

Sandtoft Scene

July 2016
No. 102



**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 to ensure that your next *Sandtoft Scene* is mailed correctly

FRONT COVER PICTURE: In Belton Road on the final lap of a 12,000-mile journey that began in New Zealand over 3½ years ago, Wellington 82 approaches the entrance to the Museum on Friday 13 May
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.

FROM THE EDITOR



In this issue we bring you plenty of "good news" stories. First, many of this year's open days have been well-attended and we continue to receive positive feedback from our visitors, some of whom take the trouble to record their comments on *Trip Advisor*. Their words of appreciation speak for themselves, and - as reported on page 13 - we are proud to have been awarded a 2016 "Certificate of Excellence" by *Trip Advisor* in recognition of this feedback.

Secondly, after a sustained effort to complete the extension of the seating area in *The Tea Trolley Café*, we successfully finished the work and had the extra facilities up-and-running in time for the beginning of this year's operating season at Easter. Go to page 14 for the full story.

Thirdly, the Museum has secured the future of Bournemouth 297 and the BTS has acquired Bournemouth 301, the last new trolleybus built for service in the UK. 301 will eventually join the collection at Sandtoft - more about this on page 24.

Finally, our long-term project to acquire and restore Wellington 82 reached a major milestone with its arrival at the Museum on 13 May, following the completion of a programme of work by First South Yorkshire in Rotherham. The possibility of bringing no.82 from New Zealand to the UK was first discussed in 2005, so it is very rewarding to see this remarkable trolleybus finally at Sandtoft. As explained on page 18, some pieces of work remained to be done after 82's arrival at the Museum, primarily an electrical overhaul and the fitting of new trolleybooms. Good progress was made during the following four weeks and 82 was able to perform demonstration runs during the Worldwide Weekend, with the launch into passenger service now expected on 'Gathering Preview Saturday.

On page 28 you can read the final instalment of "Black Rod's" long-running series about trolleybus preservation during the pre-Sandtoft era. Reading his articles has always been a real highlight for me as 'Scene editor, and we are very grateful to him for documenting this fascinating piece of history in so much detail.

'GATHERING 2016: YOUR HELP, PLEASE!

This year's Gathering on 30-31 July is not long away and, to make it all happen, we need volunteers on the Thursday and Friday beforehand to clean trolleybuses and prepare the site. Much help is, of course, required on the Saturday and Sunday, particularly with car parking, marshalling of rally vehicles and in *The Tea Trolley Café*. We will also need helpers to assist with the Monday clear-up, something often left to the vital few! If you can assist in any way, please contact Stewart David (email stewartdavid@sandtoft.org or 'phone 01405 741624).

Please note: News deadline for the next Sandtoft Scene is 25 August 2016

RECENT RUNNING DAYS

Easter Weekend: 26-28 March

David Hanchett

"It's raining, it's pouring, and some men are snoring..."

When Easter comes early, our first open weekend takes place in March. April is known for... well, just showers and spring, whilst March is known for... um, unpredictable weather! A goodly number of our volunteers were on site on Good Friday, enjoying glorious sunshine, and preparing everything to welcome back the public.

All was going well until later in the day. Bournemouth 297 was being put through her paces when she ground to a halt. She had blown a fuse. Seemingly affected by "stage fright" on the eve of her re-introduction into passenger service, she had trouble with a contactor coil. As replacements were not available in time, this meant that she became a static exhibit during the weekend.

On the Saturday, the weather during opening time was welcoming: sunshine and cloudy spells, not bad for the time of year! We were really pleased to see many familiar faces returning to the Museum again, together with some new ones. Plenty of families were enjoying a hunt through our newly-cut grass and recently attended-to nature walk, in order to discover those Easter eggs, carelessly hidden by the Easter Bunny.

After the last seasonal chocolate had been collected for the day, the trolleybuses were being electrically tested for the following twenty-four hours, when the skies darkened, reminiscent of a computer-animated sci-fi movie. Then"flash flash crash bang clatter clatter clatter!" - the lightning flickered, the thunder crashed and the hail descended in sheets. Soon, Sandtoft Square was covered in ice balls, and the buses were scoured of any dust collected during the day by a myriad of hail-stones. There was enough ice on the ground to throw snowballs, although this urge was resisted as far as we know! Then as soon as it came, the storm had gone, and half an hour later all the ice had melted as the earth leakage testing continued in bright low sunshine.



