

Falkirk & District Tramways Company



1905 - 1936

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Cover Illustration: Opening day of the Laurieston extension 3rd September 1909 with tram No.18, on the left, one of three trams which had been extended upwards and given a flat topped cover to protect passengers from the weather. The curved top of the windows on tram No.10 on the right identifies it as one of the original 15 built in Paris and shipped to Scotland in 1905. (LTHS Collection - photographer unknown).

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Falkirk & District Tramways Company 1905 - 1936

Opened by the Falkirk Electric Construction Syndicate Ltd (who had taken over the Falkirk and District Tramways Company before construction began) on the 21st October 1905 under the Falkirk and District Tramways Order of 1901, this mainly single-track tramway used a 4ft gauge with 21 double-track passing loops. It began as a circular route linking the town of Falkirk with the neighbouring villages of Camelon, Larbert, Stenhousemuir, Carron and Bainsford. The original fleet consisted of 15 (Nos. 1-15) open-top double-deckers from the Compagnie Générale de Construction, of St. Denis, France.

An extension to St. Mary Square, Laurieston (with 7 short double-track passing loops) was opened on 3rd September 1909 (following major engineering work to lower the road beneath the Skew Bridge) and completed the system. Only one car serviced the route running at 20-minute intervals with a second added in peak times. The fare was three halfpennies, any distance. The new route was never as much of a financial success as the circular route, which carried workers to the foundries each day and brought shoppers into the town centre.

In May 1914 the name of the company was changed to the Falkirk and District Tramways Company Ltd.

Following the First World War much of the infrastructure was in need of replacement. Motorbus operators began to challenge the Tramway Company's monopoly, who responded by acquiring buses of its own to operate services in addition to its

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established routes. A programme of track reconstruction began in 1921 although the circular route took eight years to complete. Soon after ten new single decker trams were introduced and much of the business lost during the reconstruction phase was regained.

In 1920 the Falkirk and District Tramways Company was taken over by the Fife Tramway, Light and Power Company, a Balfour Beatty subsidiary. New tramcars were ordered in the shape of ten Brush single-deck tramcars (Nos. 1-10), with additional tramcars Nos. 13-16 arriving in 1931 and five single-deck vehicles from the Dearne District Light Railway system (Nos. 11, 12, 17-19) in 1934.

Strong competition from motorbuses on the Laurieston route prompted its closure in 1924. Rather than invest in the infrastructure the Company chose to dispense with the route, the last tram running on July 20th. By the end of the year all trace of the tracks and overhead cables had gone.

The name of the company was again changed in 1929 to the Falkirk and District Traction Company Ltd.

In 1935 the Scottish Motor Traction Company bought up most of the Company's shares and closed the tramway down the following year to make way for its bus services. The last tram running on 21st July 1936 suitably decorated for the occasion.

FLEET SUMMARY

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

1906

1-15; Double-deck open-top; ?; Compagnie Generale de Construction; ?

16-18; Double-deck open-top; ?; Brush; ?

Nos. 16-18 top-covered from 1908 to 1913.

1929

1-10; Single-deck saloon; ?; Brush; ?

1931

13-16; Single-deck saloon; ?; Brush; ?

1934

11-12; Single-deck lowheight; Peckham; English Electric; 36

17-19 Single-deck lowheight; Peckham; English Electric; 36

Nos. 11-12, 17-19 ex-Dearne District Light Railway.

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**A scenic view showing one of the French-built tramcars in original form.
(LTHS Collection - photographer unknown)**

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1929 Brush-built saloon car No. 3. (LTHS Collection - photographer unknown).

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