

Gloucester Corporation Transport

Gloucester Tramways Company 1879-1881

City of Gloucester Tramways Company 1881-1902



1902-1936

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Cover Illustration: Brush car No. 12 on the Bristol Road route - one of 30 identical cars purchased in 1904. (Photographer unknown).

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Gloucester Tramways Company (1879-1881) **City of Gloucester Tramways Company (1881-1902)**

Tramways for Gloucester were first proposed in 1877, when The Gloucester Tramways Co. Ltd. submitted details of a projected system to the City Council. This new company was a subsidiary of The Imperial Tramways Co. Ltd. Mr. (later Sir) George White, one of the pioneers of the Bristol Tramways, was also one of the promoters of the Gloucester scheme. The City Council eventually gave their approval on January 8th 1878, and the Company obtained an order under the Tramways Act for the construction of the lines on 8th April, 1878. The Company's original intention was to use steam locomotion, and although it was passed by the House of Commons it was rejected by the Lords. The total length of the authorised route was 3 miles, 51 chains (5.82km). The system, built to 4ft gauge, comprised four routes, radiating, one in each direction, from 'The Cross', the City's central point, with branches along Worcester Street to Kingsholm and from Eastgate Street to the Great Western and Midland Railway Stations.

The Company's offices, depot and stables were built at India Road just off Lower Barton Street and, initially, a stud of about 45 horses was maintained here.

Gloucester Corporation Transport 1902 - 1936

The inaugural services which commenced on Saturday May 24th 1879 were:-

Wotton (Fleece Inn) - London Road - Northgate Street - The Cross - Southgate Street - Theresa Place (Bristol Road).

St. Nicholas Church (Westgate Street) - The Cross - Eastgate Street - Lower Barton Street - India Road.

Kingsholm (Denmark Road) - Northgate Street - The Cross - The Royal Infirmary (Southgate Street).

An additional service was added later which ran from The Royal Infirmary (Southgate Street) - The Cross - Eastgate Street - Clarence Street to the Great Western and Midland Railway Stations.

The tramway failed to return a profit for investors and was offered for sale in April 1881 and was purchased by the Bristol and Bath Tramway Company who set up a new company - the City of Gloucester Tramways Company - to operate the services.

There was a ceremonial reopening of the service on July 2nd 1881, but due to poor patronage the route from The Cross to the railway stations and the Westgate Street section were both discontinued. The track and junctions for these lines were removed except for a short length of 100 yards (90m) of track in Westgate Street from the Cross to accommodate tramcars coming in from Eastgate St. The Cross now became the terminus for the trams running along Eastgate Street to Barton Street and India Road. The Kingsholm service was suspended for a time due to insufficient numbers of passengers but due to public opinion it was restored in October 1881.

Gloucester Corporation Transport 1902 - 1936

The changes the new Company made appeared to be successful and it was able to pay regular dividends. In 1895 an Order was obtained authorising extensions from Theresa Place along Bristol Road to Tuffley Avenue, and along Painswick Road to Cemetery Road, and also to convert the whole system to electric operation. The Bristol Road extension was duly opened on 10th July, 1897, but neither the other extension nor electrification was proceeded with. The Bristol Road extension ran to the junction with Tuffley Avenue. It served the various new roads that had been built off Bristol Road in recent years. At about this time a new depot was built on the east side of Bristol Road between Frampton Road and Lysons Avenue. The final length of the system was 4 miles 3 furlongs 5.74 chains (7.11km).

In 1899 the Company proposed to convert the horse tramways to electric operation, but the Corporation purchased the Company - the transfer taking place on 30th September 1902, although the Company continued to operate services on the Corporation's behalf until 1st January 1903. The Corporation then began to reconstruct and electrify the system but to the narrower 3ft 6ins gauge. Horse drawn services were progressively withdrawn during 1903-1904 - the last horse tram running on 17th March 1904.

Note: One of the Starbuck tram bodies was discovered in 1966 being used as a garden shed in Hardwicke - on investigation it was found to have borne two liveries - one was blue and white and the other gold, yellow and brown but it is not certain which was the earlier of the two liveries. Two of the first cars delivered to the Gloucester City Tramways were described as 'gaily painted throughout in lavender and green' which may be an indication of the livery used by the original company.

Gloucester Tramways Company

FLEET SUMMARY 1879 - 1881

Horse Trams

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

1879

1-2*; Single-deck saloon; Bristol Wagon & Carriage Works Co; 22

3-6*; Single-deck saloon; Loughborough Locomotive and Engineering Works; 22

7-8*; Single-deck saloon; Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co; 22

9*; Single-deck saloon; Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co; 22?

10*; Single-deck combination; Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co; ?

