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news release

14TH SEPTEMBER 1957 LIVERPOOL'S LAST TRAM

The first electric trams began operation on the Liverpool Corporation tramway in Liverpool on 16th November 1898.

Over the next half century the Liverpool Tramway developed into an extensive network and featured some of the most elegant trams in the UK. By 1945 at the height of the operation, the system included some 744 tram vehicles operating 63 routes along 156km (97 miles) of track. The trams outnumbered buses by a ratio of three to one.

The post second world-war period heralded a cross-roads in public transport decision making, not only in the City of Liverpool, but amongst many other British Cities. One of the public transport proposals included expanding the existing comprehensive tram system still further, with the possible introduction of American type tram units of 48 feet in length.

The City of Liverpool decided, along with all other British Cities with a tram system, to abandon trams in favour of buses. Indeed, in 1945 the then Transport Chairman of Liverpool, claimed that the tramway would greatly hamper the development of new roads in Liverpool, indicating the emerging dominance of the private car.

At this time Liverpool had a large fleet of ultra-modern "streamliner" trams, also known as "Green Goddesses" that despite being built in the 1930's remained modern looking into the 1950's.

On 12th June 1948 the first of the Liverpool Tram routes, numbers 26 and 27 operating between the city centre and the Outer Circular, were withdrawn.

Over the next nine years the services were phased out with at least one route being sacrificed each year. By 14th September 1957 the last tram operating along Route 40 to Page Moss Avenue was taken out of service.

Today the last official tram to operate in Liverpool, number 293, resides in the Seashore Trolley Museum in Kennebunkport, Maine in the USA.

All three of the Liverpool Tram Depots have been demolished in recent times, including Dingle Depot (operational 1898-1952), Smithdown Road (1899-1936) and Edge Lane (1926-1957).