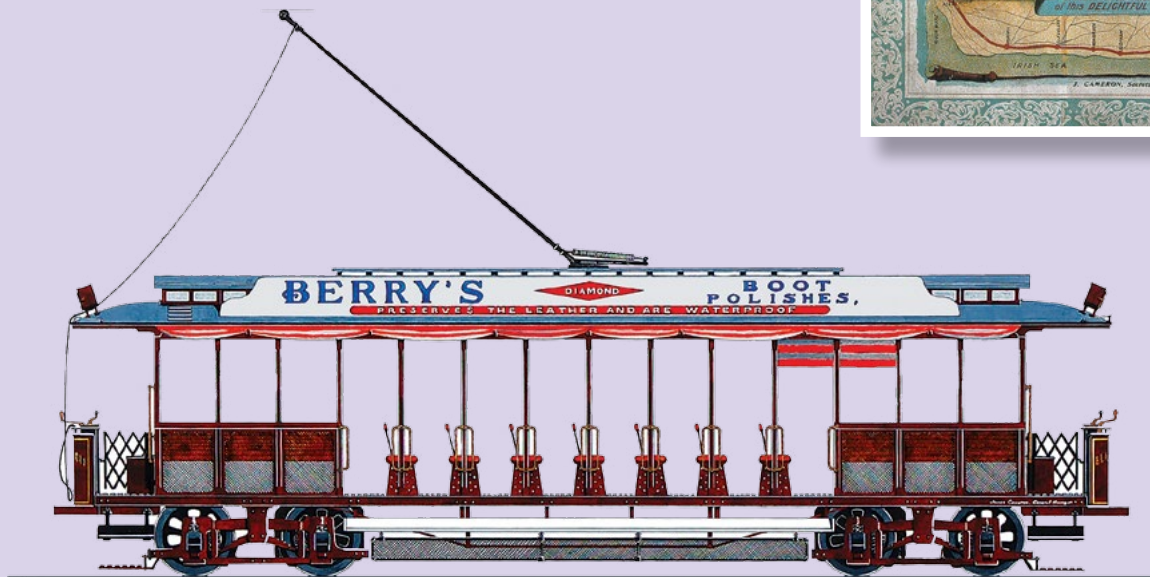
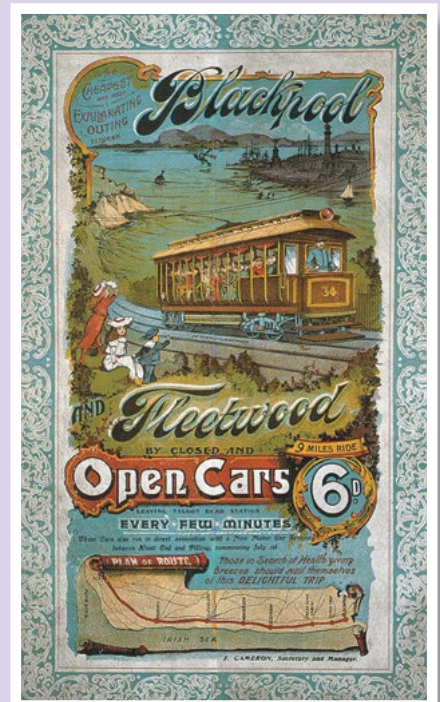


The Gynn Inn where the Corporation's cars terminated, as shown by the waiting Dreadnought, whilst the Tramroad Company's cars from North Station to Fleetwood passed on their unconnected line. An example of the enclosed box cars seen here has been preserved – Box 40 – and similar cars can still be seen running on the Manx Electric Railway which shared common management with B&F until the Corporation take over in 1919.

(Barry Shaw collection)

Negotiations then took place between the representatives of the two parties which resulted in the acquisition on 31st December 1919 of the Blackpool & Fleetwood Tramroad Company by the Borough, thanks to the intervention and actual purchase by the Mayor, Alderman Lindsay; this acquisition included 41 trams, seven miles of tramroad, three depots and a power station. It paralleled similar action later in Lytham where action by the Council allowed purchase of the Tramway Company for the Borough in October 1920.

These B&F trams were a mixed bunch, none bearing any resemblance to the cars in the Corporation's stock, but in superior condition having been better maintained than those in the Borough. They were quickly renumbered 101-141 in the Blackpool fleet and the tracks connected to the Blackpool system at the Gynn and Talbot Road. The Central Repair Works plan having been implemented – they were opened in 1920 – £254,343 was allocated for track relaying and improvements including the Gynn junction and the Dickson Road line to Talbot Road (later North) Station.





There were eleven of these distinctive trams in the B&F all single-deck fleet, number 24 being the last of the second batch and delivered in 1899. A further five similar cars were purchased in 1914/5 and thanks to its having been used as a works car, number 40 was still available for restoration for the 1960 75th Anniversary. By good fortune B&F number 2, an open-sided toastrack of 1898, has also survived. (Ted Lightbown collection)



B&F publicity was colourful and plentiful, and amongst other incentives to use the line were combined tram and steamer tickets as shown above with a paddle steamer of the type passengers could travel on illustrated overleaf. (BTS)

— THE —
BLACKPOOL & FLEETWOOD TRAMROAD CO.

TIME TABLE.

Commencing on the 1st October, 1898, and until further notice, Electric Cars will leave DICKSON ROAD for FLEETWOOD, at 7-0, 8-0, and 9-0 a.m., and afterwards every half-hour until 6-0 p.m., and every hour till 11-0 p.m.

Cars will leave Fleetwood for Blackpool at 6-45, 7-45, and 8-45 a.m., and afterwards every half-hour until 5-45 p.m., and every hour until 9-45 p.m. A late Car will leave Fleetwood at 10-15 p.m.

* SUNDAYS. *

Cars will leave Blackpool at 9-0 a.m., and Fleetwood at 9-15 a.m., and every half-hour until 5-0 p.m. from Blackpool, and 5-15 p.m. from Fleetwood, and afterwards hourly until 10-0 p.m.

Additional Cars will be run between the times stated above as required to meet the traffic.

FARES.

DICKSON ROAD to or from GYNN INN	- - 1d.
" " UNCLE TOM'S CABIN	- - 2d.
" " BISPHAM AND NORBRECK	- - 3d.
" " CLEVELEYS	- - 4d.
" " ROSSALL	- - 5d.
" " FLEETWOOD	- - 6d.

CHILDREN IN ARMS FREE.

JOHN CAMERON,
Bispham, October 1st, 1898.
SECRETARY and MANAGER.

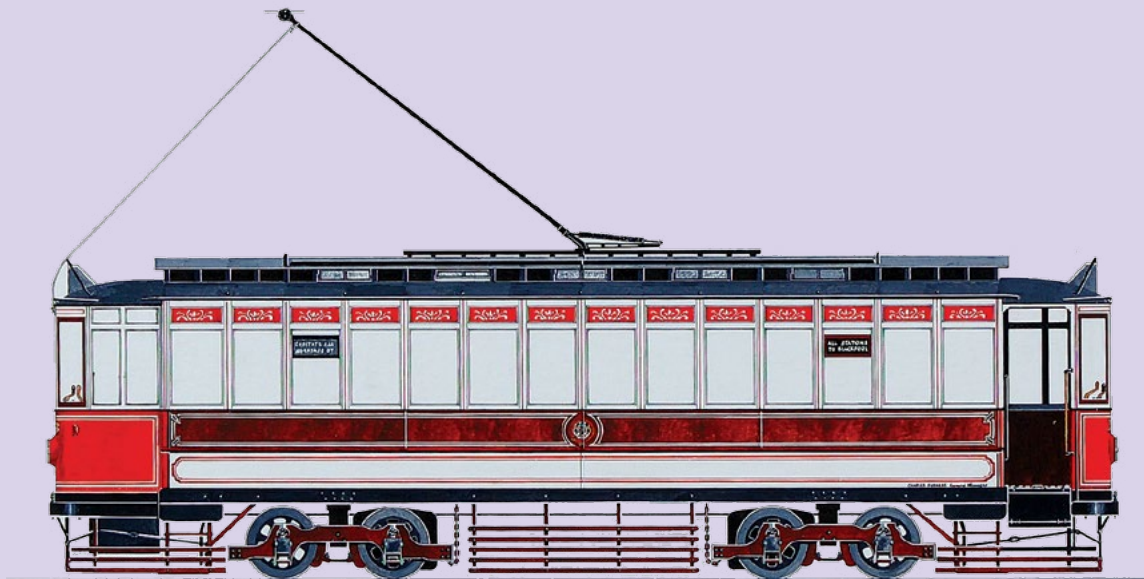


This work created additional space immediately south of the Dickson Road line junction and would later allow Lytham Corporation cars to terminate here instead of, as previously, at North Pier. The next year the old Gynn Inn was demolished and Devonshire Road was built between Talbot Road and Bispham.

Two further developments on the sea-front took place in 1923 when the promenade was widened beyond Gynn Square and the open-air swimming pool was opened at South Shore. For many years the pool was as much a part of the Blackpool scene as was the Tower, being shown on many postcards and posters. The following ten years saw the building of open-air pools at resorts all around the British coast, but changing tastes mean that only

Queen of the North was one of the many paddle steamers which plied between Blackpool and Fleetwood, and further afield – there were also sail and screw steamers. Round trips by tram and boat were one more facility offered to entice visitors to make use of the tramway. (Barry Shaw collection)

Rebuilding the previously open-sided cars gave passengers protection from the elements and bought time until replacements could be secured.



a very small number are still in use now. That same year, tram No. 33 was rebuilt to become the first Standard; the Fleetwood tram terminus was moved to the Ferry terminal in 1924 and a start was made rebuilding the former B&F 'Yankee' cars (so named because of their American controllers and motors) as totally enclosed single-deckers pending obtaining more suitable all-year-round rolling stock for the Talbot Road Station to Fleetwood service.

The Illuminations resumed in 1925 and the remains of Marton Box car No. 28 were rebuilt as an illuminated Gondola for the event, remaining in service until 1962. The 'rebuilding programme' left very little of the original tram's structure intact; salvaging parts for reuse was often more costly than producing new components. What remained was usually worthless.

However, the 'Lights' generated an additional one million passengers using the trams on the promenade that season, giving a welcome boost to revenue, and stretching the tram fleet and employees to the limit during this hectic period. For visitors and residents wishing to enjoy a quieter form of relaxation the first part of the magnificent Stanley Park was laid out on reclaimed land and opened that year whilst the former B&F depot in Bold Street Fleetwood was disconnected from the street track.

Developments on the tramway in 1926 included the rebuilding of De Luxe Nos. 62-4 from four-wheelers to bogie cars as part of the continuing upgrade of the rolling stock, this work steadily increasing the total carrying capacity of the fleet. Following the work at the Gynn, and replacement of the former Tramroad Company tracks, double-deckers then operated as far as Bispham, and the new layout allowed Lytham Corporation trams to begin running through to Gynn Square.

This was the Golden Jubilee year of the Borough and to commemorate this another illuminated tram was created, again from a Marton Box car, this time using the remains of No. 40; it became a remarkably accurate representation of a lifeboat using the RNLI's Samuel Fletcher, conveniently housed in the lifeboat house on the promenade, for reference; it was appropriately named *Jubilee*, continuing



The Gondola and Lifeboat seen inside Rigby Road depot in 1957 before starting their evening trips touring the lights. Access to both was via small ladders, one just visible in the upper picture, with the passengers needing assistance from members of the Department to climb aboard. The difficulty in getting in and out of these trams may have hastened their end, for evacuation on the Promenade could have been difficult. The final decision, however, was one of safety related to the use of traction voltage for the wiring of the lights. The Progress pseudo double-decker, partly obscured by a depot pillar, appears again later. (John A Senior both)

in service alongside the Gondola until safety concerns caused the withdrawal of both. Number 40's replacement Standard tram would eventually become Britain's last operational balcony car.

The General Strike in May 1926 caused a cessation of services between 4th and 13th of that month while the miners' strike later brought a curtailment of the newly reinstated Illuminations, but they were switched back on for just one night, 2nd October, for the official opening of the now-completed Stanley Park and the new South Promenade, both ceremonies being performed by Lord Derby. It was in this busy year that the tram route was extended south from the Pleasure Beach to Starr Gate where the turning circle was created, putting the trams in prime position to be seen and used by incoming visitors.

Despite all this positive work the spiralling losses in the bus finances continued to be the cause of great acrimony in the Committee with Charles Furness being held up as solely responsible and, allegedly, incompetent. His principal *bête noir* was Councillor Tatham, with his bus lobby, but the constant sniping eventually came to a head and Furness resigned his position in 1926. There was a huge backlash of support for him, not least in the town, and the shamefaced Committee were obliged to back down and ask him to withdraw his resignation – which he did, but now with a better standing.

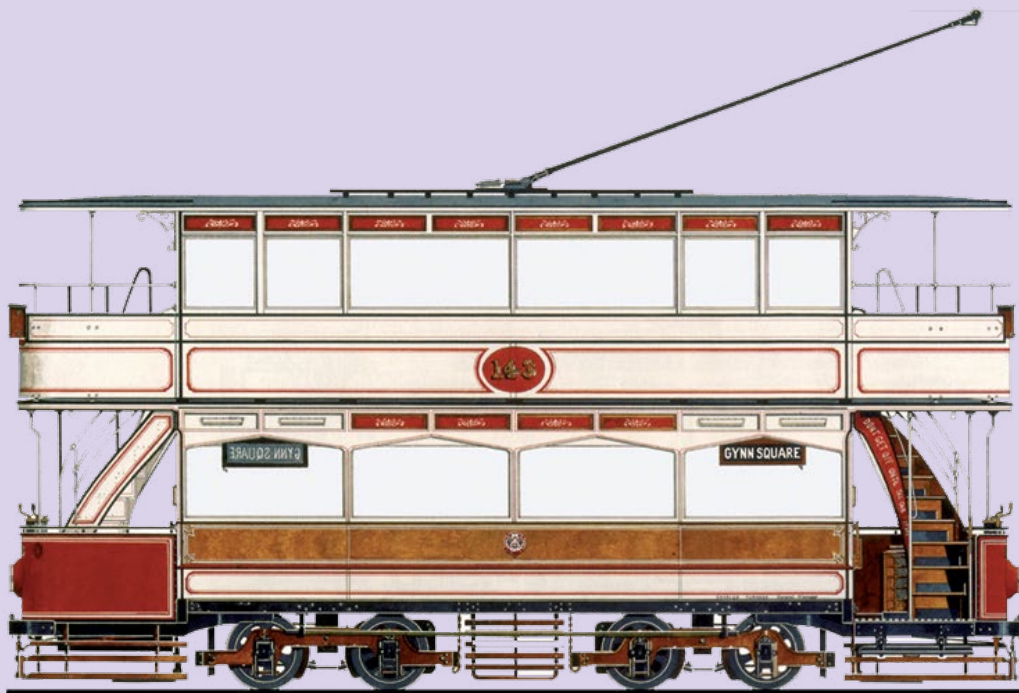
Thornton Gate sidings were opened in 1927 honouring an agreement made when the Tramroad Company was purchased, and used for the movement of coal traffic; an electric locomotive was purchased from Dick, Kerr Ltd for use on these duties. (Like many other Blackpool vehicles it survives in preservation, finding a useful role at the Crich Tramway Museum after its working life in Blackpool was over.)

In the works Hurst, Nelson cars Nos. 42-53 were rebuilt with



The Electric Locomotive in its new home at the National Tramway Museum, Crich. (John A Senior)

The Standard cars evolved through top-covered open ended to all-enclosed; initially the driver's platform was open, but vestibules were later added, leaving just the balconies open for those passengers who still loved the fresh air.

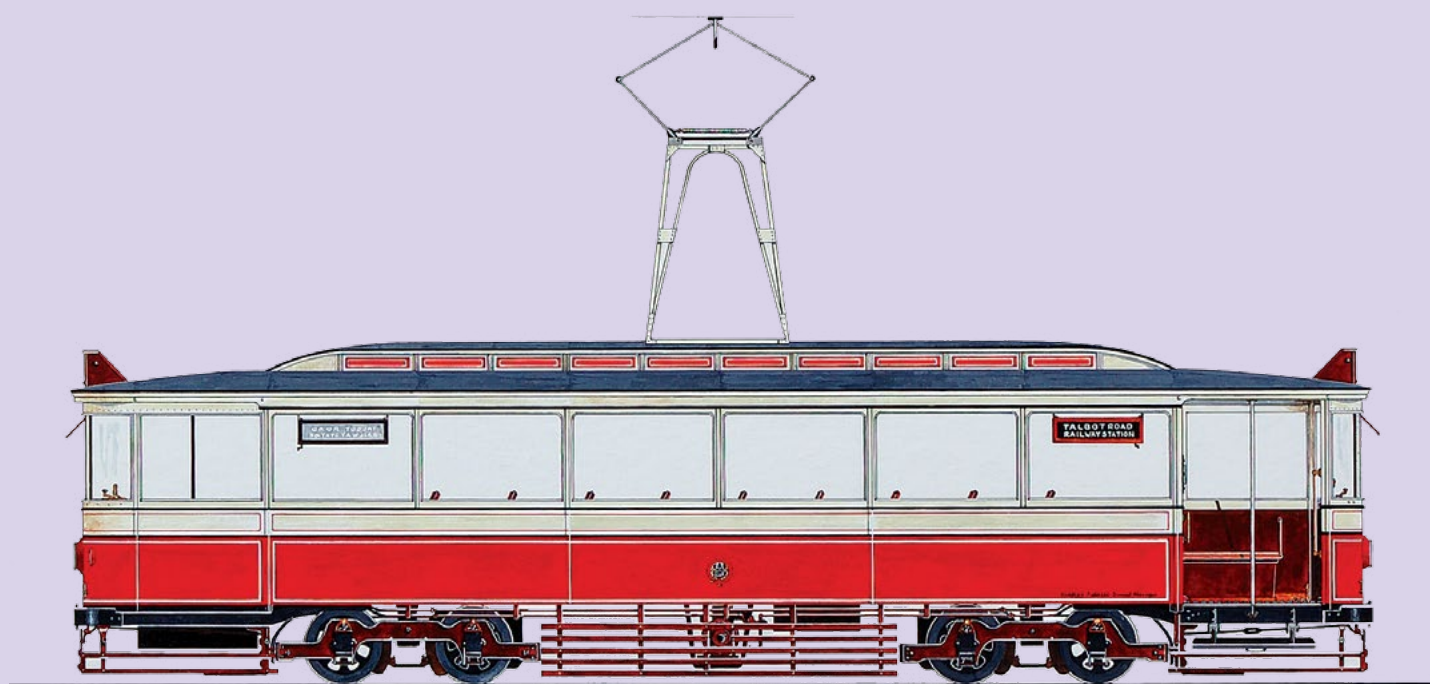


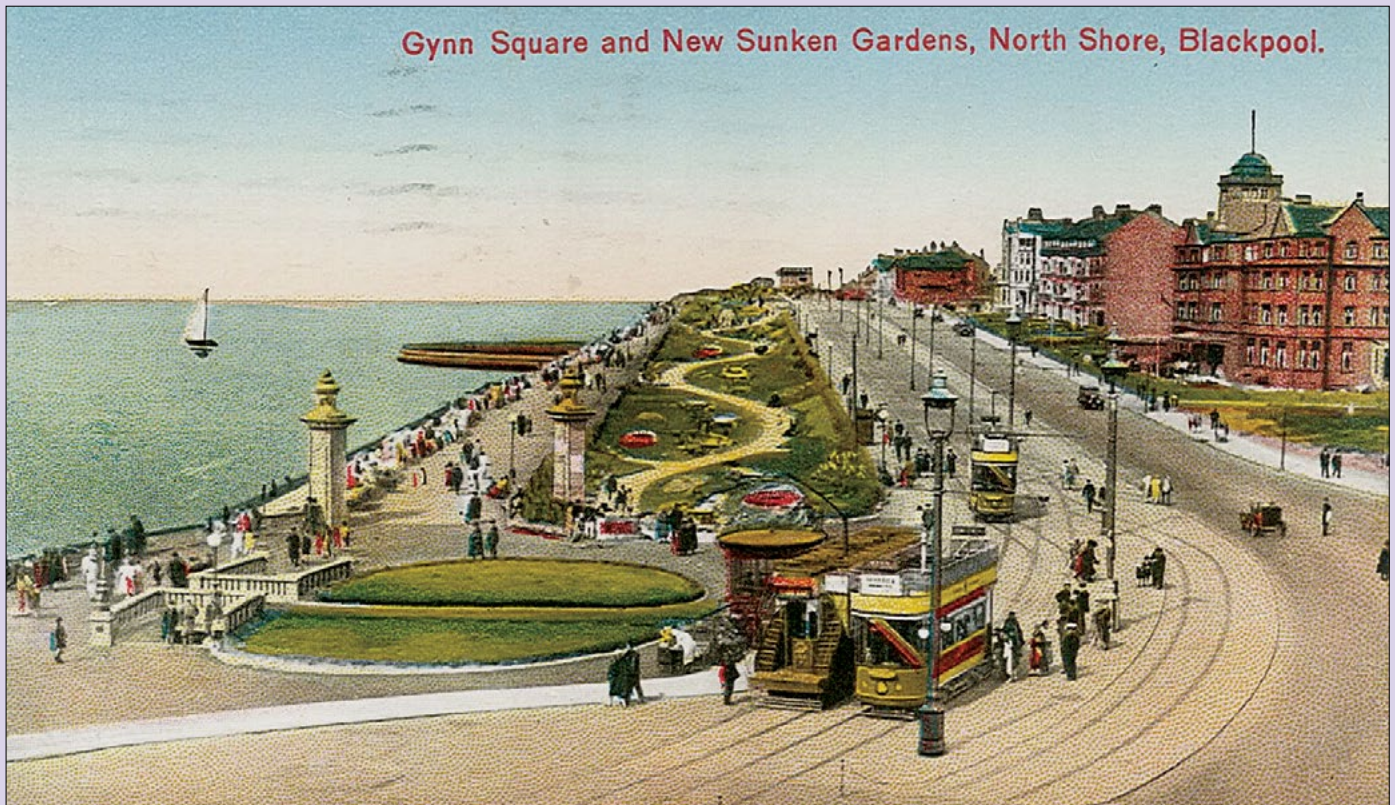
conventional open balcony top covers and the first completely new cars to join the fleet since the Toastracks of 1914 were built there – more Toastracks, and numbered 161-6 entering service in time for the season. The so-called repair and reconstruction of various older cars continued, with brand new replacements quietly taking their place. Charles Furness was not alone in this subterfuge – in Manchester, for example, four-wheel open-top short-canopy cars from 1901 entered the works and miraculously reappeared after ‘overhaul’ as totally enclosed bogie cars. Stuart Pilcher was avoiding acquiring ‘new’ cars requiring loan sanction for capital expenditure – Furness was just keeping the Council in the dark and off his back.

There was nevertheless a clear need to improve the rolling stock on the former Tramroad line, the rebuilding of some former Company cars having been only a stop-gap measure. At this time a proposal was made regarding the use of articulated single-deck trams to work the Dickson Road route but this was not pursued and instead ten new comfortable clerestory-roofed single-deckers with large platform space for luggage provision for passengers using the Isle of Man steamers were purchased from Dick, Kerr at Strand Road Preston. Perhaps Charles Furness was at last getting some measure of his own way?

Becoming Nos. 167-76 they entered service in 1928, and with heaters and air braking, upholstered seats and, later, doors to enclose their platforms, they marked a great step forward. They were much appreciated by passengers and crews alike. The North Station to Fleetwood No. 1 service was their sole province, all being allocated to the former B&F depot in Redbank Road, Bispham until they were withdrawn in the 1960s. They were prohibited from working the main Promenade services through concerns over the potential excessive heat build up in the saloon, since the large windows were fixed and the small clerestory

Dick, Kerr's Pullman cars, below, for the North Station service were known as Pantographs when they first appeared so-equipped in 1928. The name stuck, and Pantograph cars they remained – even though they actually carried trolley poles from around 1931.





lights would not have coped in slow moving lines of trams on this busy section of the line.

On a more mundane note Works Car No. 1 was built using a redundant truck left over from a Marton Box conversion and a distinctive diagonal matchboard body was constructed on it.

The Blackpool Tower Company now acquired control of the Big Wheel and commenced its demolition. This familiar landmark was finally to disappear from the skyline.

