

# Sandtoft Scene

April 2016  
No. 101



**News and Views from  
The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft**

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**Membership Secretary:** If you change your address, please advise David Needham [membership@sandtoft.org](mailto:membership@sandtoft.org) to ensure that your next *Sandtoft Scene* is mailed correctly

**FRONT COVER PICTURE:** An autumn view through the trees, with horsechestnuts in the foreground and a distant glimpse of a Bradford trolleybus

*Photo: Bob Ashton*

Our Vision Statement is

**To be nationally acknowledged as the Museum of the  
Trolleybus and to entertain, educate and give excellent value  
and service to our visitors**

and portrays exactly why The Museum exists and how the Company and The Museum should be run. All considerations, decisions, directives, policies, processes and actions of the Directors and the Members must be focused to meet this end.

## A PERSONAL VIEW FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



Two years ago I was delighted to be asked to participate in the planning workshops organised at the Museum by our professional advisors from Museum Development Yorkshire. These were very constructive sessions, with much useful ground being covered and a thorough discussion taking place of the Museum's strengths and weaknesses. These sessions, and their conclusions, were documented in 'Scene no.93, together with the actions identified to deal with some of the areas for improvement and threats to our continuing success. It is fair to say that most of this analysis and its

recommendations did not come from the museum professionals, but from those directors and managers participating in the workshops.

I am returning to this theme because, after two years with little tangible evidence of action to address the problem areas, it is now very encouraging that recent events have made it possible to take a significant step forward. Working behind the scenes, our Board members have been carrying out a detailed review of their individual roles and responsibilities, and thanks largely to Stewart David making substantially more of his personal time available to the Museum, the resulting changes should help towards a more logical and balanced workload for the other directors, and also strengthen the focus on important tasks that have sometimes been neglected. More details are contained in the updated organisation chart, which is enclosed with this 'Scene' as information for our active volunteer workers.

My second topic may sound more contentious, and relates to my observation in 'Scene no.100 that we don't receive much by way of views and opinions from our members these days. Rather than continue at length here, I have written my thoughts in the *Dear 'Scene* column on page 32. The bottom line is a personal feeling that it has now become very important to put future projects to maintain and improve our existing infrastructure onto an equal footing with projects to expand the Museum. With that in mind, I am opening up a "suggestions box" for your ideas on shaping the Museum's future plans, and I am encouraging as many readers as possible to contribute to it.

Finally, after the annual calm of the winter break, we are already well into another hectic season of weekend events and running days, Last year's visitor feedback was again very complimentary, so we are depending on all our volunteers to continue pulling together to maintain our Museum's most enviable reputation.

**Please note: News deadline for the next *Sandtoft Scene* is 1 June 2016**

## WINTER WORKING WEEKEND

**Dave Chick, Stewart David and Graham Bilbé**

It has become an established tradition to organise two working weekends during the winter season, and the first working party this year took place on 6/7 February. An encouraging number of workers came to join in and, in addition to tackling specific jobs around the Museum site, they were able to take advantage of two specially-organised education sessions for volunteers.

### Customer service education

After reading through the comments visitors have left on the Museum's *Trip Advisor* page, or listening to what they say after spending a day with us, it becomes clear that the most important contribution to visitors' enjoyment is their interaction with our volunteers. To maintain the Museum's reputation it is important that all our volunteers continue to be seen as being friendly and helpful at all times.



The Skegness building provided a good environment for Linda Proctor's volunteer education session

*Photo: Dave Chick*

To help us with this goal, Linda Proctor ran a customer service course on the Saturday. This was attended by around twenty volunteers, and the topics covered included an examination of what customer service is, communication, the customer's experience and handling complaints. The session was highly interactive throughout, which meant that everyone learned from each other as well as from Linda. Some interesting ideas were shared about how we can make sure that all volunteers are able to deal with any queries the public may raise.

This was an enjoyable and valuable session and it is intended to repeat it until all volunteers have received the training.

### Safety training session

There was a similar-sized audience for the other session, the main content being an asbestos safety briefing delivered by our safety advisor Pete Rowell. This is now a legal and insurance requirement for all our volunteers who are involved with vehicle restoration, testing and general museum site maintenance, and to record our compliance a register of all those who have received this briefing has been compiled. In addition, members were briefed on the importance of the correct management of any lone working undertaken on the Company's



In the *Regal* cinema the weekend's volunteers attend an essential safety briefing

*Photo: Dave Chick*

premises. Further briefing sessions are being planned later in the season to ensure all the relevant members are included.

### **Work on the Pelham building**

During the winter it has been necessary to repair the floor inside the rear entrance of the building and this had left the Pelham in need of a good clean-up, which it received during the working weekend. The opportunity was taken to reorganise the "1906 Room" (which is used for storage) and it was a good deal tidier at the end of the weekend than it had been before! This piece of work was prompted by the need to retrieve a display case from the room for use in our exhibition *The Trolleybus during the First World War*, which will receive some additions this year.

### **More seating space for *The Tea Trolley Café***

Following discussions at last year's AGM forum about a low-cost short-term method of creating more seating space for visitors in the café, a start was made over the weekend on making that happen. The goal is to achieve this whilst retaining as much as possible of our important display material. Our approach is to rebuild, (or adapt) the existing large cabinet, to form a "shallow" showcase on the back wall of the café between the kitchen area and the simulator.

Work has already started by clearing out the display of models in the cabinet on the café side, the main items of which have been resited in the case with the large "chassisless" model, whilst other models on loan have been returned for the time being. The aim is to displace most of the shop window display to the back wall cabinet, allowing the remaining seating units to be positioned in the window, with free-standing tables and chairs in front of the new cabinet. This should result in an additional 8-to-10 seats and a more open aspect to this end of the café. As an added benefit during the project, our archivist Adrian Dennison has at last been able to access the various museum-owned models on display for accessioning as part of the formal museum collection.

Further good progress was made during the second working weekend on 5/6 March, with completion expected in time for Easter. We believe that this will be a big improvement, though we still need to work on the ergonomic aspects of the kitchen area!

## A RIPPING TIME ON ROTHERHAM 37

Mike Johnson

There comes a time when a task can be delayed no longer! I had mentioned my concerns about 37's upper-deck lino to the RTG periodically, and after the event marking the closure of the Rotherham system, it was decided to tackle the job. Tim Stubbs gathered together a group - with tea mugs in one hand and Kit-Kat bars in on the other - and we assembled at Sandtoft on a January morning. The near-side flooring upstairs was the area most in need of attention, so we began there and confined our efforts to that area.

Ripping out the old lino meant the removal of seats, rods, screws and nails, with plenty of dust and dirt to get rid of. Some of the seats had been taken out prior to January: the first eight are already with Hayes Upholsterers being re-covered and the rest will now be dealt with.

The six of us - Tim, Nigel, Peter, John, "Monday Mike" and "Tuesday Mike" - spread ourselves out along the upper deck and the work went surprisingly well. Hammers, wood chisels, cold chisels, screwdrivers, drills, glue, kneelers, grinders and brushes were carefully used in our task. One concern was to avoid removing some seat-anchoring blocks which would have required the lower-saloon ceiling to be removed to gain access to the nuts!

Within two hours, all the seats, grip-rods and stubborn items had come out, with no bad language, nor any injuries. A lengthy lunch was followed by ripping up the (in parts recalcitrant) lino, which was dispatched by wheelbarrow to Tony Ferris' big yellow bin. With Bruce Lake and Ian Metcalfe also around, access to all the required equipment was easy.

Tidying up was relatively simple and we prepared the whole area ready for laying the new lino in the warmer weather when it will be more pliable. Overall, we had a very successful day, completed by plenty of tea and chat.



After a day's hard work, members of the "task force" line up in front of no.37.

*Left-to-right:* Mike Dilai, Nigel Tilly, Peter Swift, John Gupwell, Mike Johnson and Tim Stubbs

*Photo: courtesy  
Tim Stubbs*



## A productive day's work on Rotherham 37

Tim and his team normally dedicate their efforts to the delicate job of restoring Rotherham 73. This time it was different - it seemed more like destruction than restoration.....

**STAGE ONE** (Above):  
Completing the removal of the near-side seat frames

**STAGE TWO** (Right): Out come all the floor-level fittings, along with the remains of the debris



**STAGE THREE:** The old floor covering has gone and everything is clean and ready for laying the new linoleum in summer

*Photos: Tim Stubbs*

## NEW RESPONSIBILITIES FOR STEWART DAVID



At the AGM last November we were very pleased to welcome Stewart David as a member of the Board and a trustee of the Museum. Stewart has been a regular worker at Sandtoft since 2000 and in 2005 he took on overall responsibility for organising and supervising trolleybus operations as the Museum's Traffic Manager. Stewart moved from Reading to Thorne in 2014 and this has made it possible for him to get involved in a wider range of activities for which living near to the Museum is an advantage.