*It is not known if the cars were numbered in the order shown but they are used here for reference purposes.

No.9 had additional luggage space and was used on the service to the railway stations.
No.10 had two compartments (one for smokers) and is reported as being of the Eades design with swivel body.

Withdrawn 1881 (Nos. 1-10)

1880

11-14*; Single-deck saloon?; ? ; 22?

*It is not known if the cars were numbered in the order shown but they are used here for reference purposes. These may have been the cars renovated by the Gloucester Railway and Carriage Works.

To the City of Gloucester Tramways Company 1881 (?)

City of Gloucester Tramways Company

FLEET SUMMARY 1881 - 1902

Horse Trams

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

1881

1-6; Single-deck saloon; Starbuck; 22

7-10; Single-deck saloon; Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co; 22

Nos. 7-10 were renovated by the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co. from cars acquired from the Gloucester Tramways Company.

To City of Gloucester Corporation 30th September 1902.

1898

11-14; Single-deck roofed 'toastrack'; ? ; 24

These cars had side curtains that could be drawn in bad weather.
To City of Gloucester Corporation 30th September 1902.

The Company also operated at least 8 horse-drawn buses and 6 horse-drawn charabancs, which were included in the sale on 30th September 1902. Details of these are unknown.



City of Gloucester Tramways Company single-deck saloon horse car No. 10 at India House in 1897. This was one of the cars acquired from the Gloucester Tramways Company in 1881 and renovated by the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Company. (Photographer unknown).

Gloucester Corporation Transport 1902 - 1936



City of Gloucester 1898 roofed-toastrack car No. 12. (Photographer unknown).

Gloucester Corporation Transport 1902-1936

Gloucester's first public transport was provided by the Gloucester City Tramways Company (a subsidiary of Imperial Tramways), who operated a 4ft gauge, horse tramway in the town from 1879, using 14 single-deck cars in crimson lake and cream livery, an assortment of closed saloons and roofed toastracks built by Bristol and the local Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Company.

The tramway was 6½ miles long and consisted of five routes radiating out from the city centre; to Kingsholm via Northgate Street, Worcester Street and Kingsholm Road; to the Fleece Inn at Wotton, via Northgate Street and London Road; to the depot in India Road, via Eastgate Street and Lower Barton Road; to Theresa Place on Bristol Road, Southgate Street; and to St. Nicholas' Church on Westgate Street. There was a short branch line from Eastgate Street to the Great Western Railway and Midland Railway Stations in the city.

The tramway was not a financial success and in July 1881 was taken over by a new company - the City of Gloucester Tramways Co. Ltd.

The tramway was pruned by closing the Westgate to St. Nicholas' Church section and the branch line serving the two stations. Six new Starbuck cars were purchased and two of the older ones withdrawn. The tramway's fortune seemed to improve and a

short extension to Tuffley Avenue on Bristol Road was opened in 1897. An order to extend and electrify the tramway was approved by Gloucester Corporation, who purchased the Company on the 30th September 1902 - the commencement of municipal transport in Gloucester. It was subsequently re-gauged to 3ft 6ins and electrified, the last horse tram running on the 17th March 1904.

The reconstructed system was officially opened on 7th May 1904, a mixture of single and double-track sections, although the former Bristol Road horse route was operational by the 29th April. The fleet consisted of 20 Brush 4-wheel open-top double-deckers in a crimson lake and cream livery, no doubt derived from that used by the City of Gloucester Company. A further 10 identical Brush cars arrived later in the year to make up the fleet, which remained unchanged until closure. The entire fleet was painted grey as an economy measure during World War I, but was never returned to the crimson lake livery after hostilities ended, and remained all-over grey until the demise of the system.

Under municipal control the newly electrified system was extended to a total of 9¾ miles, including a 2-mile extension from the Fleece Inn across the boundary to Hucclecote. This line was actually owned by the County Council, although Gloucester Corporation worked the line as part of its system. It was extended in 1917 to serve a new aerodrome at Brockworth, but after the end of the War the traffic declined and this section became the first part of the tramway to be closed on 1st October 1924.

By the late 1920's the Corporation viewed the motorbus as the natural successor to the inflexible trams and the first conversions of tram routes to bus operation took place in September 1929, accompanied by an expansion in the network.

On 8th September the Cross to Cemetery Road tram route was converted to bus operation. It was numbered as service 2 and the opportunity was taken to extend it to Saintbridge.

The Cross to Kingsholm route was next to succumb on 12th September when it was replaced by bus route 4, which was also extended in both directions to Longlevens and The Oval. On the same day an entirely new service commenced, numbered 5, it linked Kings Square with Longlevens via Cheltenham Road.