Records show that gross profit for the year from the trams in 1929 was £92,045, a very satisfactory situation. Sadly this profit on the trams was like red rag to a bull to the bus faction of the Committee, for the losses on the buses were increasing year-on-year – the cumulative loss was now nearly £36,000. Despite this those on the Council who saw the future lying with the bus were actively promoting the wholesale scrapping of the tramway. It has to be said in their defence that towns and cities throughout the country were thinking similarly at this time, though most would have envied Blackpool's profitability.

The development of the aeroplane encouraged Blackpool to open its municipal aerodrome in 1931, some £100,000 being invested in this enterprise. The following year saw another landmark in the tramway when the first enclosed Standard car, number 100, made its appearance. These cars were being built as new, using some parts supplied by Hurst, Nelson. They were solid and reliable, and would give over 50 years service, and though they lacked air brakes their handbrakes were more than adequate for the job they did.

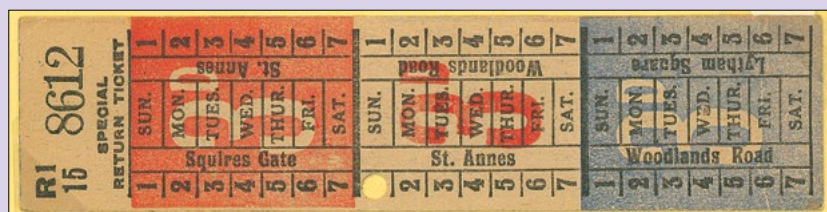
Despite the undoubted success of the rebuilding scheme there was clearly still a need for more new cars, and there was

The new layout at The Gynn allowed trams to stand at this terminus without impeding through traffic. A Blackpool Deadnought and a Lytham open-topper provide a 'Little and Large' experience. Notice the second car reversing ready for its return to Lytham and the policeman on point duty alongside the northbound motor car.

(Kithead Trust, courtesy Peter Jaques)



The smart image of the trams was backed up by the smart turn out of the employees – the Chief Inspector's hat is a reminder of days long-gone. (See also page 15) (John A Senior courtesy BTS)



Three tickets from the Lytham system with three different brandings –

The large ticket is from Lytham & St Annes Corporation.

The Discount ticket is from The Blackpool St Annes and Lytham Tramways Co Ltd (owner and operator prior to the Corporation taking over the system).

The One Penny Special is a joint Blackpool Corporation Tramways and Blackpool St Annes and Lytham Tramways Co Ltd specimen.

LYTHAM ST. ANNES CORPORATION. TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT.
Telephone No. 41044 S.S.

NOTICE TO PASSENGERS.

Blackpool Talbot Square to Lytham.

The Last Through Tram for LYTHAM

Leaves Talbot Square at 10-45 p.m. Weekdays.		10-15 p.m. Sundays.	
" SQUIRES GATE	11-5 "	" 10-35 "	" "
" ST. ANNES	11-15 "	" 10-45 "	" "
" WOODLANDS ROAD	11-25 "	" 10-55 "	" "
" LYTHAM	11-35 "	" 11-5 "	" "

The Last Blackpool Service Tram leaves Talbot Square for SQUIRES GATE 11-15 p.m. Weekdays. 10-51 p.m. Sundays.

This Car connects at SQUIRES GATE for ST. ANNES, ANSDALL, LYTHAM, at approximately, 12-0 midnight, Weekdays and 11-35 p.m. Sundays.

NOTE—A Staff Tram leaves Talbot Square for Squires Gate (only) at 12-30 a.m. Weekdays and 11-55 p.m. Sundays (approximately).

J. C. FAIRCHILD, Transport Manager.



The Corporation fleet, with its intake of varied and sometimes motley members of the former Tramroad stock, alongside its own selection of trams of many shapes and sizes, offered a great contrast when the new Railcoaches arrived in 1934. Lytham & St Annes did their bit, for their open-sided double-deckers were also from a different time and culture, though still hugely popular, together with their conventional open-toppers and balcony cars. And then there were the Blackpool Dreadnoughts of course ... a wonderful and colourful variety running up and down the Promenade.

still great tension between the Tramways Committee and its Manager. It was therefore decided in 1929 to split the Electricity and Transport Departments and in 1932 it was decided to appoint separate Managers to the two Departments and that Charles Furness should revert to his former position as Borough Electrical Engineer. In deference to his many successes, not least the creation of the Illuminations and the Central Workshops (without which the tramway could not have survived) he was also appointed Consulting Transport Manager.

The new post of Transport Department Manager was accordingly advertised in 1932 and from the many applicants the Committee selected Charles Hopkins, the go-ahead and successful (though only recently appointed) Sunderland Manager, to be the new incumbent. He had previously been Wigan's Manager. Sunderland, however, were not prepared to lose such a newly-acquired and valuable asset, and Hopkins was persuaded to stay where he was, remaining in Sunderland until he died at the age of 62 in 1948.

Interestingly, very shortly after the Blackpool interview in 1933, Charles Hopkins was short-listed for the position of General Manager of Halifax Joint Committee. Were Sunderland slow in keeping their promises and was Hopkins keeping them on their toes? Be that as it may, it was through this change of heart by Hopkins that Walter Luff – Blackpool Committee's second choice — was appointed General Manager of the undertaking, taking up his duties at the beginning of January 1933, by which time it had been renamed as Blackpool Corporation Transport rather than Tramways as previously. Charles Furness now became Consulting Manager and resumed his single post as Borough Electrical Engineer.

Luff had since 1925 been Commercial Manager at the West Riding Automobile Co Ltd in Wakefield, a wholly owned



The change in the name of the undertaking in 1932 was quickly followed by the introduction of the revised garter around the appropriately recoloured coat of arms for the new livery, as seen opposite. (John A Senior; both)

The final version of the Blackpool Standard car was launched in 1932 when number 100 left the workshops. It was somewhat eclipsed by the arrival of the new English Electric Railcoach brought out of the hat by Mr Luff.



subsidiary of the The Yorkshire (West Riding) Tramways Co Ltd, and his personality and business acumen must have appealed to Blackpool. In December 1931, twelve months prior to this seaside appointment, he had been on a short list of four for the prestigious Leeds managership but was unsuccessful.

Walter Luff was quickly to prove that here he was the right man at the right time in the right place. He could see that with modern trams, and more of them, there was considerable potential for profitable growth. Those on the Council who thought they had appointed a dedicated bus man were in for a shock.

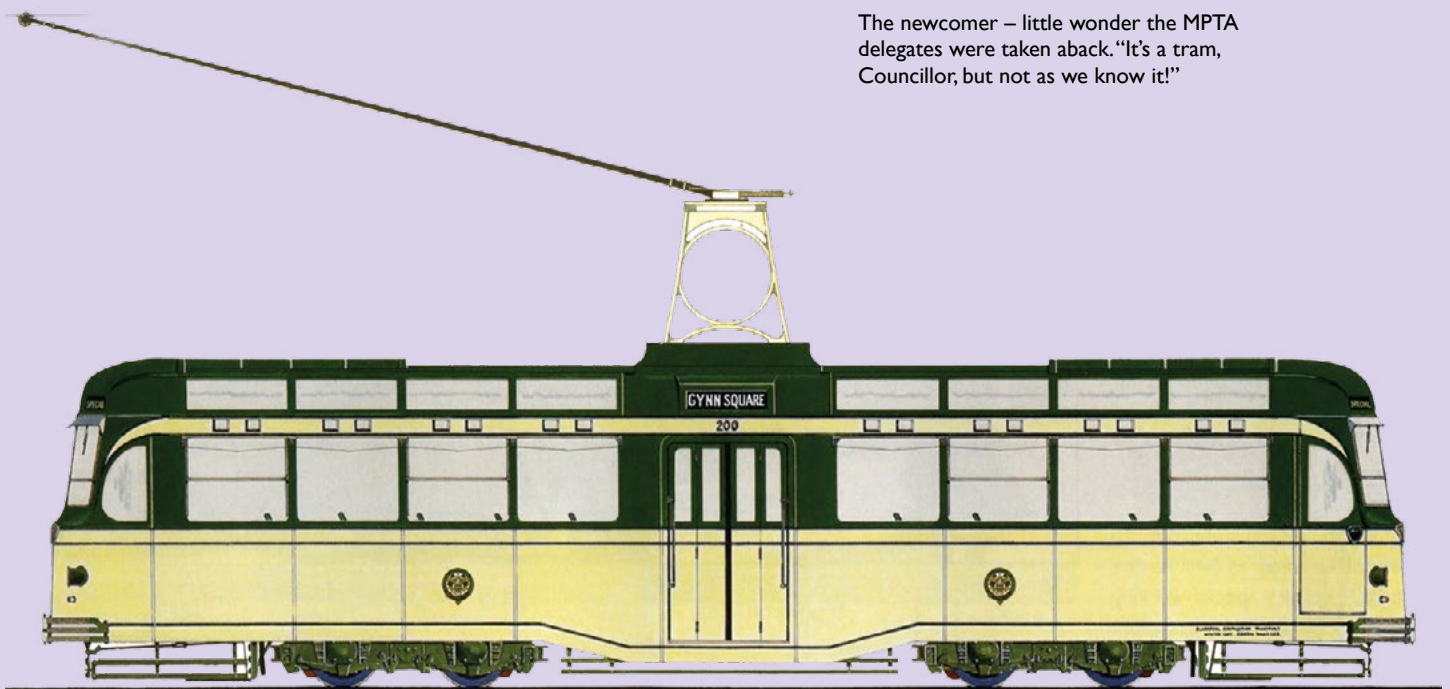
Tackling the financial situation, Luff knew that a favourable wind of change was blowing in his direction. Weekly industry returns confirmed that throughout many parts of the country passenger numbers, and therefore receipts, were starting to rise in an encouraging manner. Platform staff were glad that their wages had been reinstated after the nationwide cuts enforced on the industry (see magazine extract on page 29).

Building on the undelivered portions of the 1918 Hopkins plan, and with the assistance of his contact WL 'Mac' Marshall at English Electric (as Dick, Kerr had then become) he was able to astound not only Blackpool council but shortly afterwards the whole British tramway fraternity when he presented his vision of the future for the Borough Tramway to the delegates of the Municipal Tramway and Transport Conference in June 1933.

With one move they brought trams out of the dark ages into the limelight, and in the striking new colours of cream and green this new streamlined creation could not fail to be a winner.



The newcomer – little wonder the MPTA delegates were taken aback. "It's a tram, Councillor, but not as we know it!"



There was a certain sweet irony elsewhere in the Borough, however, for the President of the Municipal Tramways and Transport Association (MTTA) that year was one Charles Furness and so it fell to Mr and Mrs Furness rather than Mr and Mrs Luff to act as hosts to the delegates attending the Annual Conference at the Imperial Hydro in Blackpool. His Presidential Address was well received and amongst the many plaudits he was pleased to accept was one from Blackpool's Mayor, publicly thanking him for the work he had done for the Borough's tramway. He was later made an Honorary MTTA member. A fitting tribute.

Walter Luff, however, quickly established his presence by organizing three new turning circles for the trams to assist in speeding up the movement of traffic on the Promenade. One of his main concerns was the twin issue of safety and speed of loading and unloading. West Riding had introduced centre-entrance double-deck buses, with twin staircases and enclosed platform doors. He quickly arranged for a similar vehicle to be produced for Blackpool, and even replicated the style of West Riding tapered lettering into his new Blackpool livery.

In a noticeable sea change, Walter Luff had strong support from the Transport Committee, particularly so from Alderman Lumb, who was its Chairman – this support would be crucial to the future turnaround of the Department's fortunes. Alderman TL Lumb was a man who knew a lot about trams – he had been Engineer to the Blackpool, St Annes & Lytham Tramway Company, was a surveyor, architect and visionary planner involved in the formation of the Blackpool & Fleetwood Tramroad Company and had connections through that with the formation of the Electric Railway & Tramway Carriage Company, by now The English Electric Company at East Works, Strand Road Preston.

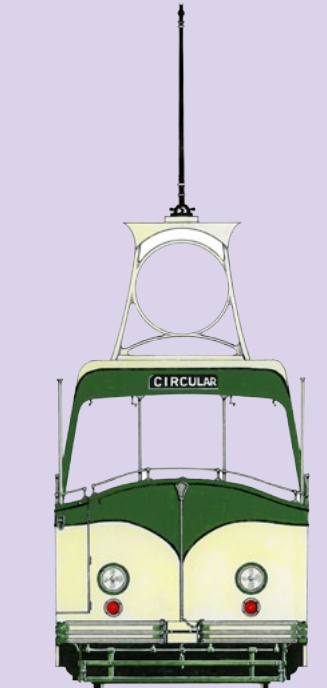
The first Railcar, No. 200, was delivered in June 1933 and when it was shown to the MTTA delegates the following month, since

From the incredibly short timescale of events it seems that the prototype Railcoach must have been produced speculatively by English Electric before Walter Luff was appointed as Manager at Blackpool. Once the concept had been approved, and a contract placed for 44 similar but improved vehicles, it then remained to be seen whether a range of types could be produced to replace the time-expired existing fleet. This was the opportunity for Messrs Luff and 'Mac' Marshall to show their mettle and on 19th March 1934 the results were shown to the Transport Press representatives at Blundell Street.

They recorded their praises, and that the Inspecting Officer for The Ministry of Transport had described the enclosed single-decker trams as "the finest transport vehicles he had ever seen – like luxury coaches rather than tramcars".

The 24 production Railcoaches had been ordered in June 1933 and the two open types in September 1933, so the Preston workforce were to be congratulated on their productivity and workmanship.

Clearly the Dreadnoughts had finally had their day, and comparison of the cars, below and opposite, needs no further comment.



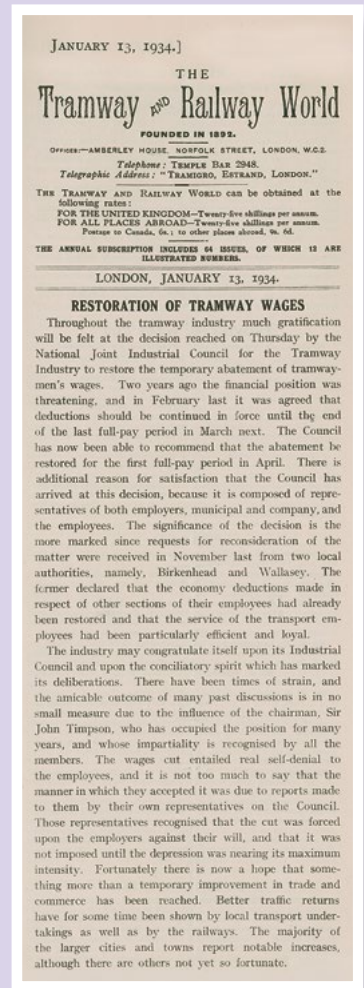
there was not another tram in the whole of the British Isles which could approach it for appearance and interior fittings, it is safe to say that they were considerably impressed. So too were the members of the Transport Committee and in July it was agreed to accept the quote from English Electric for the supply of 24 further Railcoaches, basically similar but slightly longer and with minor detail changes. It was also necessary to make provision to bolster the Borough electricity supply with additional switchgear and mercury arc rectifiers to cope with the additional loadings the new, more powerful, cars would generate.

This left the matter of financing the package to be settled. It was agreed to seek permission to borrow the necessary monies for the purchase of the trams, the new depot and other improvements. Luff was confident, however, that with the way the Department's finances were shaping, and the potential extra traffic the new streamlined trams would bring, the costs could be met from the increased profits he was expecting. It was decided to split the order for the trams into two batches, and also to reduce the amounts paid into rate relief and thus bolster the Department's reserves to cover the forthcoming expenditure. In nearby Liverpool new Manager Walter Marks was proposing the same strategy, although he wanted to use the money for a new fleet of buses. Back in Blackpool official pass holders suddenly found they were going to have £5 per year for the privilege in future – no such thing as a free lunch now.

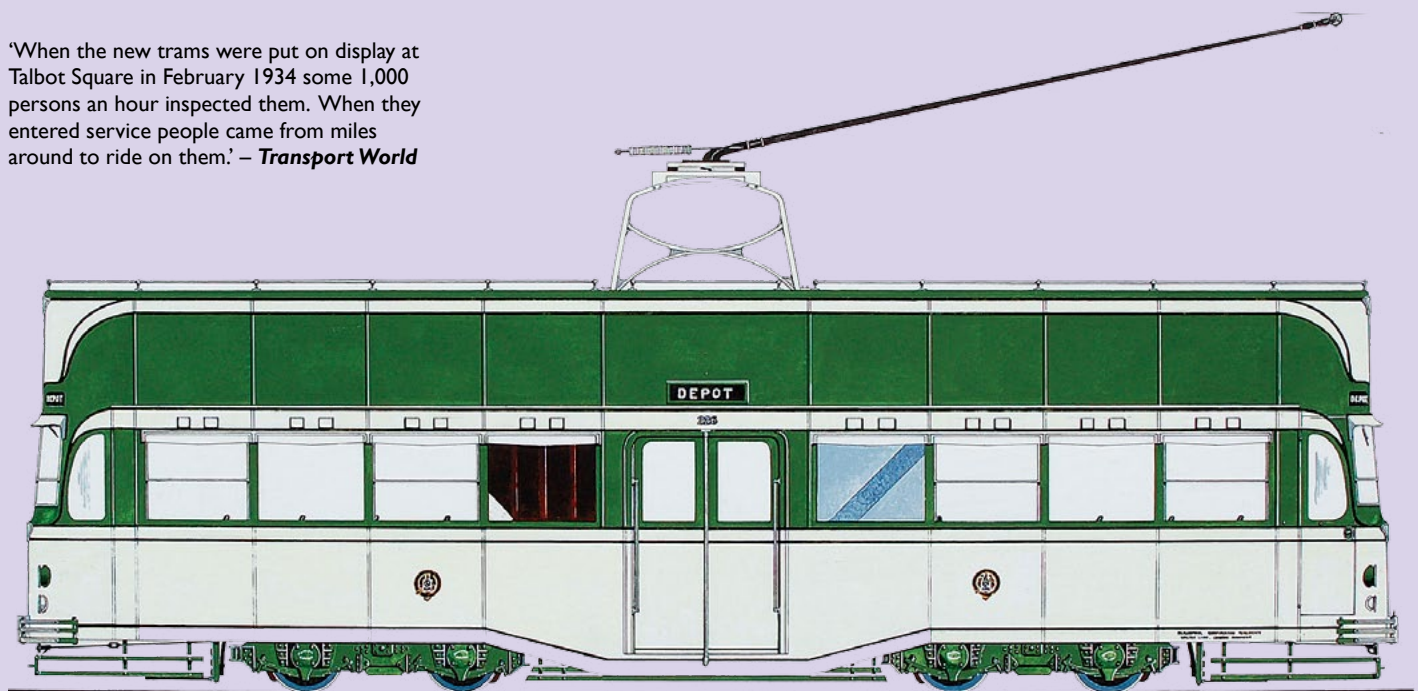
It was also agreed to purchase a further supply of TIM ticket machines as the gradual change from Bell Punch type tickets gathered momentum.

Now was the time for Blackpool to show the world that its motto of *Progress* was not to be taken lightly. Although, as the

'When the new trams were put on display at Talbot Square in February 1934 some 1,000 persons an hour inspected them. When they entered service people came from miles around to ride on them.' – *Transport World*



The tramway men had paid a harsh price as the country fought its way out of recession. Now the omens were better; investment for the future made sense, and Walter Luff was able to convince his masters of this. (STA)



new Manager, Luff had much to do, new rolling-stock had been the priority and in 1934 some very modern-looking trams started to arrive in Blackpool. Between January and March a further 24 English Electric Railcoaches were delivered, numbered 201-24 following the prototype car.

Replacing the venerable fleet of Dreadnoughts was the next priority. With large crowds on the Promenade, and quieter and faster trams now in service, they presented an even greater safety hazard than before. Immediately after the first Railcoaches, open-top 'Luxury Dreadnought' cars Nos. 237-49 began to arrive between February 1934 and April 1935. With their enclosed saloons, large central vestibules and conductor-operated doors they provided the safety Luff was looking for whilst speeding-up passenger movements. With seats for 92 passengers they matched the carrying capacity of the original Dreadnoughts.

Next to arrive between May and August of 1934 were new open Boat cars Nos. 225-36 with their attractive frontal green bow-wave enhancing the livery. These gave the open air ride visitors wanted but with enclosed bodywork to the waist, and central platform and doors, were much safer. The makeover was complete when closed-top Balloon cars, Nos. 250-63, appeared between December and February of 1935. English Electric had done a fine job and Luff could be pleased with himself.

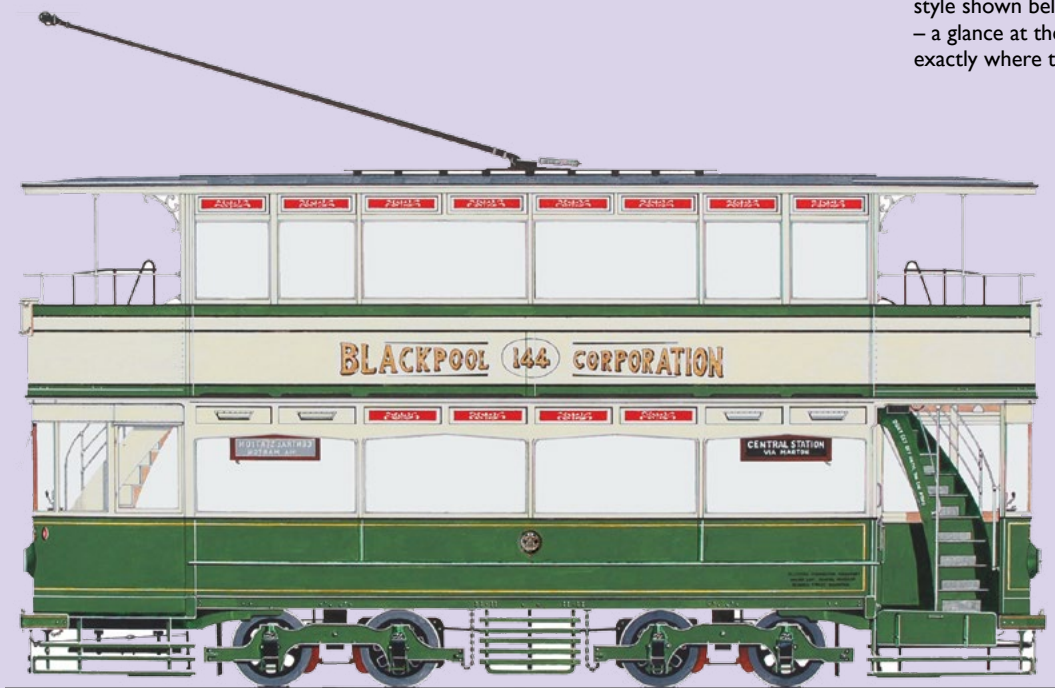
There was a strange twist to the story, however. In January 1935 as the GM was reading his weekly copy of *Transport World* he saw an advertisement for a position in Bournemouth, where a new General Manager would be required to take over when Ignatius Bulfin retired that



The open Boat cars were worthy successors to the Toastracks, though the latter continued in service until withdrawn and later scrapped in the need to make space during the war. During the 1985 celebrations one was loaned to Crich, and another to Heaton Park, as part of the exchanges.

Number 605 will go to the LTT and number 607 is to be repainted, loaned to Beamish and then sent to its new owners at Crich when these cars are finally withdrawn. (G Lumb)

It seems to be traditional for the new manager to bring something from his former system. Walter Luff actually had a choice of two liveries, for West Riding used both red and green (though not on the same vehicles). Since Blackpool were already painting their vehicles red the choice was fairly simple. He also brought the tapered lettering style shown below on one of the Standard trams – a glance at the top illustration opposite shows exactly where that idea originated.



The West Riding influence

Walter Luff quickly persuaded his new masters of the virtues of centre entrances for the trams, and also for the bus fleet. He cited various reasons, including speed of loading and unloading, and safety, but being a canny fellow he also knew that if the conductors had to be on the platform to open and close the doors – as they would need to be – there would be less lost fares. Another way towards reducing the deficit on the buses and making the whole department more efficient.