In addition to his current Traffic Department role, Stewart has now taken on responsibilities at Board level for safety and staffing - two areas absolutely critical to the running of our organisation. In addition, Stewart has agreed to become our Managing Director, tasked with pulling together separately-managed activities and ensuring that essential commitments are progressed to completion.

Stewart has already made a determined start on the safety front. The implementation of a high standard of workplace safety was a key part of his former job as a manager with Royal Mail, from which he brings a great deal of relevant knowledge and experience. His personal priorities for the safety of the Museum's volunteers and visitors include:

- ◆ Building on the significant progress we have already made over the past decade in establishing a strong and effective safety culture at the Museum, and
- ◆ Ensuring that everyone understands their important part in delivering that objective by working in a safe manner at all times

As safety director Stewart will be ably assisted by Peter Rowell, whom we are delighted to welcome back as the Museum's health and safety advisor. Peter has been a practising professional in industrial safety in the local steel firm.

As director responsible for staffing, Stewart's role for organising the staffing of our traffic operations is now extended to all the Museum's on-site volunteers. He has previously deputised for Tony Ferris in preparing staffing rosters for open days, and he now takes on that job permanently. His immediate priority here is to improve the reliability of having all the required people in place to run every open day smoothly, and to this end he is looking to establish an approach based on planning the rosters well in advance, rather than just concentrating on the next open day.

We are very grateful to Stewart for taking on the additional personal workload of these extra duties and responsibilities, and we encourage everyone to give him the best support they possibly can. Good luck, Stewart, with all of this during 2016 and beyond!

# RECOLLECTIONS OF A TRACKLESS CONDUCTOR

Laurie Johnson

As I have mentioned in my previous article (*Sandtoft Scene* no.99) my tram and trolleybus obsession began as child. I loved the tram lines in the road and was fascinated by the ones no longer used, wondering where they went, but I was never allowed to explore to find out. I loved to see and wonder at a Sheffield tram as it reversed and I watched the trolley pole as it followed that triangle of wires that turned it round to follow the tram - to me it seemed like magic! Sheffield trams were so graceful and, of the many different types they had running, the post-war Charles Roberts cars were by far the best. I have ridden one recently and it still seems so modern: pantographs never look graceful on the old type of tram.

But it was the wires above the road that interested me as much as anything: I was fascinated by the spider's web of wires above the streets in town (Rotherham), all the crossings and junctions, and the switches that the conductors pulled to set the trolleybus on its correct route. And on the rare occasion when a dewirement occurred, I was delighted to see the poor disgruntled driver get out of his cab to fish out the long bamboo pole to replace the trolley booms (as I later found they were called) onto the wires. Little did I know that when I grew up I would be doing exactly the same thing with a slightly red face, hoping that nobody I knew was about.

After the war, Rotherham had acquired a brand new fleet of single-deckers. They were very smart and comfortable and everything seemed fine, but then the powers-that-be decided that the routes to Greasborough and Worry Goose Lane (my route) would go. After that, in 1954, the Maltby section was cut back to Wickersley. To me, the economics of it all was above my head: they were putting on new bus routes, so why couldn't they be trolleybus routes? But it wasn't to be. Then, in 1956, they decided to rebody some single-deck trolleybuses and put the resulting double-deckers on the Thrybergh to Kimberworth section. These were very successful and so the Brecks and Wickersley routes were given the same treatment - at least they were saved for now. The new double-deckers were to me amazing to see, and as I was in Rotherham five days a week attending college, I saw a lot of them. I just wished they had been kept on my route.

My starting work on the trolleybuses was more by accident than choice. I had begun working as an apprentice painter and decorator, but in January 1959 we had no work and I was laid off. I had a mate whose brother-in-law was working on the "buses" at that time and he encouraged me to give it a try. So I did, and that was that: I joined Rotherham Corporation Transport on 2 February 1959 - at a time when it was very cold and frosty. We did a week in the school room learning about the ticket machine, all the rules and regulations, the bus routes - the works. I can't say it was a job of choice but it was a job where, with overtime, you could earn a good wage. However, the hours were hideous, with the first 'buses leaving the depot to enter service running at 4:30am - out to Maltby and Silverwood Colliery. These were then followed by 'buses on all routes by 5:10 am. We had miners to take to work and loads of men going to the steel works that lined

Sheffield Road virtually all the way to the City of Sheffield. At 6:00 am there was a shift change-over and hundreds of people were about in town swapping buses. You couldn't conduct a public service vehicle until you had a badge from the traffic commissioners, but whilst you waited for it to arrive you could conduct on a trolleybus, as they were licenced by the town council. Your licence didn't take that long to arrive: mine came on 6 February - and here it is -

9810



COUNTY BOROUGH OF ROTHERHAM

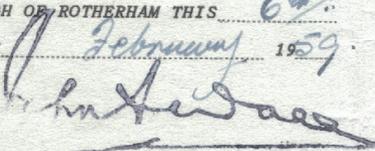
Town Police Clauses Act, 1847. Tramways Act, 1870.  
Rotherham Corporation Act, 1928.

LICENCE NO. R.E.V. .... BADGE NO. ....

**RAILLESS ELECTRIC TROLLEY VEHICLE CONDUCTOR'S LICENCE**

WE, THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND BURGESSES OF THE COUNTY BOROUGH OF ROTHERHAM ACTING BY THE COUNCIL, DO HEREBY BY VIRTUE OF THE POWERS VESTED IN US BY THE ABOVE MENTIONED ACTS, LICENSE Lawrence Robert Johnson OF 50, Hill Close Ave, Rotherham, Rotherham TO ACT AS A CONDUCTOR OF ANY RAILLESS ELECTRIC TROLLEY VEHICLE LICENSED TO PLY FOR HIRE WITHIN THE SAID COUNTY BOROUGH, FROM THE DAY OF THE DATE HEREOF UNTIL THE 30th DAY OF JUNE, 1959, SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE SAID ACTS, AND TO THE BYE-LAWS, RULES AND ORDERS FROM TIME TO TIME IN FORCE RELATING TO RAILLESS ELECTRIC TROLLEY VEHICLES, AND THE OWNERS AND CONDUCTORS OF THE SAME.

GIVEN UNDER THE SEAL OF THE MAYOR,  
ALDERMEN AND BURGESSES OF THE COUNTY  
BOROUGH OF ROTHERHAM THIS 6th  
DAY OF February 1959.

  
TOWN CLERK.

FEE 1/-

NOTE - THIS LICENCE MUST BE RENEWED ON OR BEFORE 1st JULY IN EACH YEAR

BT. ADT. LT. 12 - 8.57.



When you started on the trolleybuses, you were put to learn with an experienced conductor - usually they were female as the men seemed to prefer to be on the diesel routes, which had more variation. The trolleys didn't go as far out of town, except for the Mexborough and Swinton routes, but they had separate crews owing to the way the tickets were issued. Rotherham had the Ultimate ticket machine but Mexborough & Swinton used the Setright. Because of the revenue sharing agreements between the Corporation and the Company on the jointly-operated routes, the fares collected within the county borough boundary had to be recorded separately. This was not possible using "Ultimate" tickets, so the Rotherham crews had to continue using the old Bell Punch tickets, issuing a 2d ticket between the town centre and Rotherham Bridge, and then issuing a Mexborough & Swinton through ticket to make up the fare. Beyond Rotherham Bridge, only the M&S tickets were used.

Until my badge arrived I did my training on the trolleybuses, working on the Brecks and Wickersley section and the Dalton - Kimberworth routes. My first conductress was Irene Thompson: like many crews, she and her husband, Norman, had been working on trolleys since before the war. You had to have a day on the Mexborough and Swinton routes with the Bell Punch tickets: they were very slow compared to an Ultimate machine, but the regular crews who used them seemed to like them, and I must say I enjoyed my shift on that route. My conductress was Nellie Cooney, her husband was a trolleybus driver but they didn't work together. Once my badge had arrived, my second week was spent on the buses, mainly making sure I covered all the long routes like Chesterfield, Barnsley, Worksop (via Dinnington and via Oldcoates), plus Sheffield to Doncaster, which was great - my dream route for tram and trolleybus spotting. I got to see trams in Sheffield, trolleybuses in Rotherham (we followed them from Masborough to Dalton Brook), and when we reached Conisborough I often got a quick peek of a trolleybus at the Brook Square terminus. Then when we got to Balby, we followed the Doncaster Corporation trolleybus route into Doncaster.

