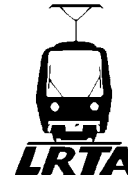


CAPITAL CITIES IN WESTERN EUROPE WITH URBAN TYPE TRAMWAYS



This review has been specifically prepared to show conclusively how different our English attitude happens to be towards urban transit when viewed alongside European cities. Although as a nation we seem to recognise that a light rail type of tramway has many qualities not available with most bus-only schemes, we still apply the false theory that motorists can be "pushed" into whatever transit is provided even though it often spends most of its time table in "go-slow" traffic conditions.

London, the largest Western European city to apply the congestion charge, is caught up in what certain politicians think is an acceptable choice, tube, bus or an entry charge. Without doubt, the tube is vital to London but, being interurban orientated to feeding passengers from distant suburbs into the CBD, it has to keep its central area underground stations to an absolute minimum.



Illustration 1: Dublin

Photo: B S Lomas

The bus is designed more as a gap-filler between stations and as such provides a more intimate public service. A British holiday visitor using the local tram services in Europe cannot help but notice the many advantages. This especially applies to the quick understanding of the routes in a strange town. Access of the vehicles requires so little effort, something picked up and now adopted here.



Illustration 2: Paris T3

Photo: A. Peter H. Velthoen

By comparison, unless one is a local in London, the use of buses in the central area can be somewhat daunting. A visitor just passing through, say Waterloo to Kings Cross, should find the Cross River Transit (if built) ideal and certainly easy to use.

The case for providing a rail type transit system is often clouded because many that could gain from its existence often demand an underground metro type line which, because of its high cost, is a non-starter. The loss of some road space could also be part of the reasoning behind such thinking.

No matter which way local council members sway our "for" and "against" attitudes, the immediate outcome often resembles that well known "chicken and egg" expression, an expression which usually leaves the impasse unresolved but with the "door" to a settlement remaining open.

The hours (days, weeks or months) on heated debate will no doubt take the argument beyond a compromise which was probably the real problem all along. Although Sheffield was the first city to run into the extended street occupation problem, lessons have not only been learned but new techniques developed such that a "which came first" question would no longer be relevant.

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APPENDIX No 1. EXAMPLES OF LIGHT RAIL IN WESTERN EUROPEAN CITIES

CAPITAL CITY	REMARKS
ATHENS	A NEW TRAMWAY - COINCIDED WITH THE OLYMPIC GAMES
BELFAST	A NEW URBAN TRANSIT SYSTEM BEING CONSIDERED EITHER A TRAMWAY OR GUIDED BUS
BERLIN	A MODERNISED TRAMWAY BEING EXTENDED INTO WESTERN BERLIN
BERN	A MODERNISED TRAMWAY. TRACKS MIXED WITH STREET WATER FOUNTAINS
BRUSSELS	A LARGE MODERNISED TRAMWAY
CARDIFF	NO PLANS FOR A TRAMWAY
COPENHAGEN	NO PLANS FOR A TRAMWAY
DOUGLAS (IOM)	TWO HERITAGE TRAMWAYS (ONE HORSE AND THE OTHER ELECTRIC)
DUBLIN	NEW TRAMWAY WITH MANY NEW LINES PROPOSED
EDINBURGH	NEW TRAM ROUTES PLANNED
HELSINKI	ESTABLISHED TRAMWAY SYSTEM
LISBON	HERITAGE TRAMWAY AND A NEW MODERN TRAMWAY
LONDON	NO TRAMWAY OPERATING BUT MANY NEW LINES PROPOSED
LUXEMBOURG	A TRAM-TRAIN SYSTEM BEING CONSIDERED
MADRID	A NEW TRAMWAY UNDER CONSTRUCTION
OSLO	AN ESTABLISHED TRAM SYSTEM
PARIS	NEW TRAM ROUTES WITH A TRAM-TRAIN ROUTE
ROME	AN ESTABLISHED TRAM SYSTEM
STOCKHOLM	A HERITAGE TRAM LINE AND MODERN TRAM ROUTE
THE HAGUE (DEN HAAG)	AN ESTABLISHED TRAMWAY AND NEW TRAM-TRAIN LINE
VIENNA	AN ESTABLISHED TRAMWAY

ANALYSIS AND NOTES

- To avoid confusion, light rail systems and tramways have all been referred to as tramways
- Total number of capital cities listed: 21
- Of the five UK systems quoted none operate a tramway.
- Total number of HERITAGE systems quoted : 4.

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