This Leyland Titan carries bodywork by Chas Roe of Leeds, holders jointly with English Electric for the patents for the centre entrance and twin staircase layout Luff wanted to introduce into Blackpool. (STA)



Save for the longer bonnet of the Guy Arab causing the driver's windscreen to project further forward it seems that if the instruction to English Electric had been 'make it like that one above' they had followed their brief remarkably well. There were two of these Arabs, delivered in 1933 soon after Mr Luff got to grips with things, but withdrawn in 1938. Two Leyland Titans, also similarly bodied by English Electric and delivered in the same year lasted until 1949. Guy's finest hour was some years away yet. (STA)



English Electric had surprised everyone with their rabbit-out-of-the-hat trick in 1933 and attempted to stage a repeat performance with this centre-entrance double-decker in 1936. It was a one-off for the Commercial Motor Show but clearly built with Blackpool in mind as its eventual owner. It duly entered the fleet but although the chassis had all the right credentials the body was not altogether what the department wanted and it remained a lone voice. The lack of access to the engine from the nearside was cited as one problem, one which could have been resolved if perhaps there had been the will. (STA)



Summer. The same trade magazine shortly afterwards recorded that Walter Luff was one of four on the short list for the position, and although he was not successful it raises the question was he serious about moving, or was he, like Mr Hopkins before him, making a point? The Bournemouth position was worth £1,350 per annum and doubtless Luff felt he was proving his worth – and more – in Blackpool. Perhaps we shall never know.

Following the death of Alderman Lumb in 1935, Alderman Tatham became Chairman and continued to give support to Walter Luff although he had admitted in the previous year to not always having been a supporter of the tramway (see cutting opposite). Alderman Tatham was also a member of the Blackpool Life Boat crew and must have been pleased when the 1928 illuminated car was produced – could it have been an olive branch from someone? It was in this year that *The Blackpool Improvement Bill* sought powers to operate trolleybuses – just in case, as it were.

The march of progress in the ticketing arrangements continued as a further 50 TIM machines were ordered in 1935. Annual returns confirmed that Blackpool had had another good year in 1934, again better than expected. Luff was now confidently stating that he expected to complete his five year plan in three years. There was relief at Strand Road too, for a loss of £175,681 in 1933 had been turned round to a profit of £172,214 in 1934. Blackpool perhaps felt that they had helped in some small measure.

POSITION VACANT

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BOURNEMOUTH.

Appointment of Transport General Manager.

Applications are invited for the position of General Manager of the Transport Undertaking comprising tramways, omnibuses, trackless trolley vehicles, and Power Station.

The salary will be £1,250 per annum, with a travelling allowance of £100 per annum.

The person appointed will be required to pass a medical examination and contribute to the Council's superannuation scheme.

Applications on the prescribed form, stating age and giving full particulars of engineering and organising experience, together with copies of three testimonials, must be received by the undersigned not later than February 9, 1935.

All applications must be sent in sealed envelopes endorsed "General Manager."

Full particulars and the necessary forms of application can be obtained from the undersigned.

Canvassing, directly or indirectly, by any candidate will be deemed a disqualification.

HERBERT ASHLING,
Town Clerk.

At a meeting of Bournemouth Town Council on May 7, Mr. D. P. Morrison, general manager of Hull Corporation Transport, was appointed general manager of the Bournemouth Corporation transport services, in succession to Mr. I. Bulfin, who retires in September next.

The Transport Committee reported that they had interviewed the following candidates besides Mr. Morrison—whom they recommended :—

Mr. A. A. Jackson, general manager and engineer, St. Helens Corporation Transport.

Mr. W. Luff, general manager, Blackpool Corporation Transport.

Mr. C. H. Stafford, general manager, Burnley, Colne and Nelson Joint Transport Committee; and

Mr. H. Vickers, chief assistant and electrical engineer, Bournemouth Corporation Transport.

The advertisement which caught Walter Luff's eye in January 1935, and the outcome in May of that year. (STA)



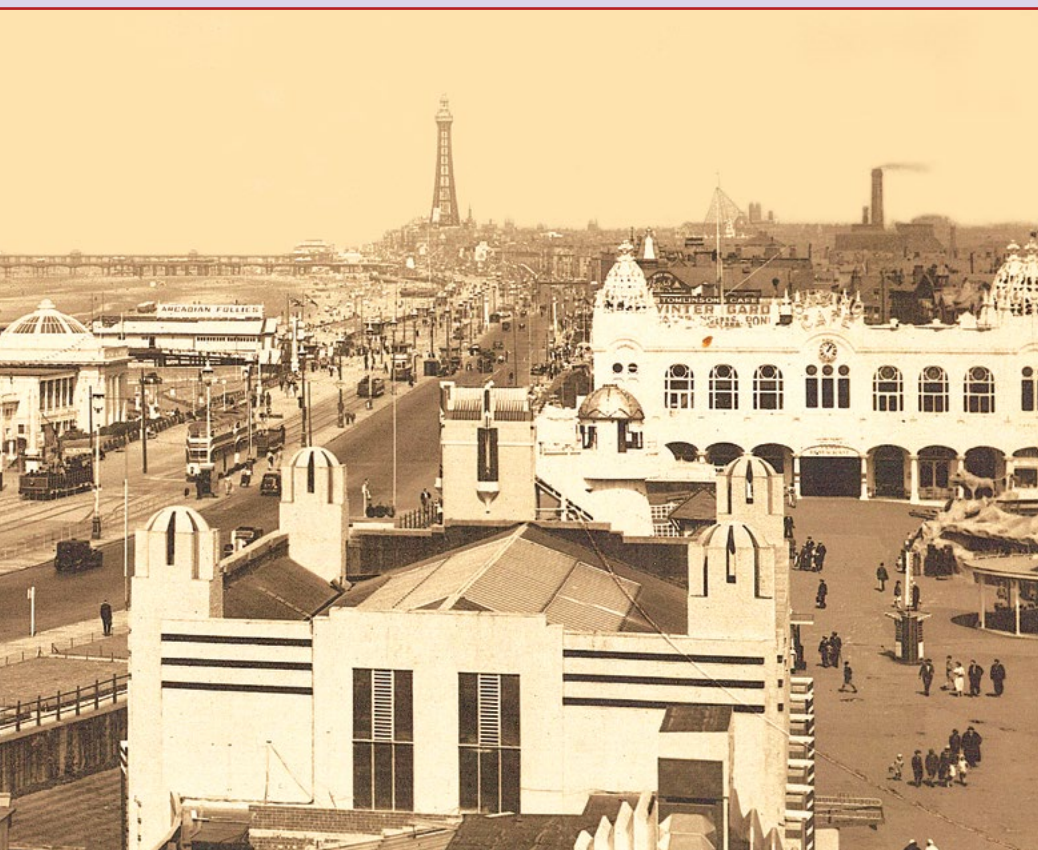
The building of new offices which also had been a part of the 1918 Furness Report proposal was next on the list. The Art Deco building was, and remains, a striking addition to the Transport Department, and indeed to the Borough.

Twenty more new trams were purchased in 1935, these being Series 2 Railcars, carrying numbers 264-283 and arriving between June and September. Rigby Road depot was also opened that year, much to everyone's relief, for accommodation had been stretched right to the limits.

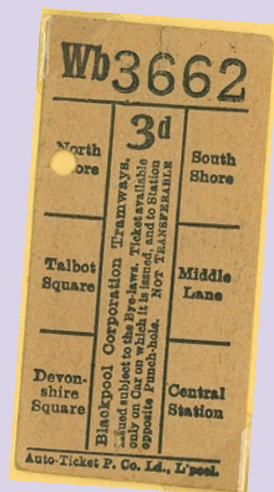
When Charles Furness retired as Borough Electrical Engineer in 1936 he acknowledged that it had not been easy serving two masters – the Transport and Electricity departments; but whilst he must have been sad that Walter Luff was the one to pull the rabbits from the hat, he knew that his far-seeing report of 1918 had been the catalyst. His Standard trams were in every-day use, solid, reliable, cheap to run, and cheap to create whilst every Autumn hundreds of thousands of people still flocked to see his brainchild, the famous 'Lights'. Those who mattered knew that during his tenure at the helm the Tramways Department had contributed over £160,000 to rate relief in the Borough. All-in-all, not a bad legacy.



Councillor Tatham praises Luff in January 1934 as reported in *Transport World* the following month. Tatham, Mayor at this time, was soon to become Chairman of the Transport Committee and, as such, Luff's boss. In the circumstances it was just as well he had had a change of heart. (STA)



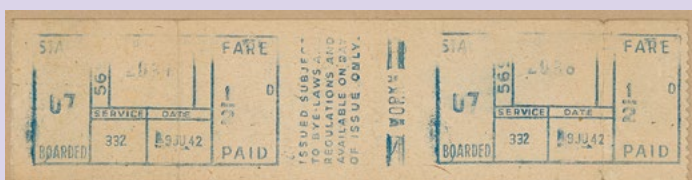
The new streamline fleet is in evidence in this view taken around 1935. The old Dreadnoughts have finally gone and the new enclosed Balloons are in service. Close examination will reveal three Balloons, one Boat, six Toastracks, two English Electric Railcoaches and a solitary open balcony Standard car followed by what appears to a Lytham car. The open air swimming pool, opened in 1923, is prominent in the centre of the picture. (STA)



Cars for Layton, in the centre, and Marton left foreground seen leaving Talbot Square in the mid-thirties and before the Layton route was withdrawn in 1936. (Barry Shaw collection)

Tickets from Blackpool Corporation Tramways, 3d single, and Blackpool Corporation Transport Dept, 10d Return. (Brian Hughes collection)

Below, a pair of faded green TIM tickets from July 1942 when two lucky children and their parents had a wartime holiday in the resort – and rode on the trams. (Courtesy JS King, one of the lucky pair)



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Here's a Lesson from Lancashire: Bury, Warrington, Rochdale and Wigan, amongst others, have decided to scrap old-fashioned pre-printed tickets and have chosen

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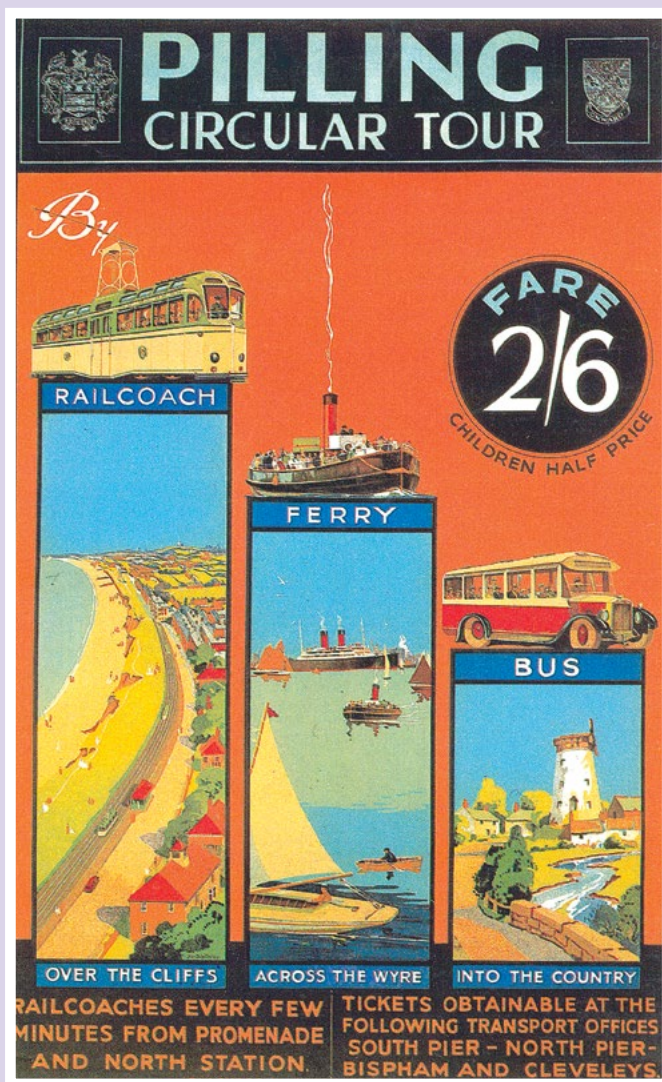
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The Pilling Circular Tour at 12½p was a transport enthusiast's delight – starting on one of the new Railcoaches, then a steam powered ferry boat and returning on a Leyland Lioness bus of late 1920s vintage. These veterans would be converted to Runabaouts in 1937 by Charles Roe in Leeds. (BTS)

The first of the tramway closures took place in 1936 when the routes to Layton and Central Drive ceased to operate. Luff had foreseen this soon after he came, and expected that eventually the tramway would just be a line from Starr Gate to Fleetwood serving the lucrative Promenade traffic. The next move concerned neighbouring Lytham, and in March and April 1937 the undertaking converted its tram routes to motor bus operation. No longer would the familiar blue and white trams wend their way along the Promenade to the Gynn terminus, and the open-sided double-deckers became just a memory along with the rest of the fleet though Manager JC Fairchild had kept one Lytham tram back to be retained as a museum piece. Sadly the demands of wartime later meant it had to be broken up to make space in the depot, and to provide materials for the war effort.

There was no stopping progress in Blackpool, however, and between July and October the next delivery of single-deck Railcoaches arrived. This time the contract had been placed with the Brush company of Loughborough, and these trams were even more handsome than the English Electric models. The 20 Brush examples had an improved frontal profile, and were also even better appointed internally, the finishing touch being a large clock mounted on the bulkhead in each saloon. Mounted on EMB bogies they became Nos. 284-303, the last vehicle having the highest number in the tram fleet until the arrival of the Coronations in 1952.

In the works the illuminated Bandwagon was created from former Tramroad Crossbench car No. 141, dating from 1898, and



Construction of the iconic Woolworth's famous 3d and 6d store nears completion in November 1936. The arrow just visible behind the lamp standard points to the entrance under the wording OPEN FOR BUSINESS. (Ted Lightbown collection)



Part of Charles Furness's lasting legacy to Blackpool. (Barry Shaw collection)

Blackpool's Latest Luxury Tramcars

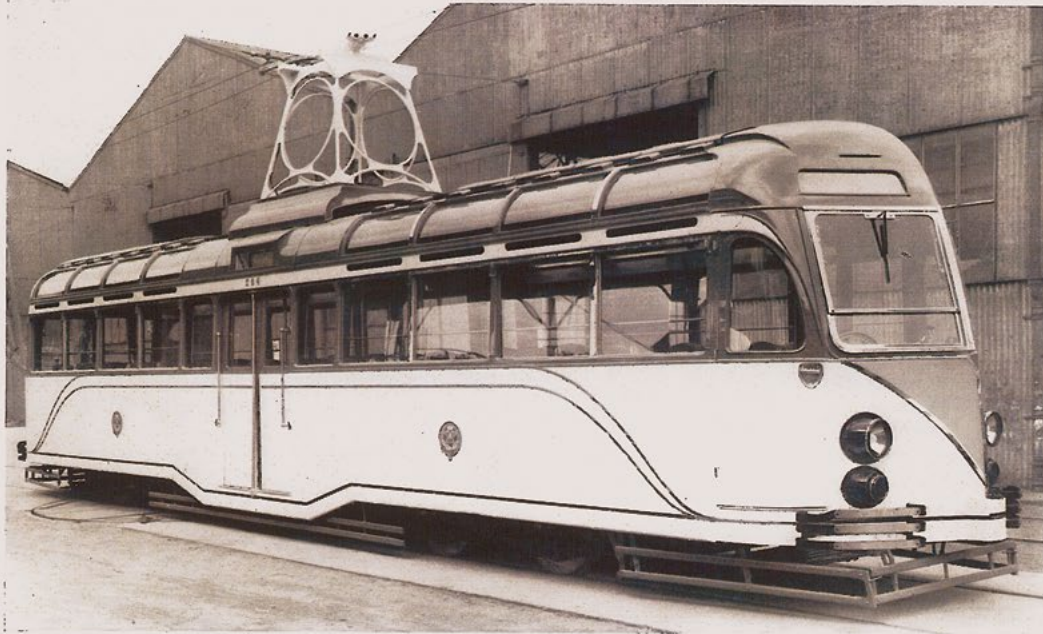
TWENTY VEHICLES BUILT BY THE BRUSH COMPANY WITH NEW FEATURES

Many new devices are incorporated in the twenty luxuriously equipped tramcars which are now being placed in service by the Blackpool Corporation Transport Department. They form part of the five-year reorganisation scheme introduced by Mr. Walter Luff, the general manager, soon after he took over this appointment in 1933, when the transport system was separated from the Electricity Department. On various occasions the progress of the reorganisation plan has been recorded in *THE TRANSPORT WORLD*. Important changes have included new vehicles—both tramcars and omnibuses—a new tramcar depot, extensions to the omnibus garage, and other work.

features of the body design are the subjects of provisional patents by the Brush Company.

They are of the single-deck bogie type, with central entrance. There are seats for 48 passengers in the saloons, with emergency tip-up seats for four more passengers in the central entrance. As it is unlikely that the two tip-up seats on the near side will be used when traffic is heavy, owing to their proximity to the loading platform, the seating capacity is thus fifty.

The equal-wheel bogie trucks, including the brake cylinders, were supplied by the E. M. B. Co., Ltd., and the electrical traction equipment by Crompton Parkin-



One of the Latest Luxury Tramcars for Blackpool Corporation Transport, built by the Brush Electrical Engineering Co. to the Design of Mr. W. Luff. Note the Curved Plate Glass Eaves Panels along the side of the Roof, and the Green Strip Panels underneath. The Trolley Gantry is Designed for special Illumination Purposes

This enterprising policy has been fully justified; income has increased considerably during the past four years, from £441,657 in 1934 to £485,773 in 1937.

Nearly three years ago Mr. Luff introduced handsome streamlined tramcars to Blackpool, which run chiefly on the Promenade and Fleetwood route. They immediately became popular, and are still holding their attraction for visitors. A number of different types were described and illustrated in our issue of November 8, 1934.

The new cars are similar in design to those of three years ago, but with many improvements which make them the most luxurious and comfortable tramcars ever put in service anywhere. They have been built by the Brush Electrical Engineering Co., Ltd., Loughborough, to the requirements of Mr. Luff, and certain

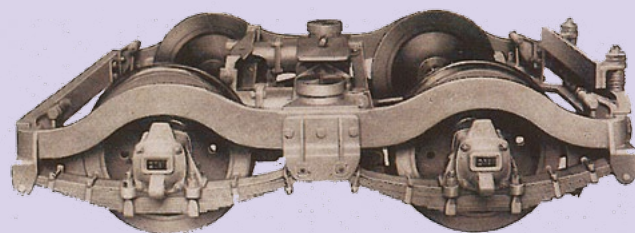
son, Ltd. The underframe is of a new design built up of rolled steel members, which are mainly welded together, and the Westinghouse air brakes, with the cylinders, are an integral part of the truck. The overall length of the car is 42 ft. 3 in.

The main framing of the body is of teak. The body is of streamline design, tapered at each end, and the streamlining is emphasised by means of stainless steel mouldings. There is a separate compartment at each end for the driver, each compartment being fitted with a hinged door giving access to the saloon, also a door on one side. A pedestal seat has also been provided for the motorman.

An innovation is the twin sliding doors on each side of the central entrance. These have been supplied by G. D. Peters & Co., Ltd.



Front View of one of the Blackpool Tramcars. The Ends are Tapered, and Streamlining is Emphasised by Stainless Steel Mouldings



One of the E.M.B. Trucks for Blackpool Tramcars

The front profile of the Brush cars was enhanced by the lower windscreen line, and the pale green V flash on the front, and repeated on the sides picked out by stainless steel trim. Whereas the English Electric cars were built completely in-house the Brush examples had bogies from the EMB Company in Birmingham and control gear by Crompton Parkinson.

With the exception of those Preston-built Railcoaches rebuilt as Motor Cars for twin-set operation they outlasted the older English Electric examples in service, though in the late 1950s their appearance was changed by the substitution of a full width single indicator over the driver's cab. At least two will be preserved in that form, one now being on display in the Museum of Museums in the Trafford Centre, Manchester; and two others are to be restored to their original condition.

A Brush Railcoach in original condition soon after delivery in 1937. Note the open sun roofs. (JS King collection)



SOUTH PIER, BLACKPOOL.

H.383



North Promenade, with two English Electric Railcoaches and a Ballooon car in this late 1930s view. The leading car has the sunroofs open. (Peter Elliot collection)

after a major make-over in 1949 this lasted in service until 1958. Passengers on the new trams would not fail to see the creation of a significant new building on the Promenade, Woolworths store, next to the Tower. This is still in use as retail premises, following the unfortunate demise of Woolworths at the end of 2008.

By August Bank Holiday 1938, the tram fleet had reached a total of 208 cars of which 104 were of the new streamline variety. A further twelve were on order from English Electric.

Earlier in 1939 the Talbot Road bus station had been opened, another distinctive building in the town and carrying a particularly attractive transport-themed mosaic on the upper section of the frontage. There was very nearly a disaster when two planes from the Cobham Flying Circus collided in mid-air and one narrowly avoided



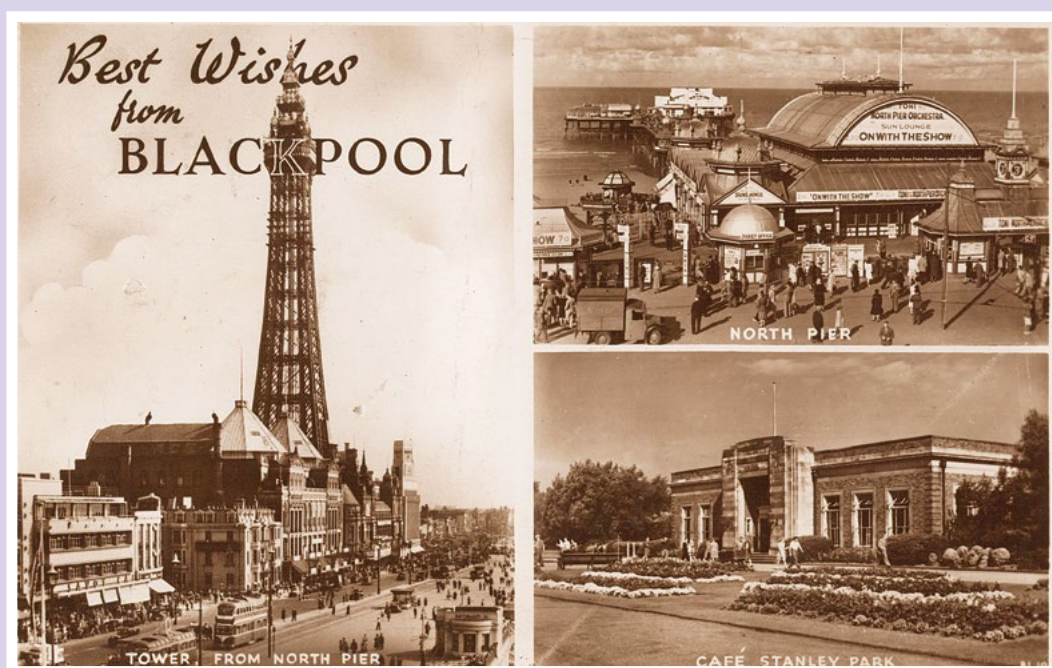
A wonderful mid-'thirties selection at Princess Parade, with open and enclosed Balloons, English Electric Railcoaches, a Boat and a Toastrack contrasting with the Lytham open-topper— the photographer might have been a tram enthusiast himself to have captured such a scene. (JS King collection)

A solitary Pantograph car makes its way up the North Promenade in the late-'thirties. These cars were repainted into this cream livery around 1937 to mimic the new Railcoaches and remained in this colour scheme until they were repainted in green with cream front flashes from late 1954. (JS King collection)



crashing into the new bus station. This same fateful year saw the opening of the Derby Baths. The baths were of an international standard and were the home to many competitions over the years. Changing requirements led to a reduction in their use and they were eventually closed, being demolished in 1990.