The final tram replacement of this initial tranche took place a week later on 19th September when the Tuffley service became bus route 1. New bus route 3 was also introduced on the 19th and provided a facility to Tredworth and Bibury Road. To operate these new services a fleet of thirteen new motorbuses entered service. All had local bodywork constructed by the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co and were built to a normal control layout. The fleet consisted of nine (Nos. 1-9: FH6170-78), Vulcan Duchess's with twenty-six seat, front-entrance bodywork and four Thornycroft BC's with thirty-two seat, front-entrance bodies, and were finished in the former tramway livery of crimson lake and cream.

In January 1930, route 2 was extended from the Cross to Westgate but this extension, like the tram route before it did not prove successful and so, in August, it was

withdrawn. Meanwhile in June, route 5 had been diverted via Oxford Street and Denmark Road, thus leaving London Road to the trams. January also saw the arrival of three more Vulcan Duchess's, which were numbered 14 to 16 (FH6462-64) again with local GRCW B26F bodywork, with another three similar vehicles (Nos. 17-19: FH6964-66) arriving in October. This enabled new route 6 to commence on 6th November. This route was a variation of route 5 (Kings Square to Sisson Road) but it diverted from Cheltenham Road via Elmbridge Road to its junction with Sisson Road.

The following year, route 7 commenced. This was a variation of route 4 - Longford to The Oval, and operated via Seymour Road and Linden Road instead of King Edwards Avenue. In 1932, route 3 was extended along Finlay Road from Bibury Road to Selwyn Road, and in December, eleven more GRCW-bodied, 26-seat, Thornycroft BC's (Nos 20-30: FH7948-58) were delivered in readiness for the final tramway abandonment in 1933.

1933 started with the final abandonment of the tramway system, when, on 12th January, the trams on the Bristol Road to Barnwood and Hucclecote routes ceased running. The replacement bus routes followed the same route as the trams but were extended along Tuffley Avenue to turn at Wilton Road.

On the 20th July a further new service was introduced, numbered 10, this linked the Centre with Coney Hill, via Barton Street and Painswick Road. To operate this route a further 6 (Nos. 31-36: FH8289-94), Thornycroft BC's were delivered to the

Gloucester Corporation Transport 1902 - 1936

Corporation. The chassis were similar to the earlier vehicles but were modified to have forward control. They were fitted with 29-seat GRCW bodies with open rear platforms.

Early in 1934 a new circular route was introduced and operated as route 11 anti-clockwise and as route 12 clockwise, via Southgate Street, Stroud Road, Parkend Road, Barton Street, Eastgate Street and The Cross. Later in the year route 10 was extended to Westgate, whilst another innovation was the introduction of special services, nominally numbered 13, to serve the Greyhound Track in Cheltenham Road.

Two more, GRCW B26RP-bodied, Thornycroft BC's (Nos. 37-38: FH8765-66), arrived in April - the last of the type to be built by the manufacturer. In October the four oldest Thornycrofts were sent to Roe, in Leeds, for modification to a rear entrance layout.

In April 1935, Thornycrofts Nos. 10 and 11 received oil engines, that in No.10 being a Gardner 4LW engine, whilst a 4-cylinder Dorman engine was fitted to No.11. Around this time Nos. 31-36 were fitted with an extra three seats, giving a total seating capacity of thirty-two. An order was placed for six more Thornycrofts with Gardner 5LW engines for delivery the following year, however, on 12th June 1936, Gloucester Corporation leased their services to Bristol Tramways and Carriage Company Ltd., and as a result the order was cancelled. All vehicles in the Corporation fleet were officially transferred to the Bristol company from this date, although the actual transfer had already taken place in April.

Gloucester Corporation Transport 1902 - 1936

The former Gloucester Corporation vehicles did, however, continue to carry the Gloucester coat of arms, a fitting reminder of the days of Gloucester Corporation Transport.

Tram Fleet List 1902-1933

Horse Trams

Acquired from the City of Gloucester Tramways Company on 30th September 1902.
This listing is in the format - Year built; Fleet No; Type; Builder; Seating.

1881

1-6; Single-deck saloon; Starbuck; 22

7-10; Single-deck saloon; Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co; 22

Nos. 7-10 were renovated by the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co. from cars acquired from the Gloucester City Tramways Company.

1898

11-14; Single-deck roofed 'toastrack'; ? ; 24

These cars had side curtains that could be drawn in bad weather.

These cars were used to provide services while the system was converted to electric traction and were gradually withdrawn during 1903 and 1904. The last horse tram running on 17th March 1904.