When I passed my test and became a fully-fledged conductor, I returned to the trolleybuses and was given a regular duty on the trolleybuses. It was on the Dalton - Kimberworth section or "D&K" as it was officially known, but the crews always called it "The Track". The route was a very busy section in those days, especially on the Dalton/ Thrybergh side, but less so on the Kimberworth side.

Sometimes, my shift would involve nine trips to Pumping Station and having to get off and pull the switch to go up Effingham Street on every trip. The experience lost its appeal on a cold, wet day, and sometimes, if the driver missed working the automatic switch at the "Pump" turn-off on Fitzwilliam Road, I would get an extra one to pull. I might also have to do this at Thrybergh if he missed working the switch for Silverwood there. When we did the early-morning journey at 4:30 am to Silverwood that went back to "Pump" only, I had two switches to pull - one at the Foljambe Hotel to go onto Mowbray Street, and another at the "Pump" terminus to go onto Herringthorpe Valley Road to return to Silverwood. I quite liked it really, as it was all part of the charm of working on a trolleybus. On the return journey from Silverwood where the 'bus turned off down Norfolk Street, there was a "pull



No trolleybuses in the immediate foreground, but this 1960 view of Effingham Square provides a study in overhead equipment at one of the busier junctions of the Rotherham system

*Photo courtesy Laurie Johnson*

and let go" switch and one of the miners would say "I'll pull the switch for you, mate" - slightly disappointing as I enjoyed doing it myself! With this device you just pulled the switch and left it, and when the trolleybus turned down Norfolk Street the switch automatically returned to the "straight on" position.

One dark, wet winter's teatime I was conducting on the no.6 to Kimberworth. We were in Effingham Square (as it was then) and behind us was a trolleybus on the no.5 "Pump" service that would have to turn left up Effingham Street. After we had gone straight across the cross-roads down Frederick Street, we stood waiting for the lights to change. The conductress of the "Pump" trolleybus behind was standing in a shop doorway waiting for the lights to change, and when they did, she ran out and pulled the switch. The result was that when my trolleybus to Kimberworth went straight across, its trolleys followed the wires up Effingham Street, causing a dewirement in which we lost a trolleyhead. Luckily, the wires weren't damaged, and the driver sent me running to the office on Frederick Street to ask for the tower wagon to attend. The inspector came and got the bamboo pole from underneath. He replaced the "good" trolley boom onto its wire, and held the boom that had lost its head against the other running wire whilst the driver slowly pulled forward far enough to clear the road junction. There were lots of sparks - it really was a sight to see! Somewhat delayed, the "Pump" trolleybus was able to continue on its journey and we waited until the overhead crew arrived in their tower wagon to repair the damaged trolleyhead.

I spent three years conducting trolleybuses in Rotherham and then, at the age of 21, I joined the driving school, became a trolleybus driver and remained in the job until the Rotherham system closed in October 1965.

The final scene in Rawmarsh Road depot on the evening of Sunday 3 October 1965. The two trolleybuses that provided the "final" enthusiasts' tours had returned, including no.30, adorned with its "Last Rotherham Trolleybus" banner

*Photo courtesy Laurie Johnson*



## VEHICLE REPORTS

*Compiled with information supplied by Bruce Lake, Geoff Welburn, John Whipham and Francis Whitehead and with acknowledgements to DO&LRS*

**Nottingham 367:** Despite John Whipham being out of service for a couple of months with a fractured wrist (commiserations, John), he is able to report significant progress since our last update in 'Scene no.97. Following investigations of the rear dome interior, a horizontal dome stretcher has been made, but is not yet in place. Much work has been done on removing the offside top deck light fittings, taking off the lamp surrounds and releasing the connectors so that they can be rewired. Two new interior side panels to go under the upstairs windows have been prepared, and these will be loosely fixed until the new green leather cloth can be fitted. Dismantling of the nearside of the upper saloon has revealed how badly it has deteriorated: complete renewal of all the pillars and waist-rails will be required.

John Whipham at work last November inside the lower deck of 367, where everything is in a much more advanced state of restoration. In this picture, John is not actually restoring 367, but painting the backing board for a road sign

*Photo: Andy Thornton*



**Wellington 82** is reaching the final stages of the work being undertaken by First South Yorkshire in Rotherham. The seat tops and other fittings were taken to the specialist re-chroming firm early in January and the necessary work has now been completed and the parts taken back to Rotherham. At the time of writing, the seat cushions and backs were still at the re-upholsterers, so once these are

received back, the seats can be re-assembled and bolted back in place. Meanwhile, a variety of jobs are being dealt with - re-fitting the catwalk and boom hooks, fitting some draught-proofing to and painting the folding doors, painting the driver's area and a deep clean throughout the interior. We are also waiting for a replacement rubber mudguard for a seriously-torn one to the front off-side to arrive from New Zealand, whilst new rubber strips for the steps to the entrance and exit have been purchased in the UK.

Once everything on First's list is completed, no.82 will transfer to Sandtoft and the electrics will be checked and tested and the trolley gear re-fitted: to that end, there are several special insulators en-route from New Zealand, and at least one of the trolley booms needs to be repaired (or even replaced) as it is severely corroded. A set of transfers and vinyls has still to be sourced, made and applied.

So, we are now working towards seeing a resplendent no.82 launched into service with an appropriate flourish on the Saturday of the Worldwide Weekend (11-12 June). An update on this will be posted on our website nearer the time.

**Bradford 558:** Work on the electrics has continued steadily, and this has taken Geoff Welburn longer than expected. He has added direction flashers at the rear, along with twin brake lights, and a reversing horn and hazard warning lights have also been fitted. A replacement vacuum gauge is required as the numbers on the dial are peeling off. The oil pressure light and the direction light are also being rewired. All the wiring for the headlamps has been replaced and these lamps will now become double dipping. This replaces the old arrangement, which required the offside light to be switched off in the dipped position. All the lamp, fog light and side light wires have been renewed, whilst the reflectors and the chrome head lamp rings have been re-plated.

Some years ago, 558's engine block had been stitched and welded due to cracking in the water jacket area. Recently the block has sprung a leak, which was traced to one of the core blanking plates, where a tiny hole had appeared after cleaning off the paint. Hopefully some "Chemical Metal" will correct this. The offside wing and and bonnet have never fitted correctly and an attempt is now being made to realign them.

**Doncaster 22** is undergoing major work on its gearbox and clutch. The gearbox has been removed and will be rebuilt before being replaced behind a reconditioned clutch. We don't expect this renovation to significantly change the "charm" of the gearbox, but it will at least mean the gears can be found in the same place every time!

**Doncaster 33** has had its fuel pump and injectors cleaned up and serviced to ensure that this vehicle performs as well as possible. The interior has also received attention, with the passenger entrance area being smartened-up and the replacement of the tired leather panels around the door. The opportunity was taken to give the inefficient demisters a thorough overhaul: not much was left of the old demister pipes and these have been being replaced with new ones.

**Doncaster 112:** Much of the woodwork trim on this vehicle has been removed, cleaned up, treated and put back in place. Repainting of the interior has started and the upper saloon is now coming together nicely.

## **GRAPHIC DESIGN - COULD YOU HELP?**

From time to time the Museum would benefit from the services of a graphic artist - someone skilled in computer design, who could create drawings for a variety of purposes. One example is to produce an artist's impression of how the Museum might look following its development, and we could also use artwork to help create some attractive souvenirs for sale in *The Trolleyshop*. It is just possible that we have someone amongst our 500+ members with experience in this area, so if you are that person, and you are able and willing to give us some time and assistance, we would very much like to hear from you: please email Francis Whitehead (contact details on page 2).

## **TIME TO FIND A NEW EDITOR**

When I took on the role of editing *Sandtoft Scene* in January 2012, I had to think carefully about whether I would be able to make a long-term commitment to the job, and at that time decided to sign up to the task for a period of five years. This approach was agreed with those Board members responsible for ensuring that we continue to produce a regular members' magazine, so my decision to stand down at the end of this year is not an unexpected one for those in charge.

This may, however, come as a surprise to some of our readers and contributors, so at risk of giving what might seem like an abnormally long period of notice, I do feel it is important that we make a start now on the process of identifying a replacement editor, so that a smooth transition can take place towards the end of 2016.

If you are interested in becoming the next editor, please get in touch and I will be very happy to explain more about what goes into creating our quarterly publication. We have prepared a job description, but the essential requirements include working closely with contributors, keeping abreast of happenings at the Museum, proficiency in IT skills and being reasonably well organised and able to work to a schedule. It will be easier to get started if you are already a volunteer at the Museum, but this is not an important requirement.