The outbreak of World War 2 in 1939 was marked by the requisition of Marton Depot by the RAF and soon the depot would be used for the manufacture of aircraft wings to boost the rate of production of Wellington bombers at the Vickers factory at Squires Gate. Rigby Road did not escape either; it became home to RAF Technical Command's Wireless School whilst the stores became the NAAFI. Drill sessions and parades were held in the yard, and inside the bus depot when it was raining. Women were



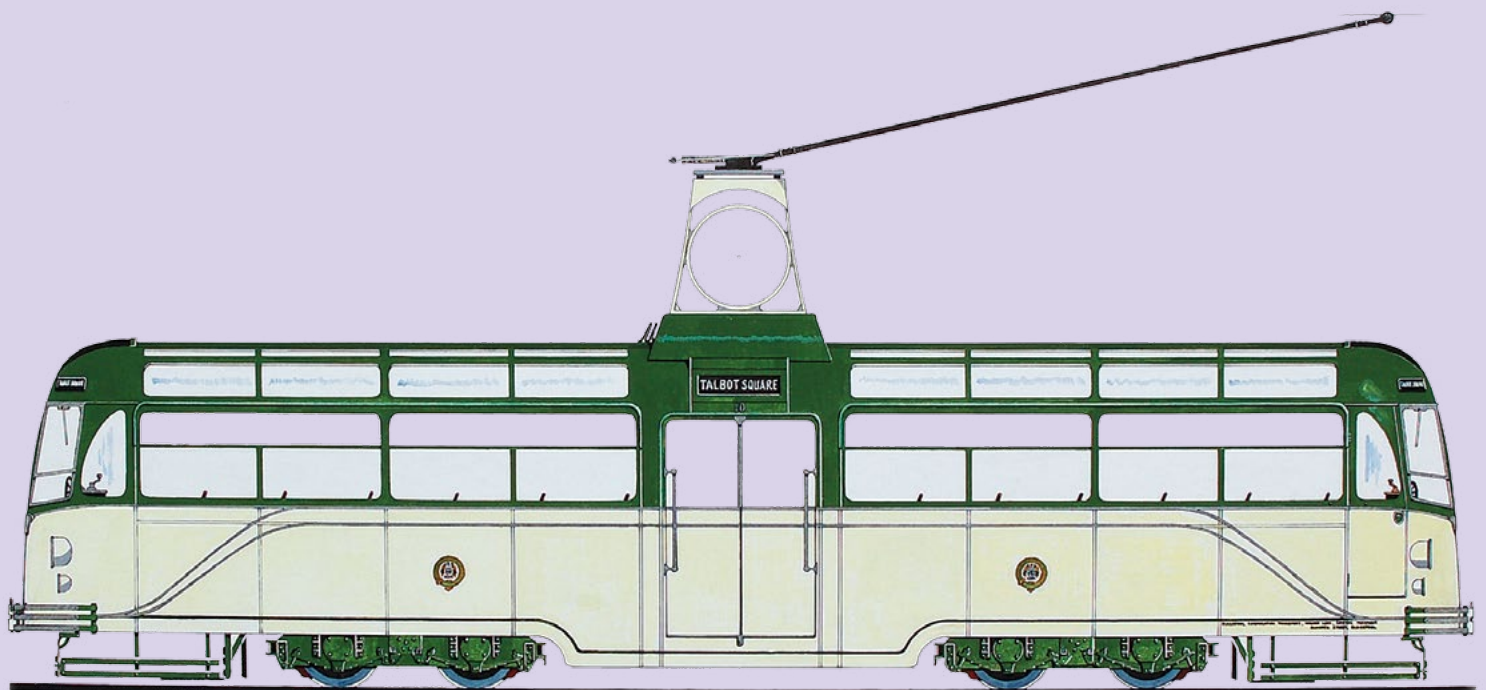
A Balloon and a Railcoach, both in wartime green livery, make their way northwards. (Peter Elliot collection)

brought in as tram drivers and also, as more men went away into the armed forces, into the workshops. Walter Luff, as Transport Manager, then became responsible for auxiliary ambulances and mobile catering facilities.

In 1940 Blackpool suffered from the blizzards which swept most of the country and left vast areas blanketed under several feet of snow. Transport in the town was severely disrupted for over a week but fortunately the deadlier downpour of Luftwaffe bombs was a rare event, though there was damage around the North Station area when a plane returning from an aborted mission to Barrow jettisoned its load. The shipyards at Barrow and Liverpool were regular targets and unfortunately Blackpool tower formed a useful navigational aid.

There was an influx of civil servants moved away from London and 'billeted' at the Norbreck Hydro; other hotels were similarly finding a new class of long-term visitor and many boarding houses would also be able to use their otherwise vacant accommodation for this new addition to the populace. The town assumed a more international aspect as troops started to arrive in the town in large numbers; RAF personnel, GI's and Polish soldiers were all to be seen and Rossall School's Firing Range was in regular use for training purposes – creating welcome additional extra traffic for the tramway to replace the reduced numbers of visitors. Unfortunately this additional traffic created some major bottlenecks when groups of trams acting as troop carriers needed to load or unload and an extra siding was laid at Rossall to alleviate the disruption. Two RAF

The Sun Saloons found themselves performing work they were not designed for and soon were rebuilt to a more appropriate configuration.



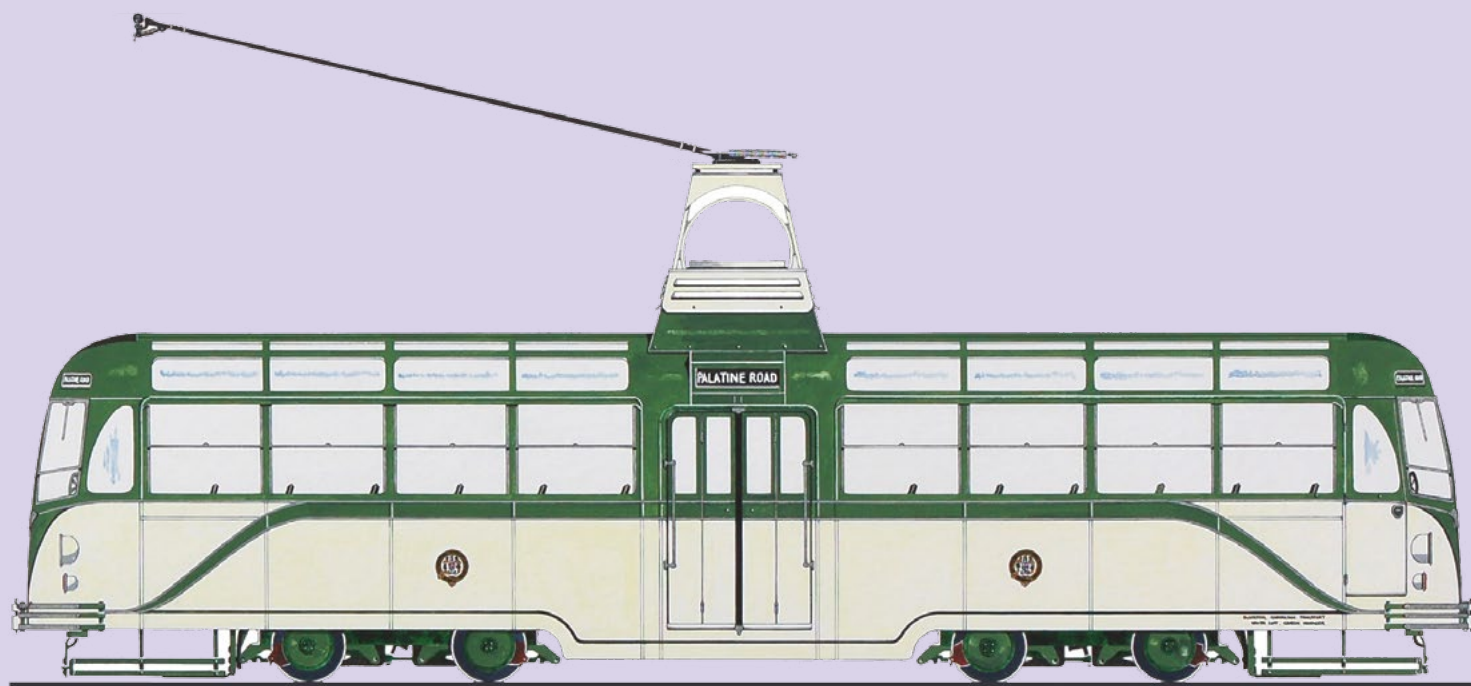
Spitfires were sponsored by the town and allegedly carried the Borough Coat-of-Arms.

Only twelve more trams had been delivered before the outbreak of war, these were Sun Saloons Nos. 10-21 from Strand Road, Preston. Mounted on similar EE bogies to the 44 earlier Railcoaches their frontal styling matched the more attractive Brush design – but there the similarity ended. Intended to replace the last of the Tramroad Company's Crossbench cars they were quite basic in their body appointments. Canvas roofs, half-height fixed windows, half-height doors, no bulkheads and wooden seats were amongst the spartan specification, with second-hand electrical equipment.

Every cloud has a silver lining though, or so the Traffic Department thought, for they were soon allocated to troop carrying duties, particularly to Rossall. Eventually even the forces personnel

Before and after – car 11 is shown in its final form after the up-grading of the body during war, followed by a complete rebuild post-war and the exchange of its bogies for Maley & Taunton resilient wheeled ones, and original electrical equipment for VAMBAC control. Note that the car now sits higher on its new trucks. The trucks and control equipment cost over £5,000 per car, roughly twice the cost of the complete EE Railcoaches when they were delivered in 1934. The VAMBAC rotary control unit is housed in the base of the trolley tower.

An English Electric Railcoach in wartime green livery, followed by a similarly-liveried Brush car, making their way up the promenade on a sunny afternoon. (Peter Elliot collection)



objected to them – they would have been decidedly uncomfortable on cold wet winter days, and rifles and ammunition boxes would just add to the discomfort – accordingly in 1942 they were given a makeover at Rigby Road. Fixed roofs, conventional half-drop windows, full-height doors and bulkheads in the saloons were welcome improvements.

The open-top Balloons Nos. 237-249 were also fully enclosed between 1941 and 1942, in the Rigby Road workshops using components supplied by English Electric, and the opportunity was taken to change the tramcar livery to one of mainly green with a small amount of cream relief. This partly reflected the problems of trying to keep cream coloured trams clean with a drastic shortage of cleaners. It also made them less visible from the air, and the roofs of the buses were similarly treated. Strangely, the Pantograph cars remained painted cream below the waist as they had been since 1937.

The coast was a restricted area during the war years and pleasure travel almost non-existent. Private motoring was virtually eliminated by fuel rationing and so public transport was essential. This rebuilding work at Rigby Road provided extra capacity for all weathers but few holiday makers would see the benefit just yet.

A busy scene at North Pier as Cadbury's van driver stocks up the pier's café ready for the next influx of holiday makers coming to see ***On With the Show***. In the foreground one of the soon to be enclosed open top Balloons makes its majestic way northwards. (JS King collection)

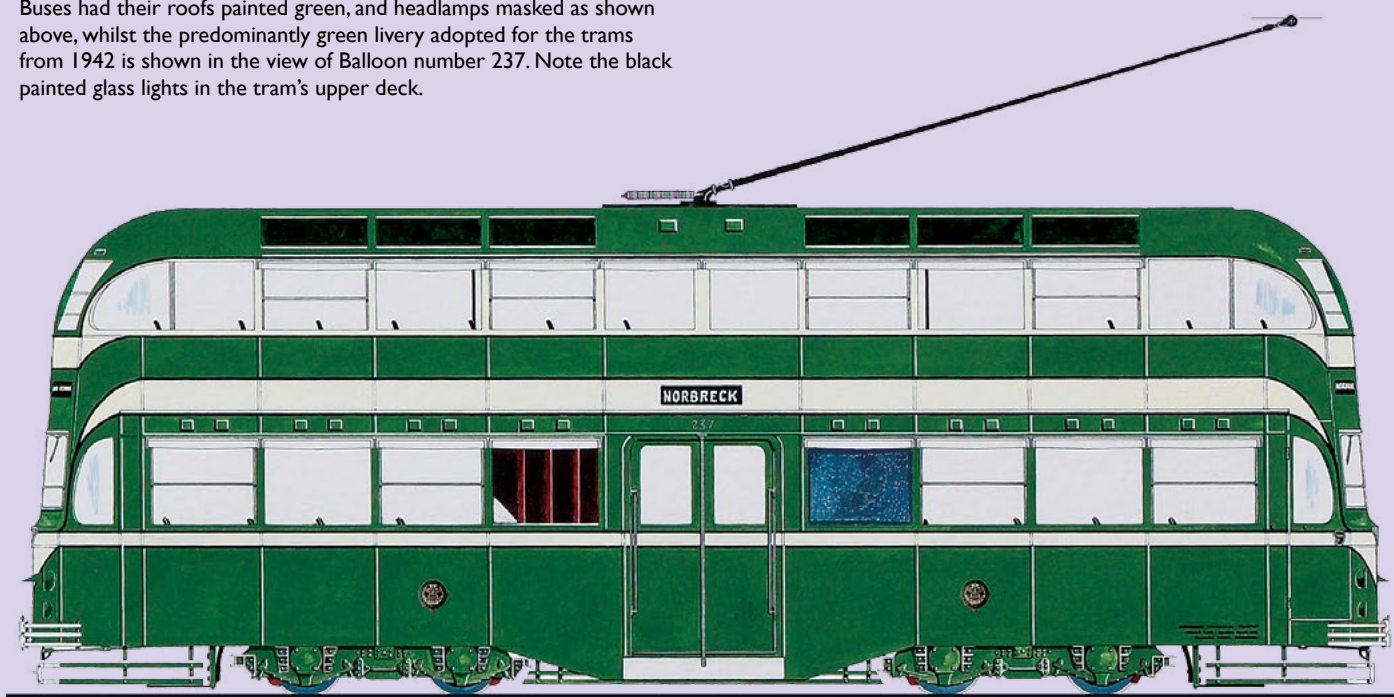


Local bodybuilder HV Burlingham, with works in Vicarage Lane and also on Preston New Road, took over from English Electric as the Department's preferred bus builder and worked with Walter Luff to produce designs which matched his iconic tram fleet. This resulted in the creation of a bus fleet which was every bit as stylish, and whose vehicles were instantly recognisable as **Blackpool** buses.

BUILDERS OF
DOUBLE and SINGLE DECK
PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLES
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H. V. BURLINGHAM LTD.
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Buses had their roofs painted green, and headlamps masked as shown above, whilst the predominantly green livery adopted for the trams from 1942 is shown in the view of Balloon number 237. Note the black painted glass lights in the tram's upper deck.

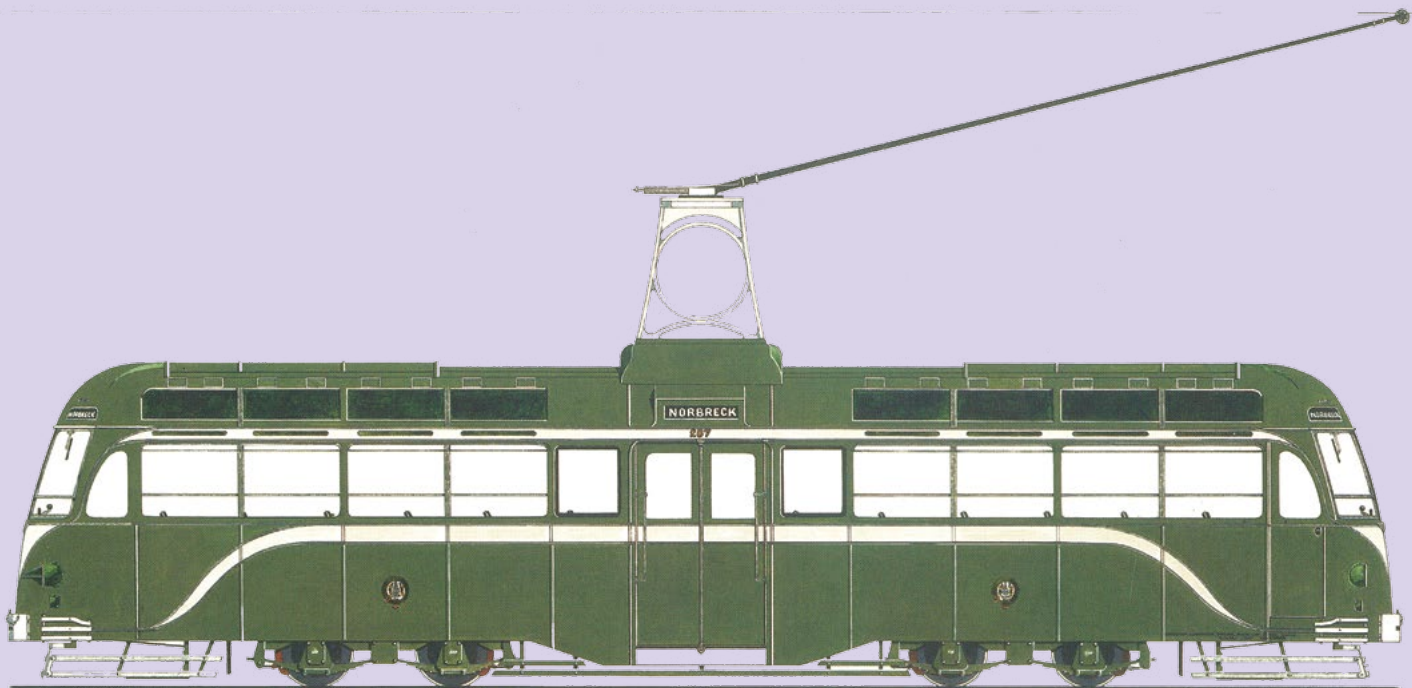


When the holiday makers and trippers began to return it created a major problem for the new temporary army of residents; they found that they could not get on the trams at Norbreck because there were no available seats and trams were going past full. It created quite a rumpus until the Transport Department addressed the problem. Other areas of difficulty were eased by relaying and improving some junctions.

What would have been a major improvement was not to come about. Vickers' factory was a mile or so beyond the Lytham Road tram terminus and they were keen to see the tramway extended to their factory gates to ease the lot of the hundreds of people employed there working on Wellington bomber construction and travelling by tram. Luff had the necessary materials and apparently the wish to carry out the work, but his committee were not keen and insisted that if Vickers Armstrong wanted the extension they must pay for it. And so that was the end of that.

Because the department had had to relinquish Marton depot, and had also lost part of its Rigby Road complex, it was now desperately short of space and so in a twin-pronged attack on the situation it began scrapping old cars which would never run again and also moving rolling stock around. Bispham depot was reopened and Copse Road Fleetwood gained some new residents – it also began to see scrapping taking place in its yard again. Amongst the trams broken up in this purge were

The wartime green livery as applied to the Railcoaches. The stainless trim on the Brush cars set the style for the cream relief.



the batch of toastracks numbers 69-92 and the remaining unwanted former B&F crossbench cars which the Sun Saloons had replaced. On a happier note the workshops found time to redecorate the illuminated Bandwagon to promote National Savings, War Weapons Week and so on, though it ran only in daytime and without its blaze of lights of course.

Wartime took its inevitable toll on the transport department and in addition to arrears of routine maintenance and overhaul there were now severe shortages of staff to operate the vehicles. In 1943 it was recorded that there were 165 serviceable trams available, but that some 55 were out of use for lack of crews.

Despite all the problems there was still the need to plan for the future and Walter Luff presented a three-year plan to the Council in December 1943. He clearly saw the trams as continuing to be the mainstay of the town's transport system, and expected them to remain profitable. His plan did, however, envisage replacing the Marton trams with trolleybuses, for which powers to operate had been obtained soon after his arrival back in 1933, thus retaining the benefits of clean and quiet electric transport whilst also continuing to make use of the infrastructure. On the main Promenade route he planned to introduce 30 new single-deck trams to maintain the core service, and expected that these would incorporate some of the features of the American PCC trams which gave very smooth and comfortable riding through the use of bogies with rubber sandwiches between the wheel's hub and tyre, and more modern control equipment eliminating the often noticeable jerk between power notches as the tram speeded up. At the same time he envisaged renewing worn out tracks and enlarging the depots as appropriate. Fleetwood would

Standard cars would continue to work on the Marton route until the major upgrading took place. Note the bamboo pole which was used to turn the trolley pole, suspended above the bogies. (G Lumb)



gain new depots for trams and, separately, buses. Although he was planning ahead in this area the failure to place forward orders with Leyland Motors for delivery after the end of the war would later cause problems when Blackpool was not at the top of the queue for new buses.

The debate about Marton's trams, or trolleybuses, or neither, rumbled on throughout the remainder of the war years and indeed it was not until 1947 that a decision was finally taken to retain the route, and to upgrade it with the very latest technology. The patched up but by then dangerous track would be replaced, and welding would replace rail joints, giving a quieter and smoother ride. Resilient wheeled bogies on the trams would further enhance this and the new VAMBAC (*variable automatic multi-notch braking and control*) system of control would be fitted to these same trams. Thus, after these years of argy-bargy, a decision had been reached – and Walter Luff was destined never to be a trolleybus manager.

At this time his work in preparing to modernise the tramway system was recognised by the Light Railway Transport League, a group of enthusiasts fighting vainly to promote the concept of a modern tramway, and Mr Luff was pleased to be appointed as their President in 1945. A less positive note was struck when the Council decreed that the substantially increased profits generated during the war, through a combination of increased loadings, reduced expenditure on maintenance and other enforced economies, should not, as Luff wanted, be put into the Deferred Maintenance Fund, but instead be used for Rate Relief. This apparently laudable decision for the ratepayers was to cost them dearly in due course, for the sum involved – £250,000 – would have gone a long way to avoiding the crippling loan charges later incurred in purchasing new rolling stock in the 'fifties.

The Maley & Taunton resilient wheeled bogies purchased in 1948 cost £2,748 per pair. The VAMBAC equipment for car 208 cost a further £2,300 without the cost of modification and installation to the existing tram. The original English Railcoaches, on the track and ready to run, had cost £2,356 in 1934. (STA)



The approval to retain trams on the Marton route included agreement that the latest technology should be made available in the rebuilding of the Sun Saloons, and that in their reincarnation they would spearhead modern British tramway practice. Although the full go-ahead had still not then been given, trials were conducted during 1946 with equipment which would be vital to the eventual success when the green light was given.

Luff was seeking to address two separate issues, but to combine them into one solution. He wanted to have smoother riding, intending to achieve this with the PCC-type resilient wheeled bogies with their rubber sandwiches in the wheels which absorbed shocks and made them quieter in operation. He also wanted a better form of control in passing current to the motors, to give a smoother increase or decrease in speed.

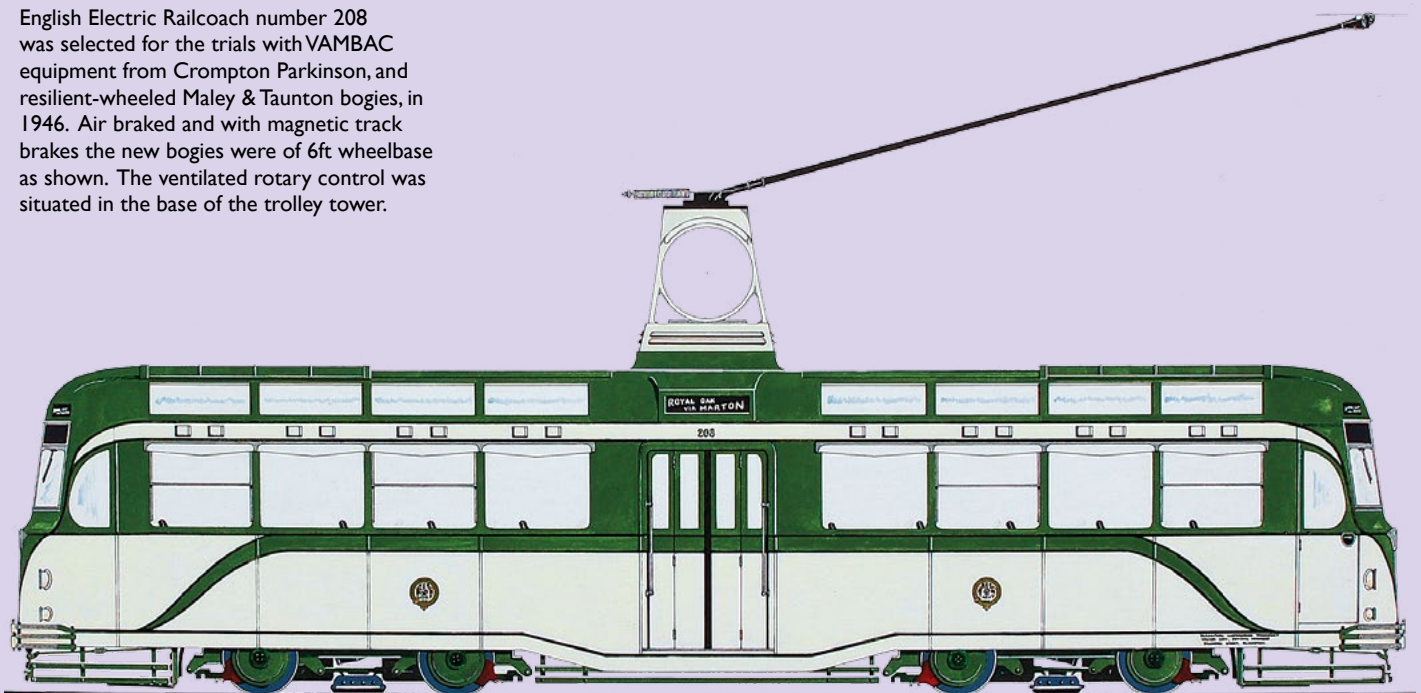
Maley & Taunton supplied two sets of bogies for trial, one with the resilient wheels, and Crompton Parkinson supplied one set of VAMBAC control equipment. This used a rotary resistance which as it spun round determined how much power was fed to the motors but any increase or decrease was gradual and imperceptible. It was automatic, the driver merely determining the rate of acceleration up to the desired speed.

