

Council during Tramway Purchase Discussion, Political Jobbery": this was how the 'Mercury' of 31st December 1932 reported the heated debate. Feelings ran very high in Norwich over this subject at the time. The heated debate mentioned above decided to have a poll of citizens about the purchase. For some time the local press carried articles and letters about the proposed purchase. Some supporting the idea and others opposing it. The case for and against was stated in the EDP of the 3rd January 1933. The polling day was set for Tuesday, 10th January 1933. The press reports reminds one of election time rather than a local issue. The Opposition party were busy issuing statements, leaflets and writing to the press. In all, some 90,000 pamphlets were issued and ten sandwich men paraded the streets on their behalf.

The Council proposed to purchase the undertaking for £175,000 and hoped to show an annual profit of £35,000 if it were run by buses and not trams. They even consulted A.R. Fernley, General Manager of Sheffield Corporation Tramways. He recommended with the City Accountant that the purchase should go through.

The Opposition stated that a vote against the purchase would mean:

- (1) the tramway company would have to make the changeover to buses themselves without any cost to the ratepayers at all,
- (2) the tramway might sell to another transport undertaking who would for their own benefit change over from trams to buses immediately.

Meetings were held to explain each case to the public. At Colman Road Schools, the Council held their meeting stating their case, whilst at the Lakenham Schools, the Tramways Opposition Committee held their meetings. The result of the poll was known by 9.30pm. It was:

Against the purchase	11,033
For the purchase	<u>7,775</u>
	3,258 majority against the purchase.

It should be noted that only 29% of the electors bothered to vote. After so much heated discussion there was an anti-climax for there were few letters to the press about the result. In February 1933, Eastern Counties proposed to increase their capital to make an offer to the Company.

The Annual Report of the Norwich Electric Tramway Company of 30th June 1933 showed that they had made a net profit of £1749.3s.0d. It was to be their last annual report.

On 1st December 1933, Eastern Counties announced that they had obtained a controlling interest in the Tramway Company and as a result of which 44 tramway cars, 33 buses, a motor parcels van and various premises came under the control of Eastern Counties. Thus twelve months after the heated debate the future of the Norwich Tramways was known.

In February 1934 the Chairman of Eastern Counties made a statement about the future. The Eastern Evening News understood that "The Eastern Counties Company are, so it is understood, desirous of taking the trams off the streets with the minimum of delay, with a view to inaugurating a system of buses in their place". This was not a surprising statement and the press and most citizens supported the idea. The Bill for the abandonment was promoted on 26th November 1934. On 5th February 1935, the Norwich Electric Tramways Bill went through its first reading and it received the Royal Assent on 6th June 1935.

Eastern Counties retained the Tramways as a separate undertaking at this time and when the Bill was passed the Norwich Tramway Buses and vehicles delivered after the 6th June would be painted in the livery of Eastern Counties Tilling Red and Cream. They would however operate on hire to "Norwich Omnibus Company" (the new name of the Tramways). With the exception of one vehicle, all vehicles carried the name of the legal owner, i.e. Eastern Counties Omnibus Company.

The Board of the Norwich Omnibus Company was made up of members of the City