

HASTINGS PIER CHARITY

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Trams and Trolley Buses in Hastings



A 1930s trolley bus in Hastings (HPC096.012)



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Heading Trams and Trolley Buses in Hastings

The Hastings Tramways Company was founded in early 1904, and construction of the Hastings tramways began soon after.

July 31st, 1905 - The town's first tram service started, with 19,000 people using them on the first day. Initially there was just a circular route from the Silverhill depot, via Sedlescombe Road North, the Ridge, Ore, Mount Pleasant, Blacklands, Queens Road, the town centre and Bohemia Road to Silverhill, with a branch line from Silverhill up Battle Road. A branch from Ore to the bottom of Harold Road opened August 24 1905. Another branch from Silverhill down London Road opened on July 28 1906, and the separate Bopeep-Bexhill line opened April 9 1906. The final section from Bopeep to the Memorial, along the seafront, did not open until January 12 1907.

February 3rd 1906 Front Line tramways: The town clerk received a letter from Mr Elston, secretary of the Hastings Tramway Co, pointing out that the company would, with the sanction of the Corporation, proceed to lay the Front Line with an underground system of electric power in place of overhead wires, as first proposed. The Mail of 3 March said it was understood that the Tramway Company had withdrawn their "GB" system for the Front Line and would shortly place another scheme before the Corporation. The Mail of 31 March said the dolter system may be adopted.

July 7th 1906 - St Leonards trams – laying the dolter system on the Front Line: Hundreds were engaged in working as the Hastings Tramway Co extended their London Road, St Leonards and the Front-Line system. By far the major portion of London Road was complete, as far as the laying of rails was concerned. From the junction of Bohemia and London Roads, down to North Road, the wood paving was finished. A double track would be laid down the whole length of London Road to Pevensey Road, and from that point down to the Front Line (about 300 or 400 yards or so) a single track would have to suffice, on account of the congested traffic and the rather narrow roadway. The poles to support the overhead wires were erected for a short distance between Gensing Gardens and Christ Church, and more were in the course of going up. The work of laying the dolter system had already commenced along the Front Line from the Bopeep Hotel, West Marina, reaching so far, a point opposite the east end of Grosvenor Gardens. There were

hundreds of studs to be laid out, but the current concrete foundation of the wood paving was sufficing for the foundation of the tramway rails. The Dolter stud contact system was known to sometimes electrocute horses.

July 28th 1906 - The London Road and Cooden tramway extensions opened today, following an inspection by the Board of Trade yesterday. The London Road extension ran the full length of the road, from Silverhill to Grand Parade. A preliminary trial of it was made on Thursday 26 July, witnessed by a large crowd. The Cooden extension was on the Bopeep-Bexhill line, which was separate from the Hastings and St Leonards lines, and it ran from Bexhill to Cooden Beach. The times and fares of the two new sections were given on page 5 of today's Mail.

August 4th, 1906 - Victory for Sunday trams: In the poll on 28 July the votes were 4,109 in favour, and 2,689 against, making a majority of 1,420. The Mail described polling day scenes and the opinions of leading men on the result on page 2. The Town Council approved the Sunday service by 21 votes to 9 on August 3. Rapid progress was being made with the laying down of the tram lines on the Front and in Robertson Street. It was hoped to have this section in working order in two or three weeks' time.

August 11th, 1906 - The Front-Line tram lines were being laid from Bopeep to a point between the Victoria Hotel and the South Colonnade. Lines were laid on the concrete foundation of the wood paving, with the Front Line punctured at intervals of a few feet where studs were sunk to the depth of about a foot. In Robertson Street, it was probable that the portion of the street then up would be relaid with the rails and studs in a few days. Over 32,000 travelled on the tram cars last Sunday (August 5). Every endeavour was made to reduce the tram noise: screeching on turning the corners and entering the points, and the clanging of bells while passing churches.

August 25th, 1906 - Tramway progress: Work continued in linking the east and west ends of town. Lines had been laid nearly as far as London Road. The work in Robertson Street had been completed and the men would be able to continue it along White Rock.

October 13, 1906 - The linking up of the systems at London Road and the Memorial was near completion, and would be the last part of tramway construction for some considerable time. The junction with London Road was to be completed this day (Saturday 13 October), and that with the Memorial in a few days' time.

December 15th, 1906 - The starting of the tram service on the Front Line had been delayed for several months because the laying of the underground system had proved far more difficult than fixing overhead wires. But now the Board of Trade inspection was very close. Several trial trips had been made, mostly at midnight. There had already been two accidents: a cab horse was injured by electric shock, and one of the two horse buses of Mr Kite of Western Road Mews stepped on a stud and received a shock. However, the Front Line came into use before the end of the month.

<http://www.giddykipper.biz/Hastings-Chronicle-Archive/sunday-trams-agreed/>
<http://www.giddykipper.biz/Hastings-Chronicle-Archive/tram-extensions-open/>
[January 12, 1907](#)

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