One English Electric car, number 208 of 1934, and one Brush example, number 303, the last of the 1937 Railcoaches, were selected for the trials. During 1946 both cars were subjected



Number 208, now fitted with VAMBAC control, prepares to return to Talbot Square via Marton from Station Road in 1950. The base of the trolley tower clearly shows the modifications necessary to house the equipment. (JS King)

English Electric Railcoach number 208 was selected for the trials with VAMBAC equipment from Crompton Parkinson, and resilient-wheeled Maley & Taunton bogies, in 1946. Air braked and with magnetic track brakes the new bogies were of 6ft wheelbase as shown. The ventilated rotary control was situated in the base of the trolley tower.



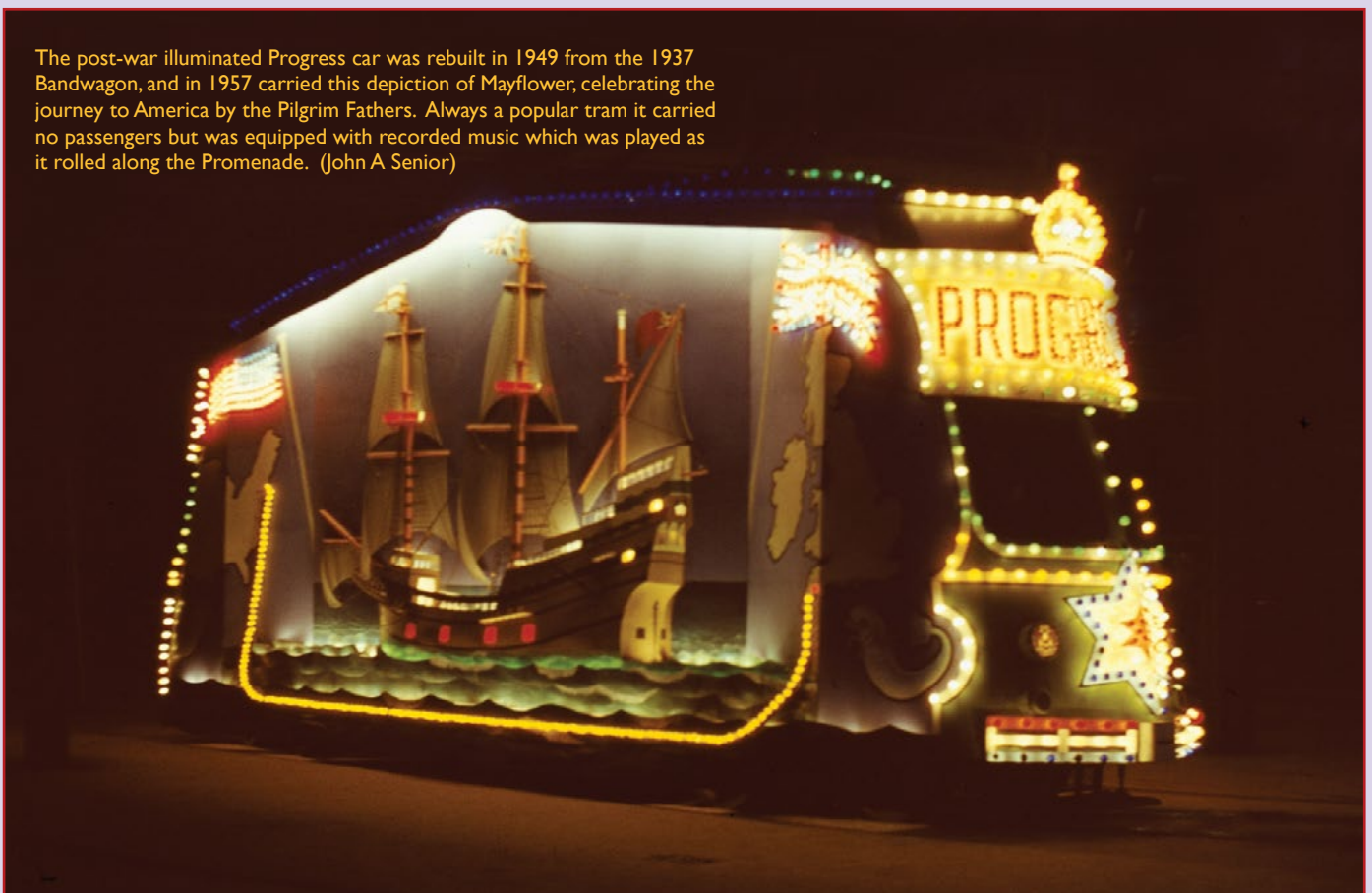
to trials and adjustments, but by February 303 had already tested the new bogies on the wornout Marton track and proved their worth. By November 208 had its VAMBAC control and the resilient bogies and then went into service, again on the Marton route. Both cars had been repainted cream with green relief. Following the success of the trials further equipment was ordered to convert the Sun Saloons.

When the war finished the Bandwagon was decorated for VE Day – *Victory in Europe* – and toured all the routes in the Borough. Times of great change had clearly come and the change of Government coincided with a period of intense austerity. Many found things harder, and basic needs more scarce, than during the war itself. In 1948, however, as relaxation of some wartime restrictions came into effect last trams and buses were extended from 10.30 to 11.00pm.

One of the war-time songs popularised by Vera Lynn had been 'When the lights go on again'; it must have had a particular significance for Blackpool, but due to the harsh economic circumstances in those immediate post-war years the Illuminations were not restarted until 1949. The movement of coal from Thornton sidings ceased in that same year and statistics for 1950 show that 4.7 million tram miles were operated and 58 million passengers carried.

The Sun Saloons had been converted between January 1948 and June 1950 and were running almost silently along the Marton route, the new track and rubber suspension giving a first class ride, and the old faithful Standard cars had now been sidelined. The next stage of the post-war improvements was about to happen as it was announced that rate relief paid by the trams now totalled £653,858.

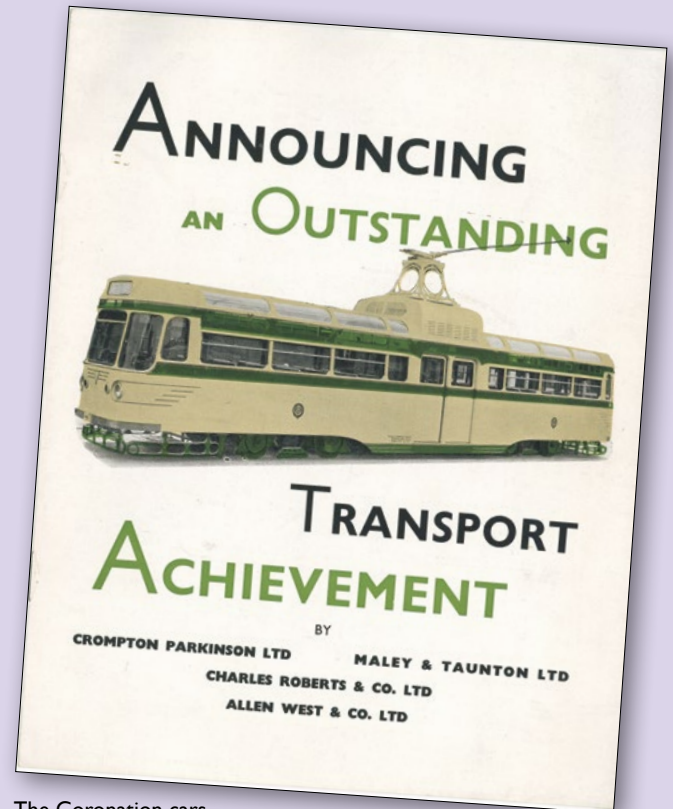
The post-war illuminated Progress car was rebuilt in 1949 from the 1937 Bandwagon, and in 1957 carried this depiction of Mayflower, celebrating the journey to America by the Pilgrim Fathers. Always a popular tram it carried no passengers but was equipped with recorded music which was played as it rolled along the Promenade. (John A Senior)



Both English Electric and Brush had now pulled out of tramcar manufacture and there was very little left of the once proud and busy British tramway industry. It fell to Charles Roberts of Wakefield, well known for railway manufacturing, less so for bus building and perhaps even less for tramcar manufacture to be the builders of Blackpool's next trams. Chas Roberts were also to build 35 double-deckers for the Sheffield system at this time.

Delivery of the first new post-war trams commenced in 1952 and, following trials, by January 1954 the 25 Coronations were in service, numbered 304-28. They were impressive looking vehicles – 8ft wide, 50ft long, seating 56 passengers and weighing nearly 20 tons. Fitted with the new VAMBAC equipment which was working well on the Marton service they were expected to be the mainstay of the Starr Gate to Fleetwood service for many years to come – just as their predecessors from 1935 to 1937 had been.

They soon demonstrated their prowess, and voracious appetite for electricity, and the control system was modified to tame their exuberance somewhat. What was not yet appreciated was their achilles heel through ingesting sand into the rotary unit in the base of the trolley tower – shades of the conduit cars of the 1890s!



The Coronation cars were fine looking vehicles though approaching 20 tons for only 56 seats they were clearly no lightweights. Interior appointments matched the external appearance but problems with the sophisticated VAMBAC equipment on Blackpool's windswept promenade soon caused them to lose their appeal to those maintaining them. (STA)

An almost timeless scene at Fleetwood Ferry terminal as class leader number 304 awaits its return journey. The cars and building behind the tram confirm this is a 1958 view but with 304 having been restored to its original condition there are many rather similar modern images taken over 50 years later. (John A Senior).



Blackpool will always remember 1953 for the 'Matthews' FA Cup Final. Blackpool came from behind to win the game in the last minutes of normal time, thanks to two goals set up by Stanley Matthews. This was Coronation year, and so it was a thrill for the team to receive their Winners' medals from the young, and as yet uncrowned, Queen Elizabeth.

Walter Luff was due to retire in 1952 but stayed until 1954, when he was succeeded by Joe Franklin, who had been General Manager at Rochdale Corporation Transport since 1951. Mr Franklin had previously been Chief Engineer for Salford City Transport from 1946, before that Rolling Stock Engineer at Walsall and before that had worked at Midland Red – a man who knew all about nuts, bolts and spanners, and would need to.

Chairman of the Transport Committee since 1935, Alderman Tatham died in 1954, and his successor was Rhodes Marshall, meaning there were now two new men in the two key positions.

A Balloon car rolls into Cleveleys on a dull June day in 1957, before the use of these cars through to Fleetwood had been introduced. Repainting the fleet into the brighter prewar predominantly cream livery had already begun and these cars were starting to look drab by comparison. (John A Senior)



It was clear that finance was going to be a problem again and the pragmatists won the day when advertising on buses and trams was reintroduced for the first time since 1919. VAMBACS 10-21 were fitted with rolling advertising screens in the saloons, anticipating by many years the more modern version which now appears in many vehicles.

Although the private motor car was making its presence felt there were still plenty of holidaymakers, and business on the tramway was brisk. Circular tours now used Squires Gate Lane to access Lytham Road from the Promenade, passing the tramless Lytham depot on their way. To keep up with the obvious demand it was decided to run double-deckers through to Fleetwood and, to accommodate this, check-rails were fitted along this track in 1957 and a Balloon ran from North Station in 1958.

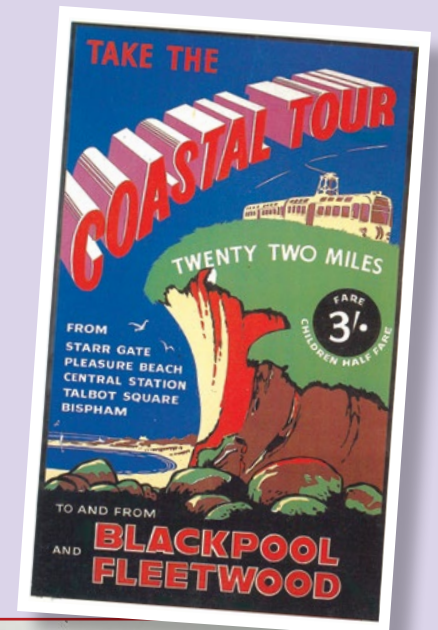
The same year the first trailer set was created from Nos. 275/6, the trailer being 275, and the pair formed an impressive unit as can be seen overleaf.

Round the corner on the same day as the picture opposite Pantograph 169 is ready to return to North Station, looking smart despite being 30 years old. Like most of the class it had seen many changes in its life. Delivered in the pre-1933 red livery it was repainted into green and cream in 1934; its next repaint in 1937 saw it change to cream, hoping to fool passengers into thinking it was a Railcoach. Around 1955 it received this livery, and by then the familiar large shaded numerals had been replaced with plain gold as shown. All the Pantographs had been withdrawn from passenger service by the end of the 1961 season. It was one of eight to receive cascaded English Electric bogies from the former Sun Saloons when they received new bogies post 1948 as part of the VAMBAC upgrade. (John A Senior)



As Mr Franklin settled in he began to realise that the financial situation was actually worse than Walter Luff had inherited, and a major part of the problem was those 25 new trams which soon proved just how temperamental they could be. He must have been reminded of the dark days in Salford when he struggled to get enough servicable trams from his graveyard fleet to operate the morning and evening peaks. He visited Aberdeen and Leeds to look at trams which were possible second-hand purchases due to tramway abandonment in those cities, but in the event none was bought. Aberdeen had some fine centre-entrance double-deckers similar to Blackpool's, but newer, having been English Electric's very last trams in 1940. His next visit was to see Mr Finlay, the General Manager at Leeds where he looked at VAMBAC car 602. He quickly ruled it out as being too small, with its seating capacity of only 34 and being essentially a standee tram. It had been built by Roe at the Crossgates factory in Leeds.

Meanwhile, back in the works, another illuminated tram was created in 1959, the Blackpool Belle. This magnificent representation of an American Mississippi paddle steamer was an instant success and must rank as one of the best productions from the team responsible for these eye-catching trams. Rebuilt from Toastrack 163 of 1927 it was used until 1978 and



English Electric Railcoaches 276 and 275 were converted to operate as a motor car and trailer in March 1958 and later that year the pair are seen at the Gynn on the Limited Stop working to Little Bispham. Following the success of this conversion ten new trailers were ordered and 275 was motorised again. Note the prominent air horns on the roof. (John A Senior)



replaced the much-loved Progress car which had succumbed to structural failure after the creation of the over-ambitious Mayflower tableau. Two Standard cars, 158 and 159, were decked out with lights to enhance the illuminated fleet. Traffic statistics for 1959 show 3.3 million tram miles and 34 million passengers carried.

The Borough had now reached its 75th year of tramway operation and the event was celebrated handsomely. Derelict cars were rebuilt and restored, others were refurbished, and others smartened up to allow a grand procession to take place on the actual anniversary, 29th September 1960. For the first time since 1934 one of the famous Dreadnoughts would be seen operating on the Promenade in amongst the other splendid veterans.

The 'swinging sixties' then continued with new trailer cars numbers T1-10 entering service between July 1960 and January 1961 and Nos. 272-4/7-81 being converted into towing cars. Number 275 was refitted with motors to become a towing car, these conversions taking place between July 1960 and May 1962. Changes to the illuminated fleet in 1961 were the withdrawal of the Lifeboat and the Gondola, being replaced by Tramnik One, a rocket created from Pantograph car No. 168 – the Department had finally run out of B&F cars to convert. The Space-Race was just beginning following the launch of Sputnik One by the Russians, so the rocket theme was very topical.

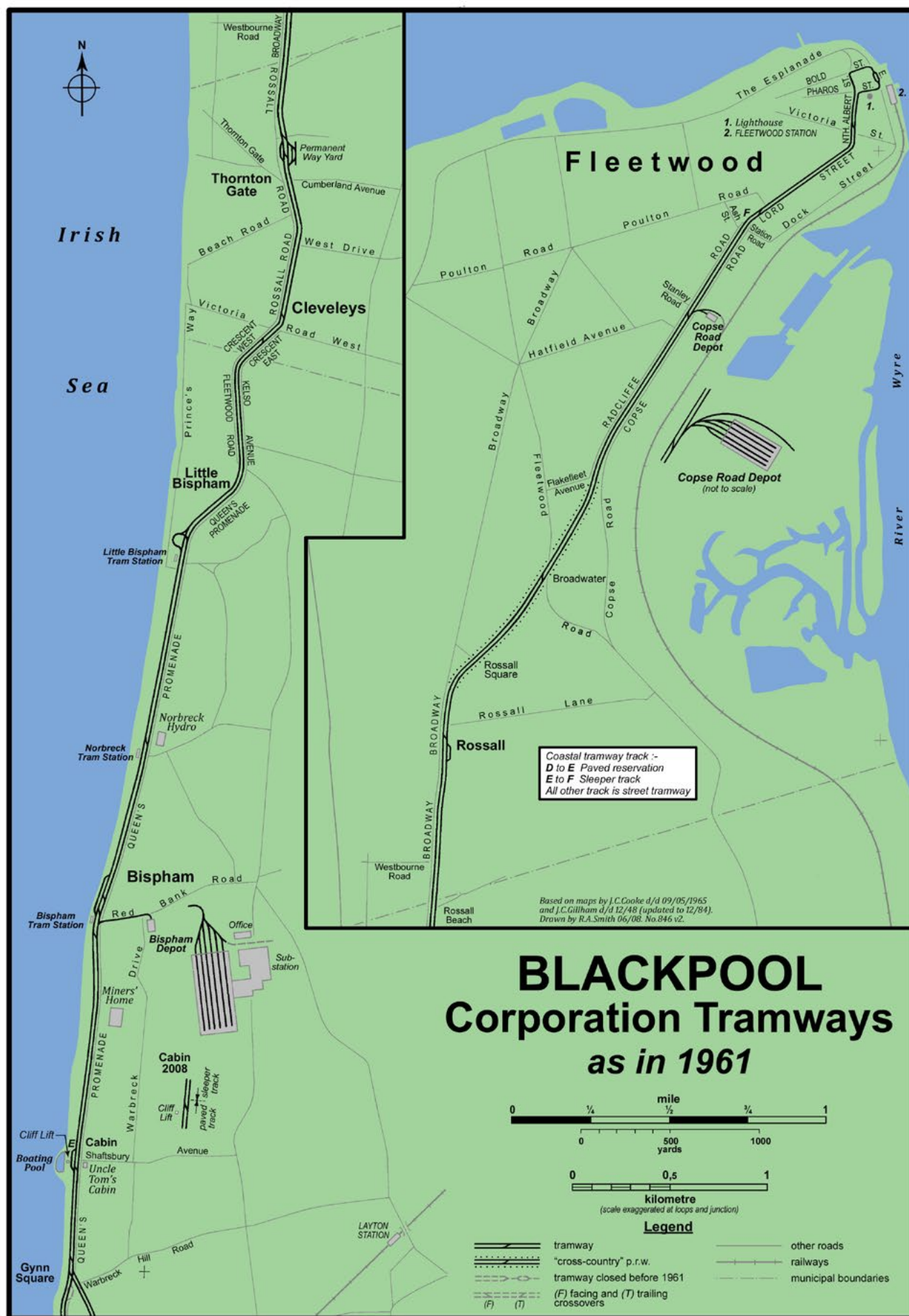


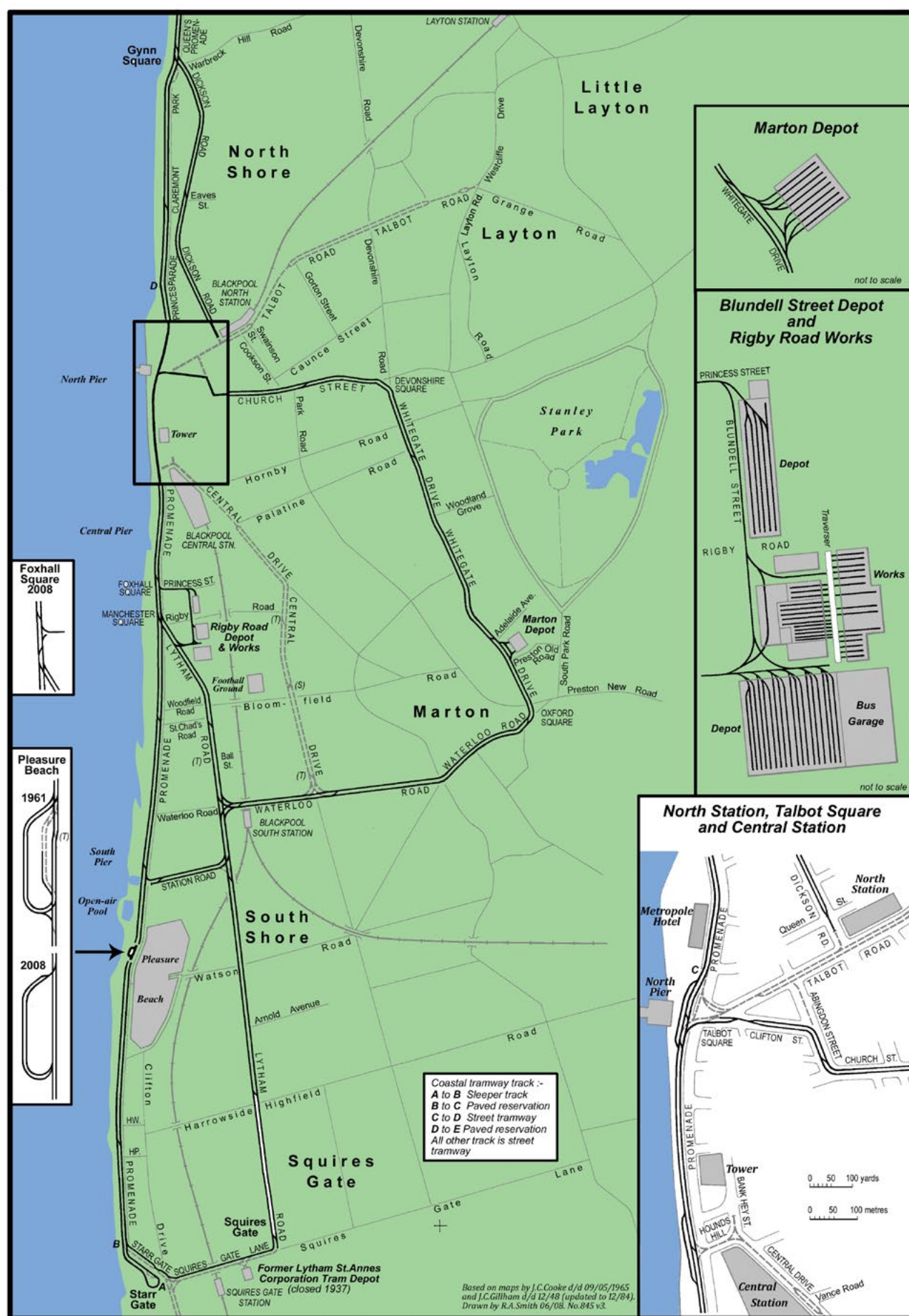
The restored cars were in great demand and here Dreadnought 59 and Rack 2 wait to leave Rigby Road depot in 1960. We shall see them again later. (JS King)