Electric Trams

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

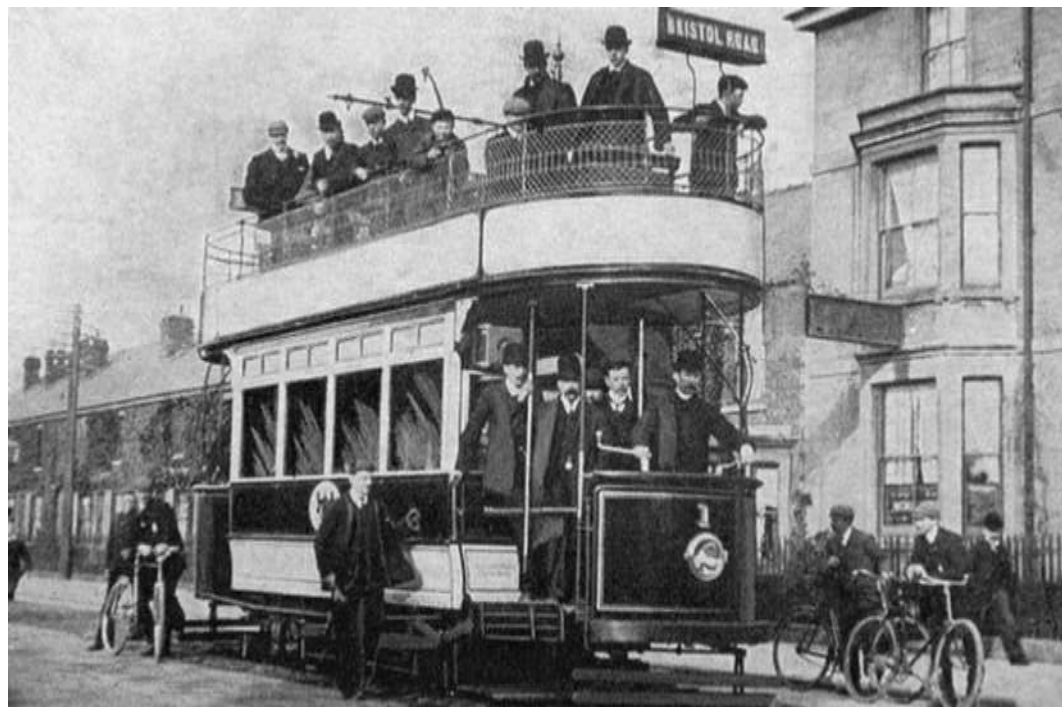
1904

1-20; Double-deck open top 4-wheel; Brush; Brush; ??/??

21-30; Double-deck open top 4-wheel; Brush; Brush; ??/??

Withdrawn 1929-1933.

Gloucester Corporation Transport 1902 - 1936



Gloucester Corporation purchased 30 identical 4-wheel open-top cars from Brush in 1904. This is car No.1 seen on trial at Bristol Road c. 1904. (Photographer unknown).

Bus Fleet List 1929-1936

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

1929

**1-9; FH6170-6178; Vulcan Duchess; D7/8/13/15/16/19/18/21/14;
GRCW; B26F
10-13; FH6179-6182; Thornycroft BC; 18820/18/17/19; GRCW; B32F**

All Corporation vehicles were bodied by the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co (GRCW).

Nos. 10-13 modified to B32R by Roe in 10/34.

To Bristol Tramways & Carriage Co. Ltd., 4/36 (re-numbered 1001-1009, 1210-1213 respectively).

1930

14-16; FH6462-6464; Vulcan Duchess; D28/33/36; GRCW; B26F
17-19; FH6964-6966; Vulcan Duchess; D50/49/45; GRCW; B26F

To Bristol Tramways & Carriage Co. Ltd. 4/36 (re-numbered 1014-1019 respectively).

1932

20-30; FH7948-7958; Thornycroft BC; 23127-37; GRCW; B26F

To Bristol Tramways & Carriage Co. Ltd. 4/36 (re-numbered 1220-1230 respectively).

1933

31-36; FH8289-8294; Thornycroft BC; 23670-75; GRCW; B29RP

Nos. 31-36 re-seated to B32RP at a later date (c.4/35).

To Bristol Tramways & Carriage Co. Ltd. 4/36 (re-numbered 1231-1236 respectively).

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No. 32 (FH8290) was a 1933 Thornycroft BC with local Gloucester Railway Carriage & Wagon Company bodywork. It became Bristol Tramways & Carriage Co's No. 1232 in 1936 when Gloucester leased their services to the company.(Photographer unknown).

1934

37-38; FH8765-8766; Thornycroft BC; 24330-31; GRCW; B32RP

To Bristol Tramways & Carriage Co. Ltd. 4/36 (re-numbered 1237-1238 respectively).

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