After Saturday night's dramatic hailstorm, Easter Sunday's events progressed relatively normally, with Bradford 746, Huddersfield 619 and Derby 172 all in service. By late afternoon, however, the scene had become decidedly damp and overcast

Photo: David Hanchett

Sunday provided another good day for all the family, with suitable weather, apart from a little drizzle. But during the early hours of Monday morning it started to rain heavily, encouraged by a very strong wind, and Noah would have felt at home in Sandtoft. The depot roof rattled, the Box Van mess room creaked and the puddles grew, as those volunteers in our sleeping accommodation not woken by the din continued snoring.

In the morning, there were many folks “tut-tut-tutting” to each other as it was realised that the puddles were just too deep for 575-volt electric vehicles to operate through safely. However, the tea in the café was good, and after a bacon butty or two, an intrepid band of hardy folk set forth with the largest brooms they could find, to physically push the water into those adjacent drains that could easily be cleared. After several hours of back-breaking work, the puddles had gone, and yes, the sun had come out, for a while.



On Easter Monday the central grass became something of a bog garden, causing problems for anyone attempting to park there

Photo: Bob Ashton

Transformed into a car park because of a waterlogged field, Sandoft Square provided some unusual scenes. Bradford 792 forms part of a more authentic than usual street scene as it passes a row of cars

Photo: Pat Ashton



Many determined visitors turned up despite the weather, and they were rewarded with free admission. They were asked to park in Sandtoft Square as the car park grass was waterlogged. The trolleybuses started to run at lunchtime, steering around a large collection of cars. Bradford 792 provided clockwise circuits, whilst Bradford 746 and Derby 172 operated counter-clockwise - quite unusual operating conditions for the traffic department. Our guests were treated to the spectacle of a car being towed off the central grass by a tractor, and potatoes could have been planted in the ruts left behind! By the end of the day, our site staff had cleared out the debris that had been washed into the drains, as a great deal of silt and other unwanted material had followed the water.

So it was that our season got off to a shaky start. The continuing service we offered our visitors was due in no small part, during this first weekend of 2016, to some very hard work by many of our members - thanks go to all of them!



Graham Bilbé presents regular conductor Patrick Wilkinson with a special cake to mark his election last November to Withernsea Town Council. Judging from his expression, Councillor Wilkinson seems to have an interest to declare

Photo: Dave Chick

On Easter Saturday our chairman, Graham Bilbé, presented volunteer Patrick Wilkinson with a cake in the shape of a ballot box, to recognise his recent election as Britain's youngest serving councillor, shortly after his eighteenth birthday. The cake had been specially made by café volunteer Joanna Hanchett, and during the weekend there was a good trade in home-made cakes made by our café ladies.

May Day Bank Holiday Weekend: 30 April - 2 May **Diesel Days at the Trolleybus Museum**

Kieran Proctor

Over the May Day Bank Holiday weekend we saw an event that shone a light on all things diesel-powered at the Museum. For some, the very idea of this event would cause chills: "Run motorbuses? But it's called The **Trolleybus** Museum...!" However, if preserved railways can stand the steam engines aside for a weekend, then why can't we operate our motorbuses?

If you think about it, alongside the world's largest collection of preserved trolleybuses, the Museum is also home to a decent number of motorbuses, with 17 in the collection. Alongside these there are three tower wagons and three



Doncaster 94,
Douglas 52,
London RT3323
and Nottingham
137

Photo: Bob Ashton

tractors, not forgetting Marseille 202 and SYPTE 2450 - which also have (auxiliary) diesel engines.

As many of the motorbuses are usually tucked away in the depths of the depot or even stored offsite, the event was a good opportunity for our visitors to see something a little different. On the back field we had gathered 11 resident motorbuses including RT3323, which has been away for a few years and was driven back to the Museum during the previous week. There was also a small display of tower wagons inside the depot, with Nottingham 802 and Bradford 032 alongside our more modern Transit-based cherry picker. Bradford 558 was also with these vehicles as its exposed body frame means it must be kept undercover.