Also, do please feel free to talk to Francis Whitehead or Graham Bilbé about the role, as their perspective is important in getting the right person for the job. We very much hope to have a replacement editor identified by mid-year, so that a good handover can be achieved after jointly working through the 3-month cycle of getting a complete magazine together.

Meanwhile, will everyone please keep the articles, news items and photographs coming in? When I took over the reins five years ago I was fortunate in having a good supply of material already in the pipeline, and having this again now will definitely be of help to the next editor.

I should add that whilst the job of editing *Sandtoft Scene* is quite time-consuming and sometimes brings its frustrations, it is for the most part a very worthwhile and rewarding one. The experience has spurred me on to volunteer for other "odd jobs" to help the Museum, and I still hope to make a contribution in other areas when the current editorial workload finally subsides.....

**John Stainforth**

## NEWS ROUND-UP

### Publicity

The 2016 visitor leaflet has been printed and a copy is enclosed with this *Sandtoft Scene*. There is a great deal of information packed into it, and thanks go to Francis Whitehead for compiling the leaflet and creating the artwork ready for printing.

Please help to spread the word about the Museum by passing this leaflet on to a friend or relative. Plenty more are available if you need them: please contact Tony Ferris. As previously, our leaflets are being distributed widely around tourist attractions, hotels, motorway service areas and other outlets by Take One Media Limited. In addition, they are supplied to tourist information centres and other visitor locations via the regional exchanges of tourist literature attended by Tony, who brings back supplies of many other visitor leaflets in return. Please contact Tony if you know of places displaying tourism leaflets that do not already have ours, then perhaps you could help by supplying some to them.

### Disabled facilities

The Museum will benefit from a Museum Development Yorkshire funded disability access audit carried out by a specialist advisor who will prepare a report for the Board on improving disabled visitor access to our facilities .

An important improvement that is programmed to be in place by Easter is the installation of a changing table in our disabled toilet unit: this was the main recommendation of a group of visitors and carers last year who left positive messages about the Museum on *Facebook* and *Trip Advisor*. We are very grateful to Museum Development Yorkshire for funding much of the cost this installation under their Health and Wellbeing Small Development Grant Scheme.

### Safety

In addition to the asbestos safety briefing sessions mentioned on page 4, other safety-related activity undertaken recently on site includes the 5-yearly inspection of our entire electrical installation.

### Gift Aid

In 'Scene no.100 we highlighted the importance of making a Gift Aid declaration to cover your subscription payments and donations to the Museum. We have now received a payment of over £10,000 from HMRC in respect of a Gift Aid tax repayment claim covering the financial year 2011-12. Some of this total results from donations specifically made towards Johannesburg 589 and London 1348, and these two projects will benefit from their share of this payment. Special thanks go to John Zebedee, who has put a great deal of time and effort into setting up the database for online Gift Aid claims as now required by HMRC.

### Seating improvements

Andy Thornton's project to re-trim the ex Reading Library stacking chairs is well underway and should be completed this winter. Andy tells us that when he prepares a batch of chairs for re-trimming, the frames and all the components are carefully numbered, in order to ensure that all the various items to go back in the same place and the same way round.

## **ROTHERHAM 73 RESTORATION UPDATE**     **Tim Stubbs**

*Tim's Rotherham single-decker arrived at Sandtoft in 1972, but since 2001 has been away undergoing restoration at a location in the Midlands. We last reported progress a year ago in "Scene no.97."*

It is a fact that seemingly simple jobs take much longer than expected! Although, at the back end of last year, we thought the restoration of 73 was nearly complete, the "final" bits and pieces have transpired to need quite a bit of time.

Work on the front bulkhead has been the main subject of recent progress. This has been very much in "knife and fork" mode, sorting out the details as we go along. The trim panels are now progressing quite well, and glazing of the partition has started. This part of the vehicle is quite different from its "as received" condition, having been rebuilt in 1950. Because we decided to restore 73 to pre-1950 condition, the cab bulkhead is all reconstructed. There was a rearward-facing seat next to it and so all the panelling here required a fresh start. In addition, it has been necessary to construct what the team call "spats" to cover the front body mounting brackets. Final trim has to be largely guesswork as there are no known photographs of the vehicle interior. Our main source of information has been from retired ex-employees of East Lancashire Coachbuilders (now in their 90s) who we met some years ago and who remembered this fleet being built.



Peter Swift fitting the specially-shaped aluminium panelling round one of the floor-level bearers

*Photo: Tim Stubbs*

In addition, we have carried out the "first fit" of the saloon door, something which has taken rather a back seat since work started in 2001. Door runners need to be designed, manufactured and installed and the latching mechanism also has to be made. We are grateful to our friends in the Cardiff and South Wales Trolleybus Project for advice on this. They have an East Lancs.-bodied BUT which has a similar door mechanism.

## BRADFORD 758

Gary Wilkinson

It is a year since we last reported on Bradford 758, which is now temporarily resident at Keighley Bus Museum undergoing major restoration. Overall the project is progressing very well: during 2014 most of the effort had been applied to the renovation of the driver's cab, the front of the vehicle and the lower saloon. Since then the most pleasing result has been the completed front of the trolleybus with chromed lower deck window frames and glazing in place, as well as the cab doors being fully restored and fitted.

### *Right and Below:*

758's cab window frames have been renovated, refitted, primed and undercoated. The windscreen glass has been refitted and the destination display frames dismantled, renovated, and their glass panels refitted



However, when the BTA's restorer began to investigate the upper deck in detail last year, he discovered that the the job of completing 758 is going to be a much bigger one than originally expected. This trolleybus is over 65 years old and still has its original Weymann body, and the latest work has exposed the ravages of age and decay in storage since 1972, including several years spent out of doors.



Corrosion has caused a great deal of damage to the body framework, and water entering around the windows has resulted in much rotten woodwork. Repairing all this, together with the replacement of the upper and lower deck flooring and upholstery, is clearly going to extend well into 2017, and the BTA is appealing once again for funds to help achieve this. All donations small and large will be appreciated, and if you are able to assist, please contact BTA Chairman Gary Wilkinson [g.d.wilkinson@btinternet.com](mailto:g.d.wilkinson@btinternet.com) .

Removal of the nearside upper deck windows and side panels revealed the badly-rusted state of the steel framework. The corroded parts have been cut out and replacement steel welded in place. All the steelwork has since been primed and the panels and beading are back in place



One for the archaeologists: items found trapped behind the upper deck rear seat box - keys, tickets and a variety of pre-decimal coins

*All photos courtesy Gary Wilkinson*

The frame of the upper deck D-shaped window removed and under repair



Inside the upper deck, a close-up view of the corrosion at seat-rail level



## VOLUNTEERS' PAGE

### Rostering for Open Days

In an effort to help manage more effectively staff rostering for our open days, a volunteering list will be displayed in the Traffic Office from Easter. This will cover the operating season up to and including 'Gathering at the end of July. Volunteers from all departments are requested, as far as is possible, to let us have their availability for this period. You can also do this by email to [stewartdavid@sandtoft.org](mailto:stewartdavid@sandtoft.org). The email request for volunteers will continue to be sent out a week in advance, together with the roster for each coming weekend on the preceding Thursday.

### More volunteers needed

To keep our open days running adequately, we can always use a few more hands. Areas particularly in need of additional resources are *The Tea Trolley Café* and, to a lesser extent, the reception facility. If you, or anyone you could recommend, could potentially help the Museum in the delivery of these vital open day functions, please contact Stewart David for further information.

### Personal notes

Many congratulations to Patrick Wilkinson on his election to Withernsea Town Council. At the age of 18, Patrick became the country's youngest councillor. We do hope that he will still find time to continue with his traffic duties as a conductor at the Museum, as he juggles his personal priorities between completing his A-level studies, representing his constituents in Withernsea and being an active volunteer at Sandtoft!

## OBITUARY



*Photo: Bob Ashton*

We were saddened to learn of the death in December 2015 of **Jean Flint**. Her late husband Les was the founding Chairman of DO&LRS and had been a major driving force in building up the Museum in its formative years. He played an important part in saving Doncaster 375 for preservation, together with motorbuses 22 and 94.

Jean looked after all the workers in the earliest days at Sandtoft when there were no facilities on site: she would bring a Primus stove and water to make us all a cup of tea, sometimes soup as well if my memory is correct. Les and Jean moved to live in Kent in the mid-1970s. Les sponsored Doncaster 22's storage at Sandtoft until his death in 1983, when Jean took over

and continued to do so until recently.

Over the years Jean continued to keep in touch with several members of our community and had been the President of DO&LRS for many years. She was diagnosed with dementia and moved to a care home in Doncaster in January 2015 where she developed a brain tumour and died in December. All our sympathies go to Jean's family and friends.

