



One of the Leyland Titan buses that replaced the No. 1 tram service seen picking up passengers on Princes St. c1954

ON THE BUSES!

With Lothian Buses recently launching more eco-friendly hybrid buses into their fleet, we take a nostalgic look at Edinburgh's iconic buses of the first half of the 20th century, and admire the magnificent new buses that have just been launched.

The people of Edinburgh and the Lothians have relied on bus services, in one form or other - and under various stewardships - for over a century. In the late 19th/early 20th century, public city transport was provided by private companies such as the Edinburgh and District Tramways Company Ltd which operated horse drawn buses, then cable cars.

With the advent of electric trams Edinburgh Corporation Transport (ECT) was formed in 1919 to operate the city's tramways. In the 1920s the trams service was augmented with the introduction of motorised charabanc buses closely followed by the first open-top, double-decker buses. As the fleet of buses increased, garaging and maintenance quickly became an issue and in 1926 ECT buses moved to their new home at Central Depot on Annandale Street, (a



1890s Horse Drawn Omnibus in Leopold Place

former Industrial Exhibition hall), which is still the main depot for Edinburgh's buses as well as being Lothian Buses' headquarters.

1939 saw the outbreak of the Second World War and, despite so many men leaving to fight, Edinburgh's buses and trams were kept running by dedicated staff, including many female conductors or 'clippies'.



1940s Conducoress or 'Clippie'

During the 1940s and into the 1950s, Edinburgh people would wait patiently at bus stops for the welcome sight of sturdy buses like the Guy Arab as they hove into view – and in 1952 ECT took delivery of the first of more than 450 Leyland Titan double-deckers. The modern convenience of these new buses and their sheer number called into question the need for a parallel



1920s Charabanc at St Margaret's Loch

tram system which largely consisted of ageing stock. Over the next 4 years more and more bus services were added, with roads being modified in favour of the new double-decker buses and to the detriment of the trams. For example, the road beneath Slatford Road railway bridge was lowered to allow a new double-decker bus service from Eastfield to Juniper Green, with the tram lines being dug up in the process!

The new bigger fleet of buses required an additional base of operations and in 1955 the Longstone Depot opened to accommodate the increased number of services to the west side of the city. This in effect sounded the death knell of the Gorgie Depot - where many buses serving West Edinburgh

The Last Tram. ECT trams ceased to operate in Edinburgh in 1956. Seen here is the last tram passing Edinburgh Castle on Princes Street on its final journey



had been stored – with its closure in 1955.

Buses were the public transport option of choice and tram usage declined rapidly until in 1956 trams in Edinburgh were withdrawn completely.

Fast forward 50 years or so and in the intervening period, ECT has undergone two name changes, firstly to Lothian Region Transport (in 1975) and then to Lothian Buses (in 2000), remaining in public ownership throughout - the major shareholder being The City of Edinburgh Council.

Today Lothian Buses operates over 70 services in Edinburgh and the surrounding areas of Midlothian and East Lothian, has a fleet of 650 vehicles and employs over 2000 staff, of whom 1500 are drivers.

Every bus in the fleet now has low-floor, step-free, easy-access and with an average



A Guy Arab on Princes Street c1953

ON THE BUSES

age of just 4.9 years, Lothian Buses has one of the youngest fleets of buses in the UK. Additionally, there are over 30 open-top buses for Edinburgh Bus Tours services and 14 specially branded low floor AIRLINK vehicles for use on the dedicated Airport Express service.

In 2011, Lothian buses introduced their first double decker hybrid bus and in April 2013 a single deck hybrid bus was introduced at a launch event in Castle Street before taking to the streets on the Service 1 route from Clermiston to Easter Road. The new buses are among the first of their kind to be used in the UK. Built by Volvo, they are powered

The now defunct Gorgie Depot



Double Decker Hybrid - In service since 2011



by electricity and diesel and have a host of eco friendly features which will save hundreds of tonnes of CO₂ emissions and have a carbon footprint around 40% lower than a regular diesel bus. Additionally, they all carry free Wi-Fi.

Welcoming the new buses, Ian Craig, Managing Director said: 'Our vision is to provide world class, socially inclusive transport for Scotland's capital city. As a company we are always looking for ways to offer greener and more sustainable travel, both for our passengers and the local environment. With financial support from the Scottish Government we are delighted to continue to add to our existing green fleet'.



Ian Craig, Managing Director of Lothian Buses

The Single Deck Hybrid - Joined the fleet in April 2013



Did you know?

Lothian Buses has recently been shortlisted for Scottish Transport Awards in the five categories: Public Transport Operator of the Year; Excellence in Travel Information and Marketing; Contribution to Sustainable Transport; Best Bus Service and Frontline Employee of the Year. The awards ceremony takes place on 20th June 2013 at the Radisson Hotel in Glasgow.

The Lothian Buses Doors Open Day will take place on 28th September 2013. On the day, the public will be free to visit the Annandale Street Depot where they will be able to see new and old buses. Details for 2013 are yet to be finalised, but last year visitors watched a toppled bus recovery demonstration and were able to try out a driving simulator. There were also guided tours on an open top double decker bus, a playbus for children and prize giveaways.

Lothian
buses.com