The two decorated Standard cars found themselves carrying enthusiasts wanting something a little different for their outings and one is seen here outside North Station. Those hoping to travel to Layton would be disappointed. (G Lumb)







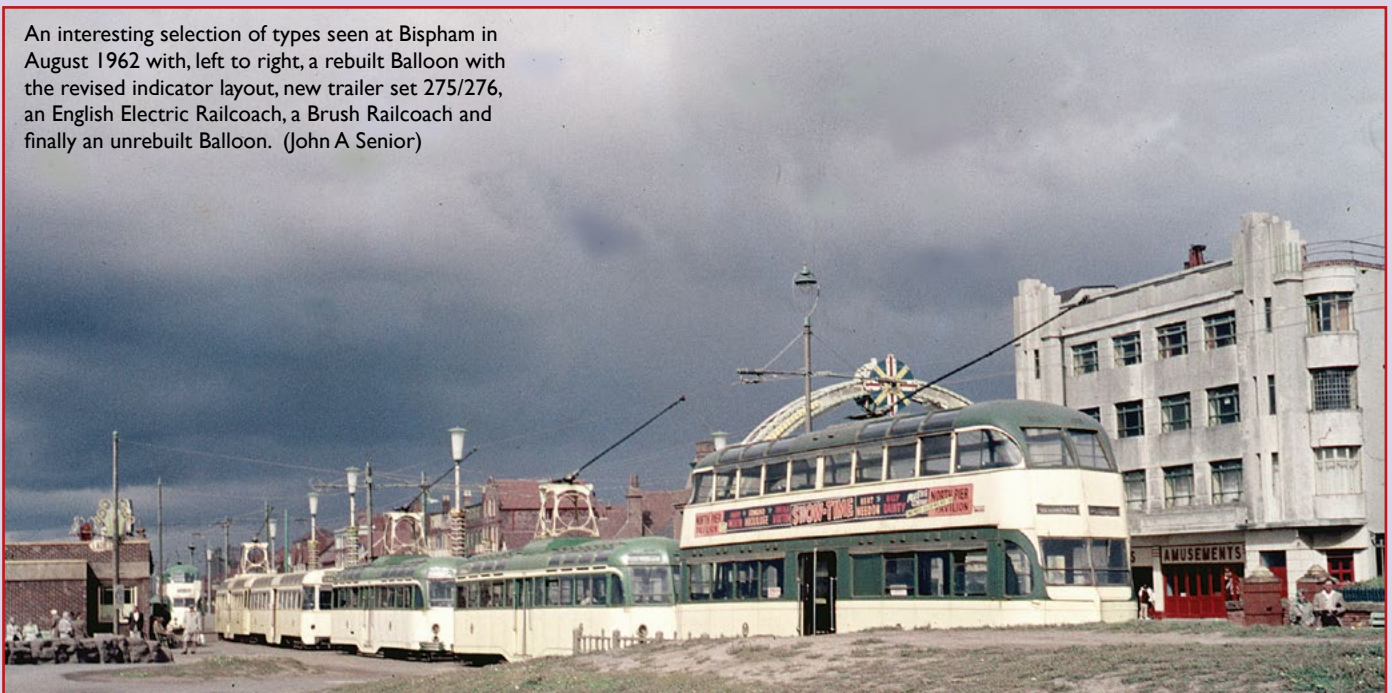




Tramnik One captured the spirit of the times as the Space-Race between Russia and America progressed. It is now part of the LTT fleet. (G Lumb)

Congestion through private motoring was now becoming a problem in Blackpool as elsewhere, and the Council was determined to be rid of all the street trams, despite the cost of relaying the Marton route so recently. The Manager tried hard to fight the trams' corner but was outgunned and so the inland tram routes contracted further in 1961 with the withdrawal of the Lytham Road and Station Road services on 29th October. Marton trams then had to terminate at Royal Oak. It was in that year that the Pantograph cars were withdrawn, having performed solidly and reliably for some 33 years. Twelve months later the former showpiece Marton route closed, again at the end of the season on 28th October.

An interesting selection of types seen at Bispham in August 1962 with, left to right, a rebuilt Balloon with the revised indicator layout, new trailer set 275/276, an English Electric Railcoach, a Brush Railcoach and finally an unrebuilt Balloon. (John A Senior)



The Western Train seen on page 4 was the next illuminated tram, having been converted for 1962 from Pantograph 174 and Railcoach 209. This was the time Glasgow trams came to the end of their line, leaving Blackpool as the only remaining traditional street-running tramway in Britain. At this time many trams from across Britain were finding a home at the Tramway Museum at Crich, in Derbyshire. Over time many would be restored to their former glory and others used as a source of spare parts.

In 1963 the last street route fell when the North Station route closed on 27th October, leaving just the coastal tramway as Walter Luff had foreseen back in 1934. There was then a considerable stock of surplus cars and a space problem as Marton, Bispham and Copse Road depots were all closed – Marton was sold for use as a garage and Copse Road as a factory in that same year. A tranche of cars, including the 1960 restored examples and the pioneering 208 and 303, were offered to Crich and as many as could be accommodated went there. They had space problems too! Amongst the non-runners both the Gondola and Lifeboat were dismantled there for parts. With only Rigby Road and Blundell Street left to house the fleet the rest were quickly scrapped in Blackpool; Railcoaches, some Standards, Pantographs and the Marton Vambacs except for number 11 which survived to be preserved

In a final indignity all trams in Blackpool were withdrawn during the winter of 1963/64, though it was necessary to run a service between Cleveleys and Fleetwood for bus licence reasons. On a more positive note, the illuminated Hovertram seen opposite was created from Railcoach No. 222 in that year; once again, this represented modern technology as the Hovercraft was being hailed as the new way to cross water.



Blundell Street, now partitioned off and partially used by the permanent way department. Brush car 624 has become the engineering car whilst behind is an underframe from a scrap victim. To the right of the sorry-looking Balloon is one of the former Manchester Guy tower wagons. (G Lumb)



TMS 1533		
Rail Road depot	7/6	Lytham Road
Central Station		"Fosshall" cross over
Tower		Pleasure Beach
Lytham Road		South Promenade
Station Road, S.S.		Starr Gate
Royal Oak		Squire's Gate Lane
St. Anne's Road		Lytham Road
Lytham Road		Manchester Hotel
Squire's Gate & Airport		Rigby Road depot
Valid only on Tram No. 2 on "Toad Rack" Tram No. 2 or Fleetwood for state tour, Sunday, 23rd April, 1961. Subject to Bye-Laws and Regulations of Blackpool Corporation Tramways.		
M		

Balcony 40 stands outside Marton Depot after an enthusiasts' tour in 1960. The building had just three years left as a home to Blackpool's trams; the Standard was more fortunate, moving to the Tramway Museum at Crich in 1963 and later returning to its home town for the Centenary celebrations. (John A Senior)

It was the turn of the railways to make a closure next as Blackpool Central station closed in 1964 as a victim of Dr Beeching, the line being cut back to South station; the buildings were used as a bingo hall until demolished in 1974 as part of a redevelopment of the whole area. Bispham depot had been used for storage and dismantling but was sold in 1965. Meanwhile also in 1965 another illuminated car, HMS Blackpool, was built from yet another Pantograph, No. 170.

In 1966 Manchester withdrew its last trolleybuses and Blackpool acquired two Guy tower wagons which were then redundant, adding these to its own Borough maintenance stock. The following year the fleet was renumbered as computerisation of records proceeded; buses were numbered from 501-595, trams from 600 and 700 upwards. New buses later began at 301.

The Coronation cars were now causing serious concern. They were extremely expensive to maintain, spares costing a fortune when such small numbers were involved. It was perhaps only many years later when the Channel Four TV Programme *Salvage Squad* followed the resurrection of number 304 that the extent of some of the difficulties was exposed. At some time that tram had had a serious fire in the rotary controls in the trolley tower, which fortunately had not resulted in the car being burned out as it could so easily have been, but had brought its career to an end. This was acknowledged in the programme as being a part of the ingested sand legacy and 304 had not been alone in experiencing this disaster.



The Shell Hovertram of 1964, another fine creation. (G Lumb)



In 1967 the fleet was renumbered and here Balloon 719, formerly 256, rumbles past the Metropole. The single indicator arrangements were introduced in 1955 with the last one being done in 1980. Gold numerals would be replaced by black ones in 1973. (G Lumb)

Joe Franklin was desperate to see the back of these cars in 1968 but could not do so until the loan charges had been cleared in 1968/69 leaving them debt-free, fifteen years after their purchase. Those charges had pushed the cost to £20,000 per tram. Number 313, the so-called 'lift' car, stored without bogies, was the first to go in 1968 with nine others following over the next two years.

The Transport Act of 1968 included provision of grant assistance to operators purchasing new buses which had to be suitable for one-man-operation. Mr Franklin could now see a possible glimmer of light in his financial problems – would the same grants be available to him as a tram operator? This was particularly important now since the trams had shown a loss and the scrap-the-trams-lobby was ready for another session in Council meetings. Another change in livery occurred around now as the remaining green relief and flashes began to be reduced on the trams and buses. A young Tony Depledge joined the Transport Department in 1969 as a conductor and then driver before going to university; he was later to rejoin it in a management role.

Records for 1970 show that by then only 1.2 million tram miles had been operated with 11.9 million passengers being carried. These figures were partly a reflection of the withdrawal of the street routes between 1961 and 1963, of course, but did little to bolster the arguments against total tram withdrawal.

Although the Coronations were no longer dragging the Department down, falling passenger numbers and ever-increasing costs needed drastic measures and Mr Franklin was pushing hard to be able to introduce one-man-operated trams as he was then preparing to operate o-m-o buses, but there were no trams suitable in the fleet, and there was certainly no chance of being able to buy any – even if any had been available.



The Dreadnought car had been restored for the 1960 Centenary events but 20 years later was in need of serious attention. Blackpool Civic Trust took on the task – see opposite. (Tony Stevenson)



In better days Coronation 322 turns at Little Bispham loop. Twelve of the cars were given an extended life between 1964 and 1970 by the removal of the VAMBAC equipment and its replacement by controllers and resistances from withdrawn Railcoaches. Although it was a comedown it gave them six or seven extra years in revenue service. Three survive in preservation, number 304 restored with its original equipment at Rigby Road but owned by LTT, 660 as converted and the property of BTS and 663 in store with the LTT. (G Lumb)

The Government subsequently agreed to provide funding which resulted in the development of the first o-m-o car, using English Electric Railcoach 269 for the conversion. This became number 1 and was painted into a new livery of 'plum and custard', entering service in 1972. The task had been no small one. The body was extended outwards from the original bulkheads, and amongst many other changes drivers' cabins were created on the offside with the original controllers repositioned, alongside rather than in front of the driver as previously, to allow ticket sales to take place. Subsequently numbers 2-12 were converted in the same way, but from number 10 in April 1975 they were finished in a new red and cream livery. The existing bogies were retained and after experiments Metalastik suspension was adopted on all 13 cars.

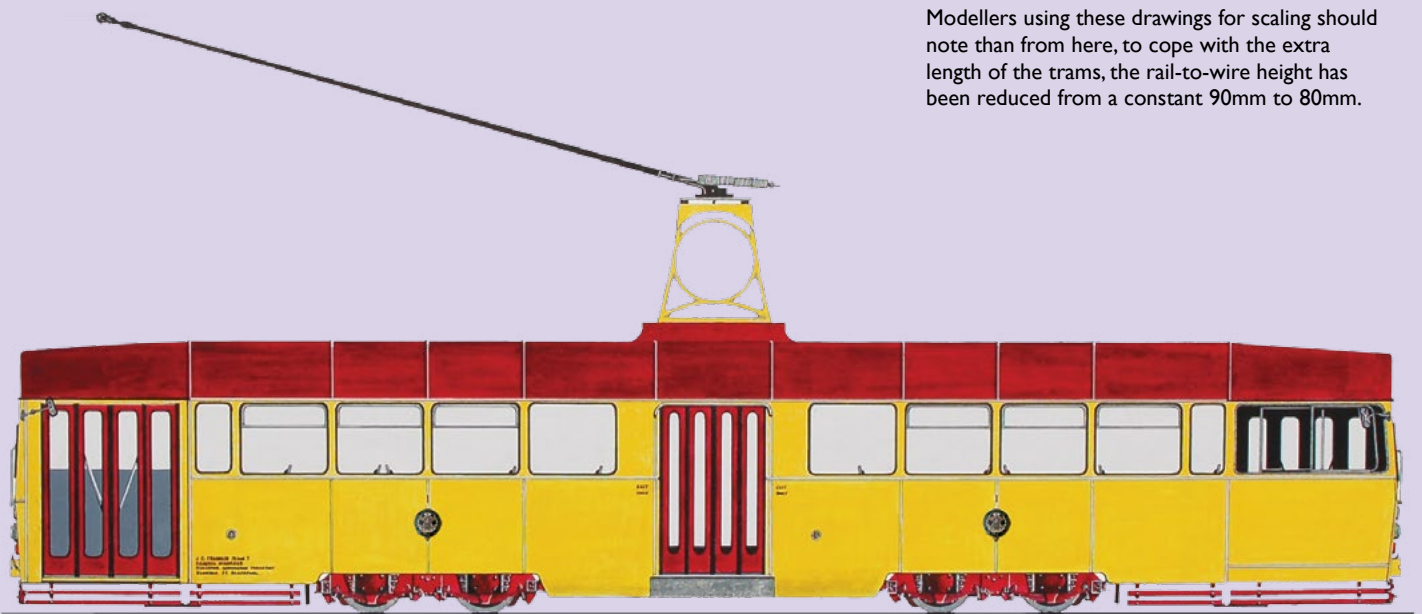
Bold Street depot was demolished in 1973, and Joe Franklin retired in 1974. He was succeeded by Derek Hyde, another Manchester man, who had previously been with Coventry Corporation, a municipal bus operator which had been absorbed by the West Midlands PTE, following Local Government changes. Mr Hyde had an engineering background, and had earlier been with Manchester, Southport and Halifax. In that same year Local Government reorganisation resulted in Blackpool ceasing to be a County Borough from 1st April. In Blackpool's case this made more Government finance available for the tramway, including track renewals and new cars. Like Mr Franklin before him, Mr Hyde could see a glimmer of light.

Nineteen-seventy-five was a busy year: the Council reaffirmed their pro-tram stance, the first all-over advertising vehicles appeared, the Civic Trust agreed to sponsor the rehabilitation of the preserved Dreadnought and a bridge was constructed across the promenade close to the Tower which gave a good vantage point for observing the trams as well as improving safety for pedestrians. This concrete structure was disliked by Blackpool residents, however, being described as an 'eyesore' and a 'monstrosity', in letters to the local paper. It was eventually demolished without too many tears in 2009



(Barry Shaw collection)

Modellers using these drawings for scaling should note that from here, to cope with the extra length of the trams, the rail-to-wire height has been reduced from a constant 90mm to 80mm.





The difference in colour of the cream introduced by the twin sets is clearly shown in this view, contrasting with the lighter cream on the Coronation class car. Another Coronation is just passing the end of the Metropole Hotel. (Peter Elliot collection)



A 'sixties scene with one of the streamlined buses following the classic Balloon down the Promenade. (Peter Elliot collection)

A Blackpool Tram

Blackpool is Britain's largest, liveliest and most go-ahead holiday resort. It also proudly boasts Britain's only remaining commercial tramway system which runs the whole length of the famous promenade, using comfortable modern cars similar to the one shown opposite. Brilliantly lit and imaginatively decorated trams are a big feature of Blackpool's famous Autumn illuminations.



Post cards just of the trams became popular when the streamline fleet was introduced in 1934 and continue to be so today. This example from around 1978 unfortunately shows just how grubby cream-liveried trams can become when sand and salt air do their worse. (Peter Elliot collection)

One-man-car number 8 in the plum and custard livery introduced when these cars were first launched in 1972 and denoting that they carried no conductor. In 1976 the livery was changed as shown on page 64. The Lancastrian Transport Trust have purchased this car and commissioned Blackpool Transport Services to repaint it in this livery prior to work beginning at their Marton base to restore it to as-converted condition. (STA)



as part of the final phase of the sea-front improvements programme.

Following the Civic Trust's sponsored refurbishment of Dreadnought car No. 59, it returned to Rigby Road in 1976 in time for the Borough Centenary celebrations which included a procession on 12th June. There were 85 trams in the fleet at that time.

Boat No. 603 went to Philadelphia to take part in centenary celebrations there, for which it was re-gauged to 5ft 3in, and Railcoach No. 635 left Blackpool for preservation, eventually moving to Mode Wheel, Salford to continue being rebuilt to 1937 condition as Brush car 298. The last four Coronations were ready for disposal, No. 663 being bought for preservation at Lytham Creek and one more o-m-o car, No.13 was rebuilt from Railcoach No. 271.

The most significant event of the year, however, was that work began in creating a modern double-decker by rebuilding No. 725 using standard bus body sections to become Jubilee car No. 761 when it entered service in 1979.

The Tower was painted silver in 1977 to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee and in the winter there was major work on track renewal on the promenade. Tony Depledge returned to become

Number 10, formerly Railcoach 267, shows off the new livery in April 1975 with an example in the earlier livery behind. (John A Senior)



In 1968 number 618, below, formerly Railcoach 271, was the subject of what turned out to be an unsuccessful conversion whereby the seating capacity was increased from 48 to 56 after it was lengthened and fitted with tapered ends as seen here. It was decided to rebuild it to become the thirteenth one-man car, and as such it duly appeared numbered 13 in June 1976. It was the first of the class to be scrapped, in 1985. (STA)



Traffic Manager, having worked in the Midlands and South Yorkshire, following his time at university. The decision was taken now to replace the TIM ticketing with a more up-to-date version, and the Almex system was chosen.

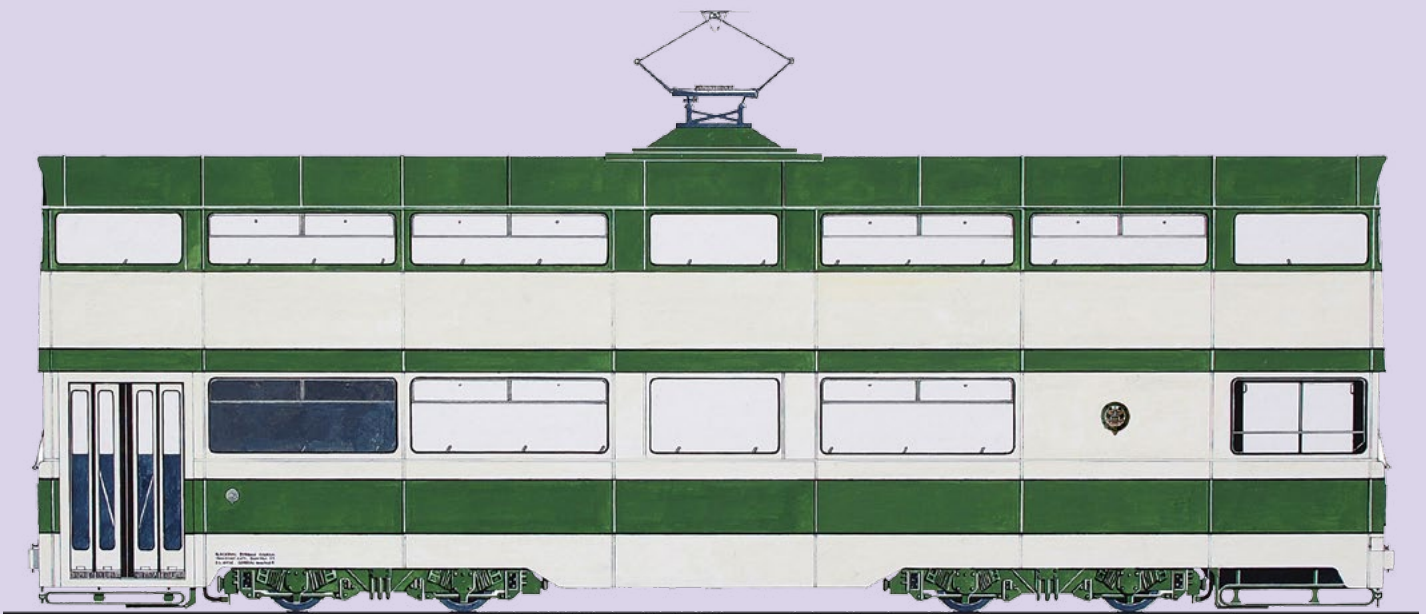
Boat No. 603 returned from Philadelphia in 1978, and returns for the year show that only 7.5 million passengers had been carried, but, more importantly, the trams had shown an operating profit. There was a slight improvement in 1980 with 8.3 million passengers carried but only 0.9 million tram miles run. That same year a head-on collision between Balloons numbers 705/6 caused severe damage but thanks to intervention and financial input from the Fylde Transport Society this later resulted in No. 706 being rebuilt as an open-topper and named *Princess Alice*.

During 1981 the workshops were busy creating a second double-decker, again using a withdrawn Balloon car, this time the original number 251 out of use since 1971. It was decided to retain the centre exit on this car, in addition to the front entrance alongside the driver. Whilst this work was underway a veteran double-decker from another era arrived – Bolton 66 which had been rebuilt and brought to operational 1920s condition by enthusiasts in that town. The car was tested and found to be in excellent condition, and, being a large bogie car with enclosed top deck, was eminently suitable for regular work. In its eye-catching traditional livery it was soon noticed by visitors and established a 'home link' connection with people from that area, encouraging them to want to ride on it. This



Bolton 66 demonstrated that visitors liked to see trams they could associate with their home towns, even if they had never ridden on them. It also encouraged the Department to consider other such trams. (Jason Cross)

The first Jubilee car, number 761, was created from the remains of Balloon 725 (formerly 262) which had lain out of use since Autumn 1971. The bogies had been designed and built for the Department. It was rolled out in April 1979 and entered service in July of that year.



spawned the idea of possible similar loans and paved the way for the influx of visiting trams for the 1985 Centenary, of which more in a moment. Bolton 66 remains in Blackpool to this day, and is still a regular and reliable performer, having operated during each season since its arrival in 1981. Heavy snowfall at the end of that year caused widespread disruption, and the arrival of the New Year was greeted with relief.

The second Jubilee double-decker, No. 762, was completed in 1982, but two less-happy events were the demolition of the famous Blundell Street depot, and the departure of the Blackpool Belle tram for preservation in America.

By 1983 Councillor Stanley Parkinson was looking ahead to the Centenary year, and how it should be celebrated as befitted such a momentous occasion. Working with the Manager, Derek Hyde, and his brother Geoff Hyde, the Chairman of the Crich Museum, it was decided to stage a grand procession showing the development of the tramcar through that 100 years. A former Edinburgh tram which had been stored in its home city then appeared, and it was agreed that National Savings would sponsor its refurbishment.

Meanwhile Bispham depot was finally demolished, severing another link with the old



Edinburgh 35 arrived in November 1983, in advance of the 1985 celebrations. It was sponsored by National Savings, put into running order and spruced up ready for the event. It is seen outside Rigby Road depot. It later went to the Glasgow Garden Festival, and from there to the Crich Tramway Museum, now its owner. (Tony Stevenson)

The evolution of the double-decker. Left to right an open-top 'Luxury Dreadnought' of 1934, as enclosed in 1942; enclosed Balloon from 1935 repainted in wartime green livery; 762, the second car built by the Department from a withdrawn Balloon incorporating various standard bus components from Metal Sections Ltd of Birmingham; the fourth and last Millennium Car, 724, produced in 2002, again from a withdrawn Balloon.



Tramroad Company. In the works the Coronation car which the Department was keeping, No. 660, a de-VAMBAC version – was being repanelled. As the year progressed arrangements were made for more visiting trams to be delivered and the great move around began. Cars were loaned to Crich, Heaton Park and to Beamish in exchange for cars borrowed from those places. Some became long-term visitors just as Bolton 66 had done. The workshops staff began to cope with the variety, and the need to ensure that all were fit for purpose, and though some were familiar types, others from Sheffield and Glasgow were definitely not. The conversion of badly damaged Balloon car 706 to open-top form began, ultimately creating a very attractive, popular and well patronised member of the heritage fleet. The first Centenary car, 641, was delivered in April (see page 70).