**Jim Sambrooks**

## Our participation in

### **THE NORTHERN MUSEUMS VOLUNTEER PASS SCHEME**

Following an enthusiastic reception of the idea at the AGM Forum last November, we are pleased to report that we are now part of the 2016-2018 Northern Museums Volunteer Pass Scheme. The scheme is organised by Museum Development Yorkshire, an umbrella organisation funded by Arts Council England which advises museums throughout Yorkshire and the Humber region and assists them to improve and develop. Our Museum receives their support and the Volunteer Pass Scheme is a tangible benefit of our Accredited Museum status.

Under the scheme, volunteers from participating museums can visit other participating museums on a concessionary basis. It has recently been expanded considerably to cover the north-west and north-east as well as Yorkshire and Humberside - effectively the whole of the north of England.

**How does it work?** Participating museums are provided with a number of scheme passes for issue as required to their volunteers to allow them to make visits. They are also supplied with a schedule that identifies what concessions each institution gives to scheme pass holders when visiting. There are currently over 160 museums taking part in the scheme and passes are valid from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2018.

**What do we offer visitors to The Trolleybus Museum?** We will provide free admission to our Museum for each visiting scheme pass holder plus one guest. The take-up of this offer will be recorded by our staff in Reception.

**How can our volunteers use the pass?** Please understand that this is a scheme for our volunteers, not the broad membership. If you are planning to take a guest, you should check in advance whether the offer from the museum(s) you are visiting will also include free entry for a guest. The list of participating museums can be downloaded as a PDF file from the members' page of our website [www.sandtoft.org/members](http://www.sandtoft.org/members) and you are advised to check closely the offer and opening times of the museum(s) you propose visiting. Because we only have four passes, it is important that they are returned quickly to us after use as others may be wanting to use them.

**To request the loan of a pass,** email [stewartdavid@sandtoft.org](mailto:stewartdavid@sandtoft.org) stating the date you want the pass and how you would like to receive it - either by post or collection in person at an agreed time and place. Stewart will check our records to ensure you are actively a volunteer, confirm back the availability and the arrangements for collection or delivery, and when the time comes, issue the pass. We advise that you submit your request for a loan in good time to ensure you can have it allocated and issued in time for your chosen day - and we trust you will avoid those days when we need your services at Sandtoft !

This is a small way we can reward our volunteers for their valued input into our Museum and it is a great opportunity to see other museums and how they operate. During your visits you can, of course, fly the Trolleybus Museum flag and we will welcome your feedback on any good ideas you may pick up to help us improve the visitor experience at Sandtoft.



## THE ROUTE TO SANDTOFT

### BLACK ROD KNOCKS ON THE DOORS - OF SANDTOFT ! PART 15: End of the Line

“Black Rod”

The more impatient of you will be relieved to learn that we are now at the penultimate stage of my response to the earlier series of articles by Steve Collins serialised in *Sandtoft Scene* over five years, intermittently from issues 58 to 77. Steve's involvement with the erstwhile Nottingham Trolleybus Group (NTG) commenced with a tour on Nottingham City Transport (NCT) 578 that became the last trolleybus on much of the system as well as the final 7ft 6ins-wide BUT 9641T to operate in the city. Sadly this tour in October 1965 had also been the catalyst for a disagreement between members of the NTG. Your writer, as “Hon Sec” of the group had been pursuing what was believed to be the policy of its committee acting, I also believed, with the general consensus of the membership. This was broadly to acquire certain trolleybuses with a view to co-operating with other societies to create a national working circuit where they could be operated.



Nottingham 506 becomes the centre of attention at Nottingham Road terminus during the last trolleybus “celebrations” on 1 July 1966. Within a few minutes, 506 departed to the City where its invited guests would disembark for a luncheon at the nearby Council House. 506 would quietly slip away to Parliament Street Depot to join the last remaining trolleybuses and await disposal. Fortunately, 506 was preserved and currently looks as good as it did when repainted as the last trolleybus

*Photo: “Black Rod”*

A reasonably definitive list of preservation candidates had been drawn up that had included one NCT 8ft-wide BUT 9641T, of which type no.518 had been selected due to its late overhaul and consequent decent condition. NCT engineering staff had assisted in this decision and, I believe, with its long term future in mind, 518 had been withdrawn and stored under cover at Parliament Street Depot to prevent any further wear and tear or potential damage. It had been intimated that the NTG would be allowed to acquire the trolleybus at extremely advantageous terms. However, Mr John Wake (NCT's General Manager) had carefully pointed out on several occasions that he did not wish to be bothered with a multifarious selection of enthusiasts writing to his Transport Department all wishing to purchase trolleybuses. He had a busy organisation to

run and did not wish his staff to be engaged in responding to letters from various societies all wanting to purchase trolleybuses at low cost. I had therefore been surprised and alarmed that on the October tour a character whom Steve christened "The Teacher" had made an impassioned plea to save no.578. Sadly, The Teacher seemed to have the complete support of the NTG chairman, who Steve appropriately titled "The Chairman". Since I had been involved with The Chairman for several years and I believe that we had pulled off several excellent "coups" during these years, I felt particularly betrayed. 578 had not been on the NTG list and it simply could not be afforded - so I had thought. However, the said vehicle had arrived at Plumtree, the NTG storage site where the rent was due for a considerable increase.

Derby 175 had also been saved and brought to Plumtree and Steve had been ...er... "coerced" into becoming responsible for collecting money for the loan taken out to fund this purchase. Unbelievably, the NTG was now planning to erect a depot building - potentially at a cost of three houses at that time - with seemingly no idea of how this would be funded. The NTG now also seemed totally committed to making Plumtree the site of a working trolleybus museum - with or without assistance from



In October 1970 Derby 224, Manchester 1250, Nottingham 502 and Derby 237 are seen amongst other trolleybuses, an ambulance and assorted motorbuses at Plumtree. I had not visited Plumtree since 1966 but a chance meeting with Steve Collins had inevitably led us back to the station site. Whilst some of the later arrivals, notably the Derby trolleybuses, remained in tolerable condition, many of the vehicles that had been there for some time were becoming increasingly dilapidated

*Photo: "Black Rod"*

other interested societies. Again, no thoughts of cost implications appear to have been discussed. In fact none of these radical policy changes appear to have been discussed by the committee or minuted in any documentation that I have ever seen. This had caused your scribe to give a particularly strident and melodramatic resignation speech designed to bring people to their senses. Of course, some of the members such as Steve were new recruits revelling in snatching 578 and 175 from the jaws of the scrap man - no wonder they thought that I might have been "out of touch". However, they were not made fully aware of the build-up to the situation or the financial uncertainties heading their way.

Naturally, some of the membership were rightly concerned about these plans and held several meetings to keep a watching brief on activities and take action

should any vehicles, especially those in which they had a financial interest, become threatened. Eventually a society confusingly also called "Nottingham Trolleybus Group" (NTG2) was set up. The rationale was that The Chairman and The Teacher had created a "breakaway splinter group" - we were merely carrying out established policy. As part of this policy, at this time, we still intended to pursue preservation of Nottingham 518 and indeed a letter was sent to NCT. However, as has been previously mentioned, the "going rate" paid by The Teacher for 578 had proved to Mr Wake that maybe trolleybus enthusiasts had money after all, so no advantageous terms then - he wanted the full price. By this time, it was also evident that Tom Bowden was determined to save 502. I would guess that he was encouraged to do so by The Chairman and The Teacher. NTG2 therefore decided not to proceed with saving 518. It was too expensive and it seemed unnecessary to preserve three Nottingham BUT 9641Ts! No.518 actually re-entered passenger service on 1 May 1966 still looking rather smart amongst the shabby specimens then operating. However, it was quite galling to see the vehicle dragged off for scrap some months later.

Manchester 1250 being towed on the M1 close to Junction 25 at Sandiacre en route from Plumtree to Sandtoft on 17 December 1970. The inexorable and painfully slow run down of the Plumtree site had already started with Nottingham 493 and Derby 224 being moved to Sandtoft earlier in the year. The M1 at this point is now very different, with four lanes, lighting and crash barriers. The fields on the left have now been built over

*Photos: "Black Rod"*



The same trolleybus safely at Sandtoft alongside Walsall 874 (ex-Grimsby & Cleethorpes 159) and Huddersfield 619 in the initial 8-vehicle depot on 23 April 1972. It would be another five months before trolleybuses operated under power at the Museum. 1250 has been cosmetically restored and is now exhibited at the Museum of Transport, Greater Manchester. 874 is currently stored pending restoration as Grimsby-Cleethorpes 159. Happily, Huddersfield 619 today fulfils the purpose for which it was built – carrying passengers

Members of NTG2 still worked on the vehicles at Plumtree but it is fair to state that The Chairman and The Teacher were conspicuous by their absence. Matters had come to a head when it was discovered that a quotation had actually been sought for the depot and, more importantly, the site rent had not been paid and removal of “assets” (i.e. vehicles) was a likely course of action to settle the outstanding debt to British Railways. Steve, bless him, became treasurer of NTG2 and I was a committee member. With the NTG2 chairman and other members of our committee we had made the regrettable but necessary decision to remove trolleybuses from Plumtree. By May 1966, Derby 175 and Rotherham 37 had been moved and Ashton 80 was scheduled to go. I was in communication with several societies regarding Nottingham 493. These were the four vehicles that we could reasonably claim to belong to NTG2. There were tentative informal discussions about the ownership of Nottingham 466 and Manchester 1250 since NTG2 members had contributed substantially to their respective purchases, but nothing was ever done to press the issue.

There had been attempts, in fairness from both parties, to arrange reconciliation meetings. These had taken place between The Teacher and members of NTG2. There was total intransigence from The Teacher who insisted that the depot would go ahead and that the outstanding rent could be paid. Apart from talk about raising loans and “£1 per week from the membership”, there was little talk of how this could be financed. In 1966 it would have been easier to raise the dead than to raise a loan for this potential amount! The Teacher was at his most scornful at one of these meetings, mentioning that removal of NTG2 vehicles had simply made it easier to accommodate Nottingham 502, which had arrived at Plumtree at this time.

June 1966 proved to be a particularly significant month. It had been announced that the last remnant of Nottingham’s trolleybus system would close on 30 June 1966 with an official last trolleybus on 1 July. During the first few days of June, I had received a telephone call from The Teacher rather politely requesting another meeting. This time both he and The Chairman attended. The atmosphere was quite cordial and their attitude contrite. They had arranged a series of emergency meetings amongst their members. They confirmed that the site rent at Plumtree had been paid, including all arrears. There was now no danger of vehicles being removed as part payment of rent. Arrangements had been put in hand that rent payment would now receive priority so that the situation would not occur again. The depot plan had been abandoned. However, they were aware that the Plumtree Station site, including the goods shed, would become available for lease in the near future and they thought that it might be affordable given certain circumstances. Effectively they were now planning a more “local” museum that could comprise a variety of vehicles. By widening the scope of exhibits it was hoped to attract more vehicles whose owners would pay the rent of an enlarged site. They reasoned that the closure of the Nottingham system would foster further interest in their project and the projected abandonment of nearby Derby trolleybuses would add to this interest. Within the near future trolleybuses would not be an everyday local sight and to highlight the change of Plumtree’s role, it

was intended to rename the group to “East Midlands Transport Society” (EMTS) on 30 June following Nottingham’s last trolleybus.

It was the most common-sense meeting that I had held with them for nine months and I could not fault the logic. They also asked if Nottingham 493 could remain at Plumtree since it was a local trolleybus and fitted into the collection - i.e. it would be a pity to remove it from its “cousins”. I was even requested to resume the role of honorary secretary. Was it another “load of baloney” or did I believe them? Well... I did. Although I was no longer interested in the position offered, the consequence was that on 14 June 1966 the last meeting of NTG2 took place. With Steve and myself in attendance it was decided to wind up NTG2, with the minute book recording that “if at any future time vehicles appeared to be in danger, action would be taken, as necessary”.



Plumtree Station in June 1971, showing what might have been... Nottingham 578 stands behind 502 with 578's trolleys skilfully positioned for the photograph. Your writer still holds to his opinion that the site was not suitable for actual trolleybus operation. Whilst it would have been just possible to reverse a trolleybus at the location of this picture, the driveway beyond 502 narrowed significantly as it joined the main road, and there would have been no possibility of turning a trolleybus at the end of this drive. One doubts if planning permission would ever have been granted to erect depots or overhead wiring at this “select” Nottinghamshire village. However, this photo, taken during my last visit to Plumtree in trolleybus preservation days, shows a tantalising glimpse of The Chairman's dream

*Photo: "Black Rod"*

Plumtree Station forty years later in April 2011. The station building has now been thoroughly renovated and is an attractive Italian restaurant. Clearly the parking spaces on the left were approximately where the preserved vehicles were parked. The little building to the right (just visible above) was formerly part of a weighbridge, since demolished. However, the electricity wires and pylon (behind the trees) remain in situ. Although the vegetation has grown much denser in the intervening years, the narrowness of the driveway is clearly obvious

*Photo: Howard Piltz*



This is nearly the end of the story, you will be pleased to read! As 30 June drew near, The Chairman and The Teacher invited me to participate in their Nottingham trolleybus tour due to follow five minutes behind the last service trolleybus. I would not be charged and The Teacher even gave me the ticket! It is still in my collection. I did not participate simply because I thought it more appropriate to travel on the actual final service journey undertaken by an NCT trolleybus. It was a memorable night when 522 (the last service vehicle) entered Parliament Street Depot. A few minutes later and tour vehicle 510 also entered the Depot. Enthusiasts, staff and well-wishers linked arms in a wide arc around the last trolleybuses. I stood between The Chairman and The Teacher and we sang "Auld Lang Syne". I shook hands with both of them. I never saw either of them again.

*To be concluded*

## KEEPING IN TOUCH

If you would like to receive email updates from the Museum, please make sure that we have your up-to-date email address and that this address is included in one or both of the following mailing lists, depending on your needs:

- ◆ **All members:** [members@sandtoft.org](mailto:members@sandtoft.org) is used to send information intended for all members, such as Board Briefings, details of winter working parties, and important messages about coming events. To join this list, send an empty email (with a blank subject line) to [members-subscribe@sandtoft.org](mailto:members-subscribe@sandtoft.org)
- ◆ **Working volunteers:** [staff@sandtoft.org](mailto:staff@sandtoft.org) You need to be on this list to receive information relevant to the setting-up and running of open days, including rostering for staff duties. To join this list, send an empty email (with a blank subject line) to [staff-subscribe@sandtoft.org](mailto:staff-subscribe@sandtoft.org)

You can check whether you are on the appropriate list(s) by simply sending an empty email to [members-subscribe@sandtoft.org](mailto:members-subscribe@sandtoft.org) and/or [staff-subscribe@sandtoft.org](mailto:staff-subscribe@sandtoft.org). If your address is already on the list, you will receive a reply that contains the message "You are already subscribed!"

Finally, our membership secretary David Needham also keeps a record of each member's email address. These are taken from the membership application form completed by new members joining the Museum, so if you have changed your email since you enrolled, please send a brief email to [membership@sandtoft.org](mailto:membership@sandtoft.org) (with a suitable subject line and content).

## NEW MEMBERS

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined the Museum recently:

Mr Billy Birkett (Dagenham)	Mr Steve Kemp (Sale)
Mr Tom Burchill (Pontefract)	Mr K N Pauline (Reading)
Mrs Sue Burchill (Pontefract)	Mr Jeff Tucker (Snodland, Kent)
Mr John Hughes (Doncaster)	

... some of whom are former members rejoining the Museum - welcome back!

## DONCASTER 375 - THE PROJECT CONTINUES

**Bob Ashton**

Preparation of the stairwell area of 375 has progressed, including some filling of the panels facing you as you go up the staircase. This is not an easy place to get

to or to work in, but with the help of Geoff Welburn, who sanded and rubbed down this area, I was able to apply an undercoat and then a top coat two weeks later. Now I know how the child chimney sweeps used to feel cleaning the chimneys of the larger stately homes: often they were covered in black soot, but for me it was a case of two shades of red.



Unusual views looking up the staircase

*Above:* newly-painted with undercoat, and

*Right:* with the first top coat applied

*Below:* New burgundy paintwork on the interior of the offside wheel arch

*All photos: Bob Ashton*



The wheel arches have been painted in a slightly deeper crimson, similar to the original colour applied by Charles H Roe in 1955 when they fitted the new body to the wartime chassis. Apparently 375 did not receive the newer shade of red until 1961, making this vehicle (along with 385 and 395) look a slighter lighter colour than its sisters.

Geoff Welburn inspected the bell system wiring and has embarked on some remedial work, testing the circuits as the work progresses. The photograph (Right) shows one of the bell pushes that may have to be replaced, as it does not make a circuit when the push button is pressed. It has been soaked with "WD40", as have others, to get the terminal screws loosened. It is interesting to see on the internet the variety of bell pushes and their high prices on eBay, one recently going for £50.



Jim Sambrooks arranged for 375's steering wheel to be re-coated, and this has now been returned and refitted (Left).

The fleet number has been hand painted back on, with numerals in the same style as when 375 was withdrawn from service. Some finishing touches are still required.