The following year, 1985, Manchester 765, Howth 10 and Steam Tram John Bull arrived, with Boat 603 leaving for San Francisco to operate with other vintage trams in that city. Preparations around the town for the big event included the creation of a floral tram at St John's Church, and hotels and boarding houses throughout the town were seeing record numbers of bookings. The first event was an open day at the depot on 16th June, followed by the first Tram Sunday in Fleetwood which assumed a carnival atmosphere for the day with the town full of vintage vehicles and street theatre.



A clever floral tribute from St John's Church. (John A Senior)

Number 762, showing its centre exit and the revised livery with the deep green band. (Tony Stevenson)



Finally on 29th September came the Grand Procession, watched by an absolute multitude as the mist cleared and glorious sunshine added the finishing touch to make the day perfect.

Blackpool's own trams mingled with the borrowed examples and crowds gathered along the route to enjoy the spectacle and, once the main parade was over, ride on the various trams. It was a wonderful opportunity for Blackpool to promote itself and hotels and guest houses throughout the Borough felt the benefit as they welcomed the many visitors who stayed to enjoy other attractions in the town and surrounding areas.

When it was all over the visiting trams were returned and life began to return to normal, but not for long for big changes were on the way following the 1985 Transport Act as we shall shortly see.

Conduit car number 4 from 1885, the Dreadnought from 1902 and latest addition 762 pose for photographers at the Pleasure Beach loop on 29th September 1985. Sheffield Roberts car number 513 is just visible in the background. (John A Senior)



Tram Sunday, and the crowds flock into Fleetwood. (Tony Stevenson)

TICKET NO: 001334

Blackpool Transport

FARE 60/-

SEAT NO. _____ RESERVED

For _____

TRAMWAY CENTENARY
CAVALCADE OF TRAMS
SUNDAY 29th SEPTEMBER 1985

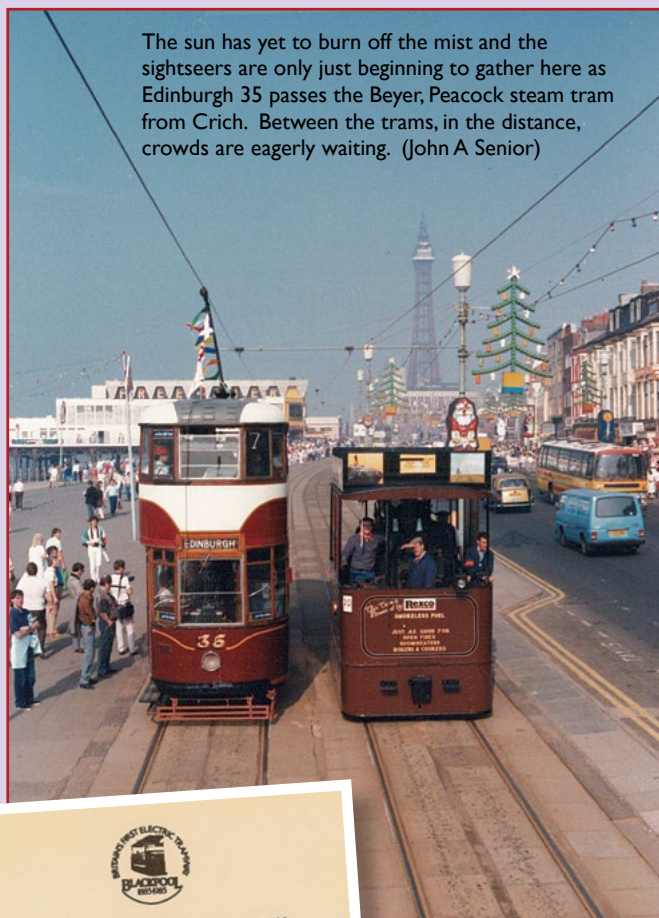
CONDUIT 4
STANDARD 46
PANTOGRAPH 187
PRINCESS ALICE 768
DREADNOUGHT 19
CORONATION 440
JUBILEE 762
TRAILER TRAM
OPEN BOAT
BALLOON
BRUSH CAR
BOLTON 44
SHEFFIELD 513
MANCHESTER 765
GLASGOW 1397
EDINBURGH 35
HILL OF HOWTH 18
CENTENARY 601
ONE-MAN SINGLE DECK

TIME: _____ FROM: _____

THIS PORTION TO BE GIVEN UP WHEN BOARDING TRAM AS INDICATED BY PUNCH HOLE

TRAM SEAT NO: _____

TICKET NO: 001334



The sun has yet to burn off the mist and the sightseers are only just beginning to gather here as Edinburgh 35 passes the Beyer, Peacock steam tram from Crich. Between the trams, in the distance, crowds are eagerly waiting. (John A Senior)



Trams from Scotland, Ireland and England meet at Bispham. Glasgow Cunarder 1297 and Hill of Howth 10 from Crich stand with Manchester 765 from Heaton Park in that City. All three carry their procession numbers in black on white cards. (John A Senior)



The 1885 Conduit car leads Dreadnought 59, Blackpool Balcony 40 and Pantograph 167 whilst a Trailer Set including 684 prepares to leave the inner anti-clockwise loop, the RESERVED display confirming it is one of the cars in the procession. In those days of conventional photography the amount of film used over the events must have been impressive. The Dreadnought is acting as an impromptu grandstand but questions as to the reason for its storage are clearly answered in this view. (Carolyn Senior)



1986 to the Present Day

Blackpool Transport Services Limited was formed on 20th October 1986 and took over operation of the services of the Blackpool Corporation Transport Department from Sunday 26th October. Tony Depledge, who had been Traffic Manager, became Managing Director of the new company, with Messrs T Leach and D Evans as Directors. Bill Gibson was Chief Engineer. Derek Hyde retired but was retained as a consultant. These changes were a direct result of legislation contained in the 1985 Transport Act, which required local authorities to set up arms-length companies. The Municipal coat of arms was replaced by a new logo depicting the words 'Blackpool Transport' and incorporating the Tower and sea waves. All of the shares in the new company were held by Blackpool Council which retained ownership of the track and fixed assets, and in some ways initially it was 'business as usual'.

At this point three further Centenary cars (Nos. 642-4) were at the East Lancashire Coachbuilders' factory but were waiting for controllers and equipment from Brush, and when delivered replaced one-man cars numbered 3, 6 and 7. The arrival of the Centenary cars meant that the winter service was no longer operated exclusively by the o-m-o cars. A new lease of life was given to No. 7 when it was selected to be rebuilt to replicate a Tramroad Vanguard car. This work was done at Salford Mode Wheel workshops and it returned to Blackpool as No. 619 on 27th June 1987. After some small modifications it was passed fit for service and first operated on 27th September.

The Glasgow Garden Festival took place in 1988 and a tram-line was constructed on the site whilst Blackpool Boat No. 606 was loaned for operation there, being joined by Edinburgh 35. The remainder of the seven Centenary cars were in service by this year.

During 1990, Balloon car 701 was rebuilt with safety glass, fixed seats and painted in the red and white livery as carried by the Routemaster bus in the fleet. By now, surprisingly, remedial work was needed on the first of the Centenary cars with the fitting of new window frames, due to the rusting of the originals. Stockport No. 5, a small four-wheeled open-topper arrived in Blackpool in 1996, again from the Mode Wheel workshops, and work began on the re-creation of No. 700, the first of the original Balloons.

Centenary car 641, the first of the new trams purchased to replace the o-m-o conversions, seen when brand new. The body incorporated components common to buses in the fleet from the same Blackburn manufacturer, whilst the bogies were those which Blackpool had itself designed for the Jubilee double-deckers 761 and 762 (Tony Stevenson)



After more than a century of continuous operation, it was recognised that major improvements were needed to bring the tramway up to modern standards, and to exploit its potential for serving other parts of the Fylde area. Studies were undertaken to assess the most cost effective solutions, sponsored by the local authorities responsible for the tramway, Blackpool Borough Council, Lancashire County Council and Wyre Borough Council, together with the operating company, Blackpool Transport Services Limited.

In 1997 the *Blackpool Tramway Access Study* examined ways of improving accessibility, particularly for mobility impaired passengers including those in wheelchairs or pushchairs. The high step entry to some trams was a major difficulty for many users. Possible solutions were seen as low-height platforms at all stops, coupled with either modified Brush cars, low floor trailers or new low floor trams.

The Centenary of the Blackpool & Fleetwood Tramroad Company occurred in 1998, and to mark this occasion a re-enactment of the first run took place. Trams in the procession were Crossbench Rack No. 2, Box 40 (which had been reupholstered at Mode Wheel), and Pantograph 167, all borrowed from Crich, former Marton Box No. 31 from Beamish Open-Air Museum, and Coronation 660 (no longer a VAMBAC car)



Balloon car 701 in its distinctive red and white livery dwarfs the Stockport open-topper which arrived in 1996 and has operated intermittently since then. (Tony Stevenson)

The arrival of the Centenary cars allowed withdrawal of the now worn out o-m-o trams. Number 5, seen here, left in June 2000 to join other Blackpool trams at the Crich Tramway Museum where it remains in store. (Tony Stevenson)



which the Department had restored and would keep. Later in the year Nos. 2 and 167 returned to Crich.

The new tram and light rail systems which had commenced opening in Britain during the 1980s all used rolling stock built in continental Europe, and in an attempt to counter this an experimental car was built in Britain, Trampower 611. It was designed with the intention of reducing costs by using off-the-shelf automotive components such as drive shafts, and to make use of existing proven UK technology. This tram came to Blackpool in 1998 from Birkenhead for trials.

Heaton Park returned Boat No. 600 in 1997 after its lengthy and successful sojourn there, whilst Glasgow Coronation car No. 1245 arrived in Blackpool from the East Anglia Transport Museum for evaluation, though in the event no action was taken regarding its possible use. In the workshops Balloon number 707 was rebuilt to become the first Millennium double-decker. It was not possible to find finance to build further sophisticated Jubilee cars to match 761 and 762, and so although these latest conversions had major bodywork reconstruction, with flat ends and new saloon windows making a great visual improvement, in the cab, and underneath the body, however, all remained much as previously and modern chopper control and new bogies were out of the question.

The publicity and marketing value of reliable 'vintage' cars caused plans to be formed in 1999 to repatriate Standard No. 147 from Trolleyville, Ohio where it had been since September 1967. This was achieved in 2000 linked with the exchange of Boat No. 606 which would be capable of operation at Trolleyville,



Standard 147 splendidly restored after repatriation in 2000. In 1964 this car had been earmarked as a static exhibit for a street scene in the Salford Peel Park Museum, to represent a Salford bogie car (which it closely resembled) but that scheme failed for lack of finance and the car went to America. (Geoff Senior)

Balloon 718 at Anchorsholme crossing showing the new design of end styling and saloon windows, and also route branding for the Starr Gate to Fleetwood service. Below decks all remains substantially unchanged. Route branding was discontinued completely from July 2010. (Jason Cross)



something 147's height had prevented. Number 147 was shipped with the decks separated, arriving in Blackpool on 23rd October.

The new millennium saw illuminated trams Frigate and Hovertram still in service, but the Rocket and Western Train were withdrawn on safety grounds. The Lancastrian Trust later acquired the Rocket for preservation whilst the Western Train became the subject of a successful Lottery Grant as mentioned later.

Further studies following on from the one in 1997 culminated in a bid to the Department for Transport (DfT) in July 2001 for a three phase project costing £166m (2000 prices). Phase 1 costing £86m was to upgrade the existing tramway with new trams, new track, low platforms, completion of the electrical works (the late 1990s electrical infrastructure renewal project was not completed due to budget limitations) and extension of Rigby Road Depot. Phase 2 would see the reinstatement of tracks in Dickson Road and Talbot Road and trams extended from Central Pier to St Annes and Lytham using former and existing rail alignments. The BR rail service would have been cut back to Lytham, or possibly with joint use between Lytham and St Annes. Phase 3 would take trams from Blackpool North Station to Poulton-le-Fylde and then northwards to Thornton and Fleetwood to join the existing tramway south of Fleetwood. Shared track with heavy rail, or parallel running, would have been necessary between Blackpool North and Poulton-le-Fylde and with freight on the Fleetwood branch. Network Rail formally objected to Phase 3 of the 2001 plan through the Blackpool Local Plan inquiry.



Illuminated cars HMS Blackpool, the Frigate created in 1965 and then restored and updated in 2003/4, and below the Trawler Cevic of 2001 sponsored by Fisherman's Friend. These new-generation illuminated cars use low-voltage lighting circuits for the bulbs instead of the traction-voltage series-wired arrangements of the past. (David Cole both)



Steve Burd, who had formerly been with Arriva North East, was appointed Managing Director in 2001, when Tony Depledge moved to Arriva as Director of Transport Policy. A new illuminated tram was created as the trawler Cevic which was sponsored by the Fleetwood firm of Lofthouse, makers of Fisherman's Friend cough sweets.

Stockport No. 5 was now fitted with air brakes, and restoration work continued on Blackpool No. 147, the latter being launched into service on 4th June 2002. In the same year a Channel 4 TV programme *Salvage Squad* took on the restoration of No. 304, which duly returned to Blackpool from the St Helens Transport Museum. This car, by then in a sorry state, still had all its original VAMBAC equipment, and was seen as a worthy challenge for the programme makers' redoubtable team. It proved to be a huge challenge, becoming the only one of their projects to have a second programme to follow the vicissitudes of its reincarnation. Much of the difficulty in keeping the original fleet in working order became apparent to the outside world through that follow-on programme.

Meanwhile, back on the ground, outside contractors Birse re-laid the track from Norbreck to Little Bispham. This was the first time that such work had been contracted out. At this time the Railway Inspectorate were unhappy about the track between Thornton Gate and Fleetwood



The magnificently rebuilt Western Train, based on former Railcoach 209 and Pantograph car 174, posed after completion in 2009. (David Cole courtesy Heritage Lottery Fund)



Rebuilt Centenary car 644 in July 2010. The original body styling can be seen at the top of the facing page. (John A Senior)

and prohibited the use of double-deckers on this section; the line closed for a time and the service was restored the following year but using only single-deckers.

The *Salvage Squad's* second programme was screened in 2003, concentrating on the restoration of the control equipment of No. 304. The programme, on 11th November, showed it running again. Frigate No. 736 was rebuilt in 2003/4, which also marked the 70th anniversary of the Balloon cars. During that Winter the track was re-laid at the Manchester Square junction, a major project costing £900,000.

Seemingly endless further studies and meetings with DfT eventually came to an end in July 2004 when the bid was rejected. Blackpool was not alone; the Government also rejected Manchester's 'big bang' Metrolink expansion, and new tram schemes in South Hampshire and Leeds. Some Government contributions were made for emergency track repairs but these were a fraction of what was needed. Undeterred, a year later in July 2005 Blackpool Council and Lancashire County Council submitted a revised bid for funding for £96m, just for a modified Phase 1 scheme.

The objective at this stage was to maintain and upgrade the existing tramway between Starr Gate and Fleetwood, which was by then in urgent need of renewal, and to resolve the accessibility issue by introducing a parallel, modern low-floor tram fleet. Unless major funding was forthcoming the future of the tramway itself would be in serious doubt,



Centenary car 651, built in 1985, was used by GEC for testing new equipment and purchased by Blackpool after those tests had been completed in 1988. It was then re-equipped to match the other cars and renumbered 648. The initial number reflects the original intention to order ten cars. (Tony Stevenson)

Trampower No. 611 on trial before its unfortunate conflagration. The vehicle has been built using off-the-shelf automotive products and industrial technology to reduce costs, and demonstrate that it is not necessary to source from abroad. (Bob Ferguson)



unthinkable for Blackpool's local economy. All thoughts of extensions were put in abeyance. The emphasis was on regeneration, but retaining the attraction of the historic tramway was still very much in mind.

In 2005 an application was made for a Lottery grant for the rebuilding of the Western Train and this was confirmed the following year. It eventually re-entered service after its rebuild in May 2009. The remainder of the Centenary trams had, by then, been repanelled and had replacement window frames fitted. Number 648 (formerly 651, the GEC tram) was earmarked for eventual preservation at Crich and, accordingly, has retained more original features than the others.

Vintage trams Nos. 40 and 147 were repainted, as was o-m-o car No. 8 in a BTS contract job in the 'plum and custard' livery for preservation by the Lancastrian Transport Trust. Trampower 611 returned to Blackpool for further trials. Emergency funding of £11.8 million was agreed in 2006 for the renewal of more track and the following year Copse Road gained a new substation.

Considerable surprise and disappointment was felt by many on the Fylde Coast on 30th January 2007 when the Casino Advisory Panel announced that Manchester was to receive the licence for the country's first super casino from a short list of eight locations. Along with Greenwich, Blackpool had been regarded as favourite for this facility and the Council considered that the unfavourable decision could have cost up to £400m



Relaying the tracks in Fleetwood during the Spring of 2010. (Harry Postlethwaite)

Marseille's striking new modern image, a Flexity Outlook from Bombardier, builders of Blackpool's new fleet. The Mediterranean city's LRTs offer quiet, comfortable and fast smooth running – something Blackpool's residents and visitors will be able to enjoy from 2012. (John A Senior)



of inward investment and possibly 3,000 new jobs. In the event the whole scheme was aborted.

Work next began on restoration of former open-top Balloon No. 717 as a Heritage Car, sponsored by Philip R Thorpe, and this was relaunched into service in 2008. Trampower 611 was unfortunately extensively damaged by fire in 2007 while still undergoing non-passenger carrying trials. On a happier note, to mark the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the first Brush Railcoach in 1937, No. 623 was repainted in the wartime style livery.

After yet more meetings with DfT and further recalculations, approval for the upgrade was finally announced by the Transport Minister, Tom Harris, on 1st February 2008. The DfT agreed to fund £68.3m towards the total cost, which also includes £17.7m from Blackpool Council and £15.2m from Lancashire County Council. The upgrade comprises new track and power supply, 16 new low-floor trams, low-floor stops, year-round high-frequency service and a new depot and maintenance facilities at Starr Gate. Earlier proposals to rebuild Rigby Road Depot, or to build a new complex at Blundell Street, had proved impracticable.

In May 2009 Blackpool Council announced that Bombardier had been chosen to supply its Flexity 2 vehicle, to be built in Germany and Austria, and all of which are due to be in service in Blackpool by Easter 2012. The scale of the work has, and will, result in the suspension of the tramway completely over the Winter periods 2009/10 and 2010/11. There will be a rationalisation of stops which should result in an improvement of the end-to-end journey time from Fleetwood to Starr Gate of around 15 minutes.

The new depot will have a capacity for 20 trams, and features an ultra-modern design with a glass frontage, wave-effect roof and illuminated feature walls. The new trams, costing around £2m each, will be the first of Bombardier's Flexity 2 vehicles, being a development of the company's highly successful Flexity model, of which examples are in service in a



The rebuilt promenade in the immediate foreground will provide a good vantage point to see the trams moving in and out of the new depot when all the work is completed. (John A Senior)

couple of dozen European cities, including Marseille and Geneva. They will be 32.2m long and 2.65m wide, with five sections and three bogies and a total passenger capacity of 222 each.

It was now necessary to make the decisions regarding the future of the rolling stock, and the nature of the services to be operated whilst the rebuilding was taking place. In parallel with the major work of up-grading sea defences and improving the Promenade, work began on lifting the worn out tracks and preparing the ground for the new infrastructure. Not until July 2010 were trams running between Pleasure Beach loop and Ash Street Fleetwood once again.

A start had then been made on rebuilding No. 720 with new door arrangements to suit the new platforms which are being constructed. The intention is to deal with a total of ten Balloon trams in this way. A small fleet of heritage and illuminated trams will also be retained by Blackpool Transport Services Limited for operation over the modernised tramway and these will remain at Rigby Road.

Steve Burd left Blackpool in 2009 to become Managing Director at Stagecoach Warwickshire. He was succeeded on 1st June by Trevor Roberts from Newport Transport. Mr Roberts comes from a 'bus' family, being the son of a National Bus Company regional director and grandson of a Divisional Manager of Crosville Motor Services.

Following the confirmation that Government finance was definitely to be made available for the major upgrade of the tramway system, the time had come to address the situation which would apply once the effects began to take place and the decision was taken to start to dispose of the shortly-to-become-surplus stock. Accordingly, some 52 trams were advertised as being available for purchase. Such is the interest in Blackpool's famous trams that within a matter of days all 52



Blackpool FC's victorious homecoming in May 2010.
(Vernon Linden)

This striking looking Balloon car, No. 703, will operate on loan at the Beamish Open Air Museum, being actually owned by the LTT and painted into an appropriate local livery for its stay. Sunderland had a similarly styled car built by English Electric in 1934, numbered 99. Number 100 was a former prototype London Feltham, and so this car has been numbered 101. (Jason Cross)



had been reserved or sold; some could have been sold four-times over.

This will mean that whereas until recently the operational Blackpool trams preserved in this country were to be found in four main locations (Crich, Beamish, Heaton Park and Carlton Colville) in future there will be some further examples including Birkenhead, in addition to those preserved in the town by the LTT.

This current year will see the completion of the latest phase of improvements to the promenade and sea wall, a £70m scheme which has taken four years to complete. It has seen the creation of six new headlands, replacing the 100 year old sea wall between the Sandcastle and North Pier and in so doing protecting 1500 homes and businesses from the risks of flooding. May 2010 also saw the town's football club (which was founded only three years after the trams were introduced) return to the top flight of English football after an absence of 39 years – and make an immediate impact!

After years of planning and studies, the future of the Blackpool Tramway as a modern light rail system is at last secured. Now, yet more studies are to be undertaken as The Fylde is part of a European project *Sintropher* to develop tram trains, with four other regions in Germany, France and the Netherlands. A high priority is likely to be the Talbot Road link to Blackpool North Station, but extensions to Lytham, Poulton, Thornton and Fleetwood could yet be revived.

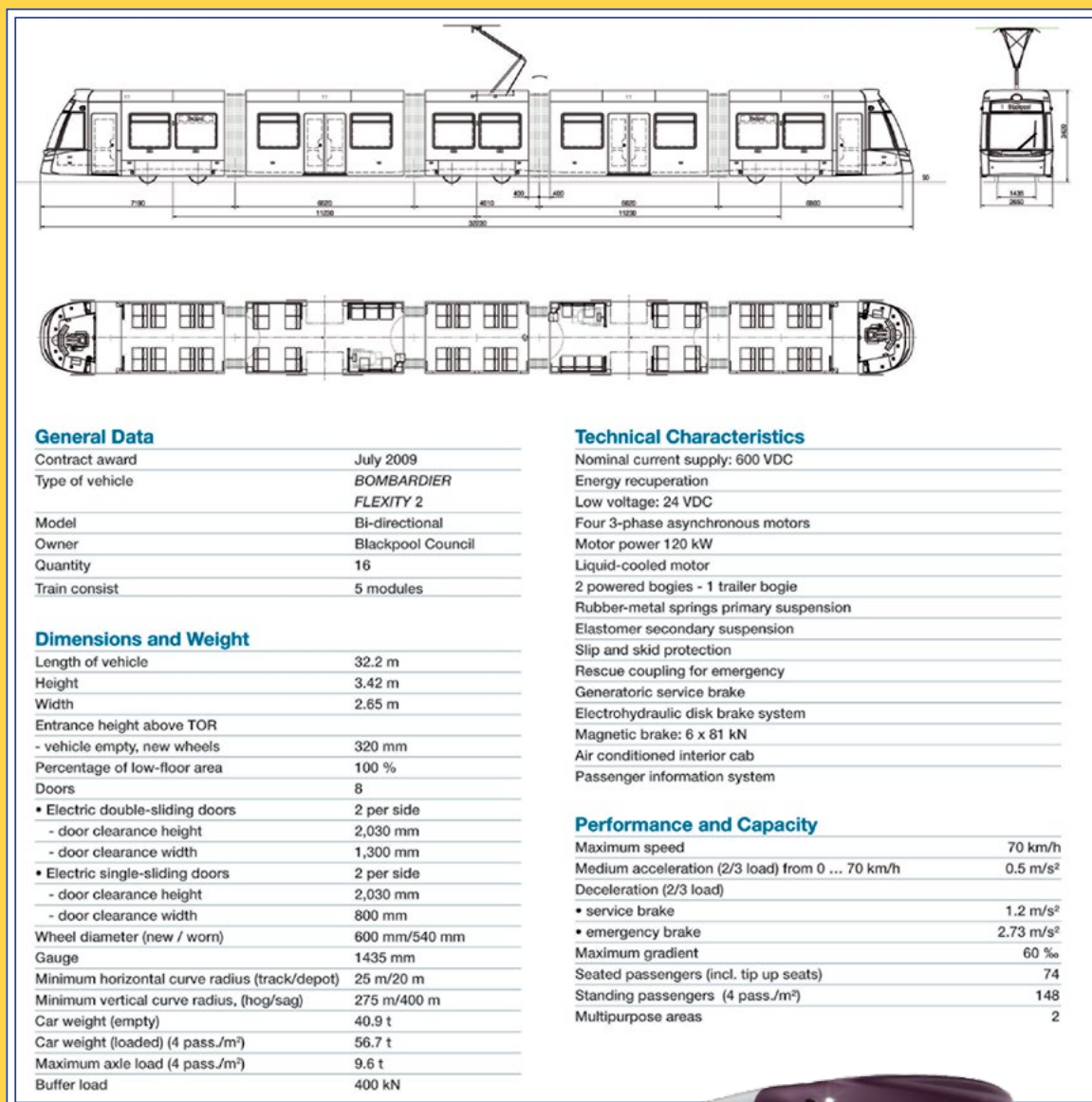
Blackpool's transformation from nineteenth century tramway to twenty first century transport system would then be complete.