The wooden strips covering the cable ducts on the lower deck

will be rubbed down next, along with some of the metal strips. Roe-bodied vehicles of the time often had a gold finish similar to "Hammerite" on the interior metalwork around the windows. This seems to have been used on the wooden ducting covers, so does anyone know if a similar type of paint is still available? Otherwise, we will need to use a "flat" gold paint instead.

This is the biggest refurbishment 375 has received in over 50 years. Thank you to all who have helped both with practical assistance and moral support.

## **EXTENDING THE ROUTE TO SANDTOFT?**

As we approach the finale of the serialisation of "Black Rod's" history of trolleybus preservation in the 1960s from a Nottingham perspective, I am hoping that those with long memories might keep this theme going by capturing their recollections in further articles for *Sandtoft Scene*.

Since 2005, "The Route to Sandtoft" has chronicled the story, starting with a series by Steve Collins covering the later years at Plumtree up to its final abandonment and the relocation of many exhibits to Sandtoft. "Black Rod" followed on with his series logging the rescue of trolleybuses for preservation prior to Plumtree, then covering events there up to the demise of the Nottingham system. Interspersed with these over the years have been individual articles about early preservation efforts in Huddersfield and Bradford, and the move to Sandtoft of Mexborough & Swinton 34. There must be further stories from those pre-Sandtoft and early-Sandtoft days, and if you can provide one, the editor would be very pleased to hear from you - contact [scene@sandtoft.org](mailto:scene@sandtoft.org).

## SCENES FROM 20 YEARS AGO

Prior to 2001, the technology used for producing *Sandtoft Scene* did not provide for colour photographs, so I am grateful to Bob Ashton for supplying several interesting images not previously published. Those reproduced here capture the very early days of the *Axholme Stores* building in 1996, soon after it had been completed. It was originally intended to be 100% an exhibition hall and had largely been paid for by three grants that also funded the children's play area, the renovation and extension of the toilet block and signage at the Museum entrance. The transfer of *The Trolleyshop* from the (now 1950s) prefab into one end of this building took place at a later stage, whilst *The Tea Trolley Café* took over the other end later still. Around 1995-6 also, the Museum was given a number of large display units that were surplus to requirements at Doncaster Museum.



*Left:* Pat Ashton painting an inside wall of the *Axholme Stores*. Two of the former Doncaster Museum showcases, already set up with exhibits, can be seen in the foreground

*Below Left:* One of the showcases with a display of the time

*Below Right:* Whilst the interior of the *Axholme Stores* was designed to be an exhibition hall, the outside, with its range of shop windows, formed part of a new streetscene to act as a backdrop to our operating trolleybuses. Here, one of the shop windows features a ladies' fashion display

*Photos (all taken in 1996): Bob Ashton*





Back in 1997, when every one of the *Axholme Stores'* shop windows housed a display, several school visits to the Museum took place. Here, a group of youngsters is studying a display of old sewing machines in one of the windows

*Photo: Bob Ashton*

## **TROLLEYBUSES ON THE WEB**

The Rotherham Trolleybus Group has recently upgraded its website at [www.rotherhamtrolleybus.org.uk](http://www.rotherhamtrolleybus.org.uk). This contains much interesting information about Rotherham's trolleybuses, including archive material, the vehicle types, photographs, articles and details of the four Rotherham vehicles preserved.

## **DEAR 'SCENE**

*Dear 'Scene*

Congratulations on the excellent 101st edition of Sandtoft Scene. I would just like to offer two corrections.

On page 8 former editor MF2B(arratt) states that I contributed the "Boxwagon Cookery" page. This was actually Christine Oliver who later became our Finance Director. Chris had offered a recipe using oil but not specifying which type of oil. I wrote to the magazine saying that I'd tried the recipe using engine oil and it tasted awful, I tried again using gear oil and that was worse, I thought fuel oil would be too volatile and asked for clarification. In a later edition we were to be told how to cook ratatouille using real rat but that never materialised. Incidentally, Michael F Barratt's initials lend themselves to be corrupted to a type of Sunbeam trolleybus; indeed he uses this as part of his email address.

On page 20 we are told that "33, 22 and 1357 wait in line in Epworth". Don't worry, 22 hasn't been rebodied or repainted, the vehicle shown between 33 and 1357 is Lincolnshire 860, FFU 860, a 1949 AEC Regal III with Willowbrook body brought for the day by Steve Milner of the Lincolnshire Vintage Vehicle Society. It's an AEC, half cab single decker and red so the mistake is understandable (well almost).

*Jim Sambrooks, Doncaster*

Dear 'Scene

## Looking to the future

When I appealed to readers in 'Scene no.100 for their views and feedback, I was touched to receive quite a few positive messages about *Sandtoft Scene* itself. Otherwise, my (electronic) postbag has been virtually empty, and this is very disappointing. I would love to believe that we are getting everything right, but despite the resounding level of satisfaction we continue to achieve on the visitor front, it would be hard to claim a 100% rating for all our "internal plumbing" - indeed the workshops with our MDOs (mentioned on Page 3) surfaced many of the practical challenges of managing a complex organisation with limited volunteer resources, and these challenges have not gone away.

When things are going swimmingly well, managing all this "stuff" may seem an easy and relatively unimportant (often invisible) activity. But unfortunately, our organisation has had more than its fair share of setbacks of late, and this climate puts much greater pressure on our leaders to come up with "solutions". In this context, we have to remember that our directors are all volunteers themselves, with limited available time and without necessarily having the skills or experience of running a business. Their job becomes even more difficult when they are increasingly being forced by events to operate in a permanent state of "react mode", rather than being able to manage things more proactively. You might say that this situation just reflects life's realities, but it is far from ideal in the long run.

It came as an immense disappointment when we and the BTS had to accept last year that our efforts to acquire an adjoining 2.5 acres of land for developing the Museum had been unsuccessful. However, in reacting to that, we cannot allow it to become the end of our expansion initiative, and I was glad to hear that work has since been underway to "pick up the pieces" and to begin looking at alternative ways of meeting the need for more space and buildings.

The Museum still needs to create a display building with room for visitors to walk round the exhibits. We still require extra parking space for larger events and we still need to enlarge and improve the visitor facilities. More pressingly now, we still need more indoor storage space for our vehicles - something made even more urgent following the unavoidable return to the Museum site last year of ten vehicles from offsite covered storage in nearby premises.

Whilst I appreciate that any discussions about purchasing other land or buildings in the vicinity are by their nature both tentative and confidential, it is doubtful whether any identifiable alternative(s) would fully meet our requirements in the way that the original proposal for 2.5 acres would have done. Inevitably, we are now looking at a more "piecemeal" approach which can only go part-way towards meeting our defined needs, and which may well cost more in total and take a great deal longer to achieve overall. Also, the limits on the total space available may force us to consider once again making use of some of our existing open land for new buildings. We now have a more complex set of constraints and possible solutions, and whilst I believe that we rapidly need to create and agree a revised set of museum development plans, the uncertainties involved will not make this an easy task.

Now for the contentious bit, and something which is very much a personal view. For the past five years, most of our plans for improving the Museum have been contingent on buying the adjoining 2.5 acres. It would be unfair to say that no other development has taken place during recent years - indeed *The Trolleybus During the First World War* exhibition is an enormous credit to everyone who made it happen - but the Museum is now standing at a definite crossroads. Unfortunately this is a very different crossroads from the one referred to by our museum mentor Susan Hopkinson at the AGM forum in 2014, when optimism abounded for the land acquisition and the projects that lay beyond it.

Because the expansion project required a very large amount of money, it had to be ranked as the highest priority item for the allocation of our funding - both accumulated reserves and any proceeds of appeals and grant applications. That did not, of course, mean that other capital projects at the Museum would never receive consideration, but simply that consideration of those alternatives would have to be delayed until after the land had been purchased and its associated buildings completed.

I would now venture to suggest that we can no longer afford to shelve infrastructure improvement projects indefinitely. We all have different ideas about what can (and should) be achieved at Sandtoft within our lifetimes. For some of us, this timescale seems to be getting uncomfortably shorter all the time! So I would like to start a debate about what **you** would like to see happen over the next five years, resources permitting. And to start the ball rolling, I would like to share the top three items on my personal "bucket list":

- 1 Depot doors that open and close easily.** How often do we struggle to shift doors that are jammed on their tracks and runners, and in some cases seem to be permanently seized up? Not only does this make life difficult (and sometimes hazardous) for our working volunteers - it also limits what we can easily open up for our visitors to see on open days.
- 2 A decent road surface on our operating roadways.** For years we have patched up cracks and potholes, but the state of the concrete surface remains an awful eyesore for our visitors, and makes for a bumpy ride on what should be a very smooth-running form of transport.
- 3 Getting trolleybuses in and out of service under power.** It seems extraordinary that we have accepted a total dependency on the use of tractors for towing and shunting as part of our everyday operations. Not only does this method require more people and an available tractor and qualified tractor driver, it adds time and effort to a very frequent basic task, to say nothing of the pollution created. There may be good arguments against the alternatives, but the logic is very simple: if the trolleybus museums at Dudley and Carlton Colville are capable of getting their trolleybuses in and out of the depot under their own power, then surely we are too.

Would other readers who work at (or visit) the Museum like to offer their own "top three" improvements? Of course there are pros and cons to any examples like these: the list could become a long one and there will be endless disagreements about their relative benefits and priorities. Obviously, in order to make a rational

prioritisation, all the proposed improvements will first need to be adequately defined and costed, which itself is no trivial exercise.

Personally I feel strongly that improvements to our existing infrastructure do merit serious consideration, and I am well aware that some of them are already listed as candidates in our five-year plan, but without any commitment to implementing them. Finally, I don't mean to undervalue what is already being done - such as the refurbishment of the traction poles - but without a concerted investment in a series of major infrastructure projects, that infrastructure will continue to deteriorate and the Museum is in real danger of losing its sustainability for the future.

*John Stainforth, Winchester*

## **THE MUSEUM'S FACEBOOK PAGE**

There is always plenty of activity on our *Facebook* page at [www.facebook.com/trolleybusmuseum](http://www.facebook.com/trolleybusmuseum), where we receive a variety of postings from visitors, enthusiasts and members, volunteers included. This page is also an important channel for publicising news and information about the Museum, especially during the running season when we can post details of up-coming events and reports of our open days. None of this would be happening without the active enthusiasm of Dave Chick, whose efforts in keeping things up to date are much appreciated: somehow he manages to do this along with many other commitments - including being the editor of *Trolleybus*, the monthly magazine of the BTS. You can register your support for Dave's work - and for the Museum in general - by adding your "Like" when you visit our *Facebook* page.

## **NON-ARRIVAL OF SANDTOFT SCENE 100**

Did you receive your copy of 'Scene 100, which was mailed out on 20 January? A few members reported receiving an empty envelope after the flap had come open in transit. If yours never arrived (or if a your postman delivered a puzzlingly-empty envelope that week) please contact [scene@sandtoft.org](mailto:scene@sandtoft.org) for another copy.

## **TROLLEYBUSES SUBLIME - OR RIDICULOUS?**

Continuing the theme of off-beat trolleybus photographs, we are now featuring another former Sandtoft resident. Bradford 712 was at the Museum during the 1970s and until November 1989, but the latest sighting finds it in an unusual guise in a surprising setting. I am grateful to Isle of Wight transport enthusiast Roland Richards for these photographs taken in August 2015.

### **A bizarre sighting on the Isle of Wight**

It was a chance encounter when Roland discovered this trolleybus in a yard in Long Lane, Newport, flanked by a caravan on one side and a shipping container on the other. No. 712 had undergone a strange transformation since last seen in 2009 by your editor outside the depot of Shamrock Buses at Holton Heath, near Poole, where it was part of the Bournemouth Passenger Transport Association collection. After Shamrock Buses ceased trading, several of their trolleybuses were relocated to the West of England Transport Collection in Devon, but after a few years WETC decided to offload 712, putting it up for auction on eBay, first in April 2012 and again in November 2014, when it sold for £1,550, the identity of its



buyer being a mystery. Then, on 11 December 2014 it was spotted (and photographed) by startled former BTA member Rev. Andrew Alcock in a layby in Oxfordshire, en-route to Chipping Norton where it was to become a film production "prop".

What on earth 712 is doing in its psychedelic new colour scheme is the real mystery. Was it painted like this for film-making purposes, or did it perhaps make an appearance at the Isle of Wight Pop Festival last summer? This is clearly not the work of an average graffiti artist, but a conscious attempt to re-create the era of John Lennon and Yoko Ono's "bed of peace" in 1969. On 25 March 1972, 712 operated one of the official final tours at the closure of Bradford's system - it was tour no.15. Amazingly, the destination

number blinds had never been turned during 42 years of "preservation!"

The other two sides look very neglected indeed, not having seen a paintbrush since 712's days in service. When originally purchased for preservation in 1972 by the NTA, the intention was to use 712 as a regular runner in a heritage trolleybus scheme in the New Forest. The scheme came to nothing and in December 1993, probably with a similar ambition in mind, 712 was moved to storage near Bournemouth, but plans for operating a heritage trolleybus route in Bournemouth also never materialised. Had that happened, 712 could possibly have reappeared in Bournemouth yellow, but we can only speculate whether its most recent change of livery has ever been completed.

A few weeks after taking these photos, Roland returned to the same location to investigate further, but by then 712 had vanished completely. Does it still exist, and do any of our readers know where it might be today? I would love to hear from anyone who can shed any light on this most unusual phase of 712's otherwise unremarkable life-story.

*Photos: Roland Richards*



# RUNNING DAYS IN 2016

Open 11.00am - 5.00pm unless stated otherwise

<b>Weekend Trolleydays</b>	Saturday 16 April Sunday 17 April	
<b>May Day Bank Holiday Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>with the spotlight on our diesel buses</i>	Saturday 30 April Sunday 1 May Monday 2 May	 <b>Free Bus</b>
<b>1940s Trolleyday</b> <i>with free bus link to nearby Thorne's 1940s day</i>	Saturday 7 May	
<b>Trolleyday</b>	Saturday 14 May	
<b>Trolleyday &amp; Vintage Coach Rally</b>	Sunday 15 May	<b>Free Bus</b>
<b>Spring Bank Holiday Big City Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>featuring trolleybuses from Britain's big cities</i>	Saturday 28 May Sunday 29 May Monday 30 May	 <b>Free Bus</b>
<b>Worldwide Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>featuring our trolleybuses from overseas (including, on Saturday, the launch into service of our trolleybus from New Zealand, Wellington no.82)</i>	Saturday 11 June Sunday 12 June	 <b>Free Bus</b>
<b>Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>featuring memories of trolleybuses in Nottingham</i>	Saturday 25 June Sunday 26 June	
<b>Weekend Trolleydays and Teddy Bears' Picnic</b>	Saturday 9 July Sunday 10 July	
<b>'Gathering Saturday Trolleyday</b> - a preview of 'Gathering Day itself: twilight trolleybus operation & real ale beer tent	Saturday 30 July (Open 11.00am - 10.00pm)	
<b>Sandtoft Gathering 2016</b> <i>with visiting historic vehicles, transport flea market, live music, real ale beer tent &amp; lots for the family to see &amp; do</i>	Sunday 31 July (Open 10.00am - 6.00pm)	<b>Free Bus</b>
<b>Blues &amp; Twos Weekend &amp; Trolleydays</b> <i>featuring visiting historic 999 vehicles with dramatic emergency services displays and demonstrations</i>	Saturday 20 August Sunday 21 August	 <b>Free Bus</b>
<b>Late Summer Bank Holiday Weekend Trolleydays</b>	Saturday 27 August Sunday 28 August Monday 29 August	 <b>Free Bus</b>
<b>European Trolleybus Day &amp; Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>celebrating modern trolleybus technology &amp; operation</i>	Saturday 17 September Sunday 18 September	
<b>Weekend Trolleydays</b>	Saturday 1 October Sunday 2 October	
<b>Isle of Axholme Running Day and Rally</b>	Sunday 16 October	<b>Free Bus</b>
<b>Twilight &amp; After Dark Trolleyday</b> <i>with twilight &amp; after-dark trolleybus operation</i>	Saturday 12 November (Open 11.00am - 7.00pm)	

denotes Isle Coaches service 291 11.00am departure from Doncaster Interchange Bay C5, connects with free Museum bus at Epworth. Return at 4.10pm to connect at Epworth with Isle Coaches service 399 to Doncaster (where it arrives 5.35pm)

**Free Bus** denotes FREE bus service from Doncaster Interchange (adjacent to railway station) direct to The Trolleybus Museum. Departs Interchange, Bay C6, at 12.00noon. Return departs Museum at 4.00pm. (journey time approximately 40 minutes)

## **ADMISSION** (charges include a Gift Aid donation):

Adult £8.00 Senior (61+) £7.00 Concession £6.00 Family (2 Adults + up to 4 Concessions) £25.50

## **On days shown on red background:**

Adult £10.00 Senior (61+) £8.50 Concession £6.50 Family (2 Adults+ up to 4 Concessions) £29.50

For full up-to-date details, visit [www.sandtoft.org](http://www.sandtoft.org)