A new platform stop nearing completion at Norbreck in August, and track laying on the stretch leading to the Starr Gate loop, with the new depot just visible in the distance.
(Harry Postlethwaite; John A Senior)



The tram-train concept is well established in Germany and is expanding rapidly in France. A three car German tram-train set is seen here on-street in Kassel; these vehicles are equally at home in the city street or running at speed on the main line railway tracks. Could the *Sintropher* project finally bring this concept to the UK, with Blackpool at the helm once more? That really would be **Progress!**
(David Cole)



Manufacturer's impression of one of the Flexity 2 vehicles for Blackpool. The five-section low-floor vehicles will incorporate wide doorways with easy access from the new tram stops. (Courtesy Bombardier)

The Celebrations

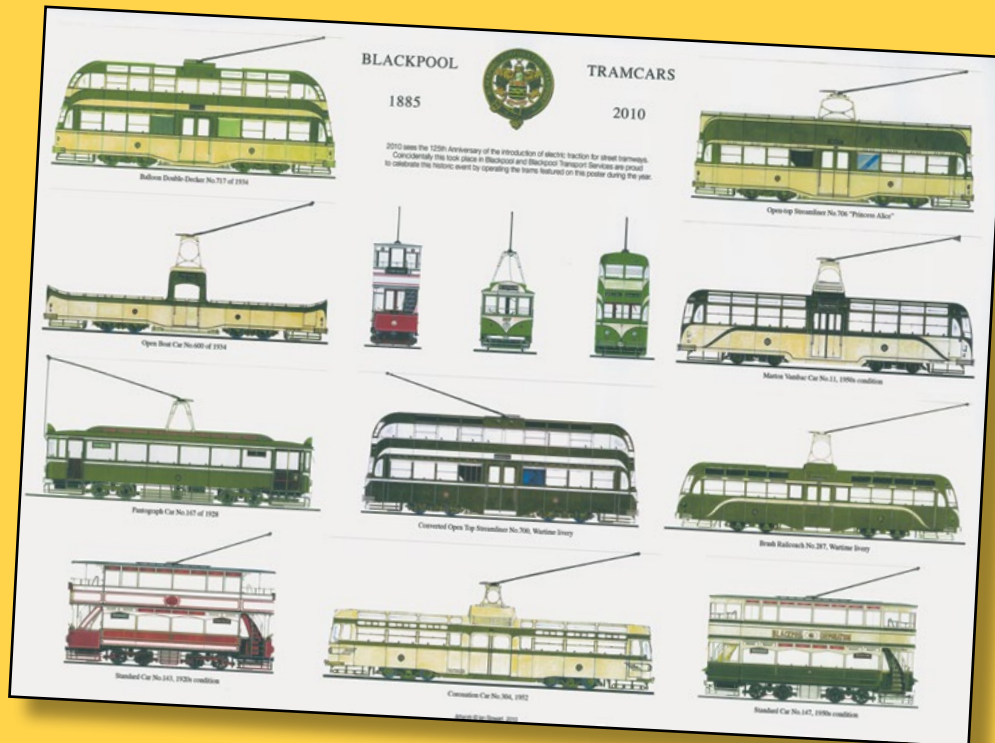
*– A Depot Open-day, Vintage Tours and the
Celebratory Procession*



Restored Balloon No. 237 seen at the
Pleasure Beach in July 2007. (Jason Cross)

The Procession

– Blackpool trams from near and far . . .



The highlight of the week's celebrations for many people will be the Celebratory Procession of trams on Wednesday 29th September, running from Bispham to South Promenade and giving an insight into the development of the trams between the 19th Century to today.

The selection will be drawn from the wide variety of survivors and preserved examples on offer, and the actual entrants were still being finalised as we went to press, matters being complicated by problems in moving double-decker cars from Crich due to the growth of trees in the area since the arrival there of Balloon 712 from Blackpool in March 2010.

Blackpool Transport Services had already commissioned two commemorative posters for sale showing the 'local' trams and the 'visitors', and we are pleased to be able to reproduce these with their permission.

The photographs which follow show trams which are expected to participate, together with those which had been intended to come, and work is still ongoing locally with LTT cars being completed as this is being written. It is clear that there will be a splendid turnout on the day, with a touch of uncertainty adding to the overall interest. With any event involving old vehicles there is always an element of chance that last minute problems may occur – even the most pampered of old trams fail sometimes – and the organisers cannot therefore be responsible if some of the cars planned to participate do not run on the day. They assure all those coming to see the event that every effort will be made to get as many of the vehicles on to the road as is possible.



Two trams from the former Blackpool & Fleetwood Tramroad Company still exist, both having survived as works cars after being withdrawn from passenger service. Crossbench Rack 2, seen at Crich with two vintage motor cars, was presented to The Tramway Museum at Crich in 1963, following restoration for the Blackpool Tramway 75th in 1960. It returned to Blackpool for the Centenary of the Blackpool & Fleetwood Tramroad in 1998 and will now be taking part in the 2010 event in lieu of the double-deckers which were booked to come but cannot now safely pass through the local trees in the Derbyshire village where the Museum is located. It will leave Crich for its home town after the Blackpool Event there over the August Bank Holiday. In the far distance is London 106 which will be missing due to a mechanical failure. (Richard Lomas)

Box 40, a younger B&F car (from 1914) is much travelled. Like its compatriot above it passed to the Crich Museum in 1963 and became the first car to operate there electrically, with a bank of trolleybus batteries in its saloon. It has subsequently operated in Heaton Park, Manchester, and been back to Blackpool where it is seen. Popular with enthusiasts it was less so with the management of the Corporation system and its passengers, the awkward narrow corner doorway and steep steps making it difficult to board save for the leanest and fittest. (Tony Stevenson)





This former Marton Box car ended its days in Blackpool as a works tram, the open upper deck having allowed access to the overhead line for repairs and maintenance. It was loaned to the Beamish Open-Air Museum in exchange for Sheffield 513 (see page 92) which did not fit in with the period street scene which was being painstakingly created there.

Number 31 was carefully restored and has been a popular and successful addition to the Museum's fleet, returning to Blackpool for the Tramroad Centenary in 1998 and now, after an overhaul, remedial work and repaint, awaits its transport to Blackpool for the 2010 celebrations. It will be exchanged for Balloon 703, the pseudo Sunderland car 101. (Paul Jarman)

Yet another car from the 1963 clear out, Balcony 40 continues to be popular at Crich just as it was in Blackpool, its open balconies being ideal for sightseeing on warm sunny days as here. It has been back to Blackpool once since leaving, in 1985, but sadly will miss the 125th event because of the problems with trees in the Derbyshire villages. (John A Senior)



Pantograph 167 was purchased for the Crich Museum in 1962, being selected because it retained its original 1928 bogies whereas the other survivors in the class had been fitted with more modern trucks from the Marton Sun Saloons when those cars were upgraded between 1948 and 1950. It had spent its later years as an engineering and permanent way car, and was restored to original condition following its arrival at Crich, where it is pictured. Note the number 1 in the indicator box for the North Station route to Fleetwood. It was overhauled at Smithills workshops, Bolton, for the Centenary event, and spent a short time in Blackpool before returning to Crich. It also operated at the Gateshead Garden Festival in 1990. It was in Blackpool again in 1998 for the Tramroad Centenary. (John A Senior)

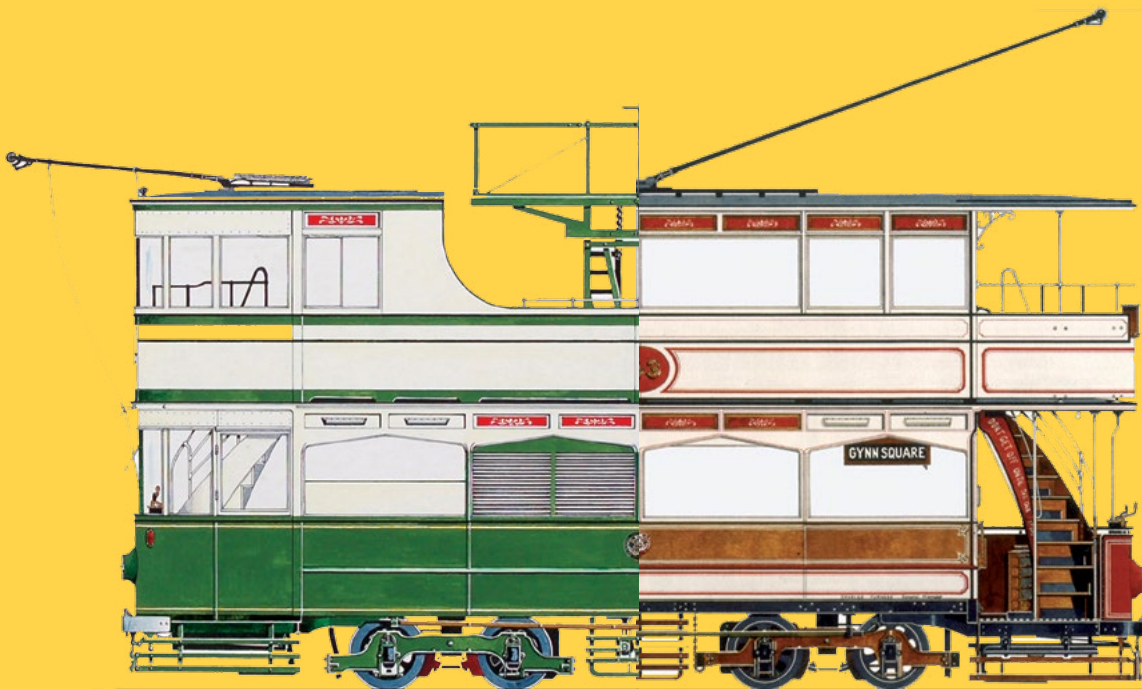


This Standard, number 147, is one of the farthest-travelled cars in Blackpool, having crossed the Atlantic twice. Recovered from a Museum in Ohio, USA, it was painstakingly restored during 2001/2 thanks to sponsorship from the Fylde Tramway Society to become another solid and reliable member of the BTS heritage fleet. Michael Airey was the Body Shop Manager at Rigby Road. The Brush car behind is number 632 from the LTT fleet and is booked to take part in the Procession. (Geoff Senior)





One of the many stars in the 125th Celebrations will be the LTT restoration project shown here. After withdrawal from passenger duties Standard 143 was converted to become an engineering car, an ambitious project which included the provision of a self-contained power unit in the form of a bus diesel engine in the lower saloon, thus enabling the car to propel itself, tow a failed car, or generate power to feed into the overhead line. It suffered a fire which severely damaged the bodywork but was kept on one side for possible eventual restoration. That restoration has now taken place under the aegis of the LTT, and includes the provision of a completely new top deck. The car will reappear as shown in the right hand segment below, in red and white livery, with open balconies and open platforms, the only preserved Blackpool Standard to have these features. It was delivered to Rigby Road on Thursday 19th August for final fitting out and commissioning, as shown above (James Millington, courtesy LTT).





Another major LTT project is the re-creation of an English Electric Railcoach, number 279, from former towing car 679. The Railcoach was new in 1935, being part of the new fleet of streamlined trams introduced by Walter Luff following his appointment as General Manager in 1933 and essentially identical to 213 seen here. It was one of ten of these Railcoaches converted to become a towing car for the 'twin sets' post 1960, having Coronation style ends fitted in place of the original pointed design. and later operated as a single unit. In the early 1990s number 679 was rebuilt with new underframe, flush glazing and fixed bus seating.

Re-creating No. 279 includes restoration of the original cab end design, and reinstating half-drop windows and swing over tram seats upholstered in the traditional green moquette. Perhaps this tram above all others will be the true icon of the event.

(G Lumb; James Millington, courtesy LTT)

The LTT plum and custard o-m-o car number 8 was difficult to photograph as we went to press but this view of number 5 gives an idea of how it will look when complete, except that it will glisten in its newly applied paint. The new livery was to indicate to passengers that no conductor was carried on the tram. Considerable time and effort has gone into the restoration, including the fitment of refurbished window frames and rehabilitation of the interior, shown inset. Like its compatriot 279, above, it is due to take part in the Celebratory Events. It was originally a second series English Electric Railcoach, number 265 later 612. (John A Senior, number 5)

(interior: James Millington, courtesy LTT)





The former Marton VAMBAC cars were always something special, quietly going about their business and gliding smoothly away from Talbot Square, leaving the bustle of the Promenade far behind.

Only one of these cars has survived and it now resides at the Carlton Colville museum in East Anglia, along with Standard 159 which is also operational and can be seen in this picture.

The VAMBAC car has been completely restored, externally and internally, and the standard achieved can be seen – or experienced by riding on it. It had been hoped to include it in the celebrations but sadly this will not be possible. (Jason Cross)

This picture clearly shows why these cars were called Sun Saloons – nowadays the glass would be tinted against the glare of the sun but here we see the restored interior in all its glory. The polished woodwork and reupholstered tip-over seats bring back memories to those fortunate enough to remember when nearly all Blackpool's single-deckers were like this inside – Pantographs, Boats and Toastracks excepted. (Jason Cross)





When flagship Coronation car number 304 was withdrawn, still with its VAMBAC equipment in situ, it was seen as a must for preservation. It ended up being stored at the former US Army base at Burtonwood, near Warrington. When it was time to vacate once more, it moved to storage in the St Helens Transport Museum. Fortuitously Channel Four TV launched a programme called **Salvage Squad** – bringing no-hopers back to life – and by that time it appeared that 304 had entered that category. The task was enormous, even with the vast resources of Channel Four, but eventually determination triumphed over adversity and the end result is seen above. See also page 49. (John A Senior)

Balloon 717 (formerly 254) was selected as one of the best of the survivors to be restored for the 70th Anniversary of the class, sponsored by the late Phillip R Thorpe whose name it carries, and including a new underframe. Restored between 2005 and 2007 to comply with modern Health & Safety requirements it carries a cowcatcher type skirt in contrast to the lifeguards on the elegant open-topped former 706 Princess Alice, seen here in this view. The different equipment represents 25 years difference in H&S requirements, whilst the (unrelated) original and post-1955 destination arrangements can also be compared. This latter modification process continued until 1980. (Jason Cross)



The Celebrations

– The Visitors – old and new



Over the last 25 years Blackpool has played host to several visiting trams, from towns and cities in England and Scotland, loaned by groups of individuals or from Museums whose collections include vehicles which tell a part in the story of the development of the street tramcar.

This year will be no different, save that the spread will be even wider than before with at least one overseas example joining the ranks from Portugal thanks to the National Tramway Museum at Crich. We are grateful to all who have offered to assist in this way although it is now apparent that some of those trams which had been expected to participate will not be able to do so.

Nevertheless the selection of types, in their wonderful liveries, will create a pageant which will enhance this 125th Anniversary and bring pleasure to the thousands of visitors expected to line the Promenade to watch the Procession.





Manchester 765 is a California, or Combination car, so-called because the open-ended construction was popular in the hot climate of California and allowed smokers to sit out in the cold in Manchester! The body was rescued from a desolate hillside and reconstructed by enthusiasts in that city. Electrical equipment and bogies were sourced from far and wide and the completed car was ready to inaugurate a museum service in Manchester's Heaton Park. In the interim it went to Crich on loan in 1977/78 arriving in Heaton Park in 1979, subsequently operating there each Sunday, and then visiting Blackpool in 1985 for the Centenary, staying until 1988 and proving to be a popular car with passengers and crews alike, before returning to Manchester where it resumed its Sunday afternoon operations.

It was the first of the visiting cars to arrive at Rigby Road in June 2010. It is seen above on home territory in a special photographic 'nightshoot', and below with Hill of Howth Great Northern Railway of Ireland car 10 during the 1985 Celebratory run. (Jason Cross; John A Senior)

Facing page: Moving the trams requires the use of a low-loading trailer with the ability to have the coupling detached to allow the bed to rest on the ground. The tram is then winched onto temporary rails. Porto 273 is seen being loaded at Crich on Monday 16th August 2010 ready to make the journey to Blackpool. (Richard Lomas)





Undoubtedly one of the most striking cars in the Celebratory Events will be this magnificent Brill semi-convertible car from Portugal. The design allows the windows to slide upwards into the roof, leaving the sides open from the waist upwards and catering for the hot climate in its home country. The design was patented by the American Brill Company and examples could be found throughout the world, though very few, it has to be admitted, were found to be necessary in the UK.

Another Brill semi-convertible car, 196 from Porto, can currently be seen operating in Heaton Park on short term-loan from Beamish in yet a further exchange of trams between museums.

Porto 273 represented one of the most challenging – and expensive – restorations undertaken in the Crich Museum's workshops when it was done and involved the need to learn many new skills, not least the making of rattan cane seats – also rare in the UK!

A new underframe was another substantial component part of the exercise, and the finished product is claimed by those in a position to judge as being at least as good as when the car was new. Better praise than that is hard to come by. (John A Senior)





Sheffield 513, seen opposite at North Pier, was one of 35 cars built by Charles Roberts of Horbury, Wakefield – the same company that built Blackpool's Coronation cars. It will be the only example of an enclosed single-truck (four-wheeled) double-decker in the Celebrations following the withdrawal of the two Crich examples. Built in 1953 the Sheffield cars were destined to have a very short life, being scrapped in 1960 when the system closed.

Two were preserved and 513 subsequently had a chequered career, including time on display at the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway. It eventually went to the Beamish Open-Air Museum, but, as recorded elsewhere, became 'out-of-period' there and finally came to Blackpool in 2001 in exchange for Marton Box 31 which, after restoration, would fit the Beamish timescale perfectly.

Number 513 is a comfortable modern car, and in its smart traditional home livery strikes a familiar chord when visitors from the Sheffield area see it running up and down the Promenade. An old hand at Processions it took part in the last night's run in its home City in 1960, the Blackpool Centenary in 1985, and will be taking part in the 125th events. (Jason Cross)

Liverpool Priestly car 762, not to be confused with its Blackpool numbersake, will be coming from across the water in Birkenhead where it operates on the Wirral Tramway. Like Manchester 765 it is a full-blown reconstruction job, the lower deck saloon having ended its days as a bowling green clubhouse, with the rest of the tram being scrapped.

Thanks to the efforts of the Merseyside Tramway Preservation Society it has been completely restored and now represents its 1931 new condition. Although the body, including its replacement top deck saloon, will be new to Blackpool, the trucks should feel at home since they were originally fitted to one of Blackpool's Railcoaches.

Liverpool had begun enclosing the vestibules of its latest trams around this time, something Blackpool had been doing on its Standard cars since 1929. The success of this batch of twelve technologically-advanced cars with their English Electric equipment gave a much needed boost to Liverpool's tramway situation at a crucial time and they were therefore as important to that city as the English Electric Railcoaches were to Blackpool soon afterwards. (Jason Cross)



Bolton 66 has now operated in Blackpool for longer than some of the resort's own trams did – its 29 year stint beginning when it came to the resort as an experiment in 1981. This was the time when Transport Chairman Stanley Parkinson was promoting the idea of a procession to mark the Centenary of trams in 1985. The car dated back to 1901/2 and had been built as an open-topper by the Electric Railway & Carriage Company of Preston. Later fitted with a balcony top it was then similar to Blackpool 143 (page 86) save that 66 has maximum traction bogies whereas 143 and the other Standards are equal wheeled. Number 66 was withdrawn and scrapped in 1946, one year before the Bolton tramway system closed, save that the lower saloon survived and in 1963 it was rescued for restoration which took 18 years. A new top deck of the type fitted in the 1930s was manufactured, bogies were obtained from Belgium, wheelsets from Crich and the rest made or recreated. It first ran in Blackpool in June 1981 and has done each year since then, being one of the most popular of the veterans in the fleet. (Tony Stevenson)

The Johannesburg car below was intended to be part of the Celebratory events, representing a standard British tram – in this case built in Preston – bought and operated from new with an overseas undertaking. Number 60 has starred in film and television performances and is notable amongst other reasons for having its notices and lettering in two languages.

It is also notable for being the tallest car in the Crich collection, a fact which sadly proved its downfall when overhanging trees only a mile or so from the Museum caused windows to be broken and paintwork badly scored. It was this unfortunate occurrence which forced the sad but necessary decision not to send the other double-deckers booked for the Procession. (John A Senior)



A second victim of the decision not to risk sending any other double-deckers was this attractive Leeds Corporation Beeston air-brake car, number 399 dating from 1926. Leeds was well-known for its selection of liveries, but this particular version was the longest in use being applied between the 1890s and 1928 when the blue and cream colour scheme was adopted. Number 399 survived more or less intact at Leeds, being used a works car towards the end of its life, and became a long-term but very successful restoration project at Crich. (John A Senior)



And finally – other preserved Blackpool trams



Replica Blackpool & Fleetwood Vanguard car 619 stands by Middleton Road gates in Manchester's Heaton Park in July 2010. (John A Senior)

Mention has been made of Blackpool trams in Museums and at locations in and away from the town. Locally the Lancastrian Transport Trust is amassing an impressive collection, some in its Marton accommodation, whilst others will later be loaned to operate at Beamish Open-Air Museum and the Birkenhead tramway. Restoration work is currently underway on three cars to join the procession including Balcony Standard 143, English Electric Railcoach 279 and o-m-o car 8. It also the owner of Coronations 304 and 660, The Rocket, Brush cars 287 and 632, Boat 605, Twin cars 676+686, and Balloons 703 and 715.

The National Tramway Museum at Crich in Derbyshire has examples other than those booked for the Procession including Conduit car number 4 of 1885; 166, a 1927 Toastrack; 49, an enclosed Standard; 712 (249) a Balloon; 717 the electric locomotive, and others which it will acquire nearer the arrival of the new fleet including an open Boat. Trams in store there awaiting restoration include the Dreadnought, works car 2, one-man-car number 5 and Brush Railcoach 298 from 1937.

Heaton Park Manchester has the Vanguard car 619, created at Mode Wheel workshops in 1987 and illustrated on the previous page, works car number 1, and has purchased four cars for future planned extensions, two of which, 623 and 702, are on display at the Museum of Museums at the Trafford Centre, Manchester.

The Birkenhead Museum has arranged to purchase four cars to supplement its existing fleet, also for planned future extensions.

Marton Vambac 11 and Standard 159 can be found operating at the Carlton Colville Museum in East Anglia.

Many more cars will find their way into Museums or other operating environments as the fleet is reduced in preparation for the arrival of the new light rail vehicles and information can be found by going to the internet and keying in

PRESERVED BLACKPOOL TRAMS

and then making your choice from the wide selection of information listed.



1885 Conduit car : Crich. (John A Senior)



1927 Toastrack car 166 : Crich. (John A Senior)



1930s Standard car 49 : Crich. (John A Senior)

Left: MTMS cars Vanguard 619 and Brush 623 on a Special Tour in Blackpool, October 2008.

Below: Balloon 702 and Brush Railcoach 623, both owned by MTMS, on display at The Museum of Museums, Trafford Centre, Manchester. (both Jason Cross)



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