The three days each followed similar formats with motorbuses supplementing the trolleybus service onsite, as well as providing the usual Isle of Axholme tours offsite. Despite all being of "one-man" design, Doncaster 55, East London RN100 and Sheffield 1357 made use of our regular conducting crew, as they took turns to operate around a third of all the journeys across the weekend. Huddersfield 619, Glasgow TB78 and Bradford 746 provided the other journeys, as the more usual "wired" option.

On Saturday and Monday we also had the sights and sounds of SYPTE 2450 and Marseille 202 operating on their auxiliary motors around the site, with 202 performing its neat "unpole-and-go" trick. The Sunday, however, saw a couple of visiting vehicles from South Yorkshire Transport Trust joining us to help create a few different scenarios in Sandtoft Square.

SYPTE towing vehicle M10 rescues a "stranded" South Yorkshire 2450

Photo: David Hanchett



The first of these was a “period” towing demonstration, as 2450 “lost drive” and had to be recovered by South Yorkshire PTE M10, a Leyland PD3 that had started life as a double-deck bus in Sheffield. Fortunately the PTE’s own towing vehicles have specialised fittings designed to help hook-up a Dominator, and it didn’t take long at all for 2450 to be towed back out of the way. SYPTE M10, with fellow visitor Sheffield 312, also helped to create a few line-ups, the first one bringing together these two former Sheffield vehicles with our own, Fleetline 754 and Atlantean 1357. No.312 had previously seen service in Australia, where it had been painted in London Transport colours, and this gave us the opportunity to create an unusual “London” line-up including resident vehicles East London RN100 and London RT3323.

My view of the event was mainly from behind the steering wheel of a bus. However, I couldn’t help but overhear the positive comments from visitors and staff alike. The chance to ride motorbuses around the site seemed to be well received, with visitors showing no obvious bias towards either method of propulsion. Many people also mentioned how nice it was to be able to see the “lesser spotted” members of the collection out together on display. Although the Tour de Yorkshire and intermittent downpours may have kept some people away, I do think, all in all, that the weekend was a success. And - who knows? - it may even become a regular event in the Museum’s calendar.

SYPTE M10, Sheffield Fleetline 754, Sheffield Atlantean 312 (in London livery) and Sheffield Atlantean 1357 in Sandtoft Square



Driver Alex Proctor helps the mechanic, Darren Sentance, prepare a “broken down” 2450 for towing, during a demonstration on the Sunday afternoon

Photo: Pat Ashton



Photo: Pat Ashton

1940s Trolleyday: 7 May

Stewart David

Following last year's interesting and successful one-day event in conjunction with nearby Thorne's 1940s celebrations, we held an additional open day on Saturday 7 May. The Museum provided a free hourly shuttle-bus service between Sandtoft and Thorne (North Station) throughout the day. This carried around 80 passengers, the service being operated by Doncaster 55 and East London RN100.

Right: Taking a break from his duties, ARP Warden Ashton relaxes on board Derby 172. Typical of many wartime trolleybuses, the utility bodywork of 172 features slatted wooden seating, whilst the blue window-coverings and blue light bulbs serve to reduce its vulnerability as an air-raid target

Below: Visitors taking a look round the military vehicles on display

Photos: Pat Ashton



A small selection of visiting military vehicles attended the Museum, courtesy of Yorkshire Military Vehicles Trust, and these were displayed on the back field. Three of our wartime trolleybuses were in passenger service: Derby 172, London 1348 (making a welcome return to service) and South Shields 204. Visitor numbers were impressive throughout the day and the weather was good, whilst *The Tea Trolley Café* was also very busy. We look forward to working with our friends in the Thorne Conservation Group again next year.



A Huddersfield Day and a Coach Display: 14 - 15 May

or: A weekend of variety and surprises

David Hanchett

According to the Museum's diary, it was to have been an ordinary Saturday of trolleybuses circulating Sandtoft Square for our visitors, followed by a Sunday blessed with our second coach rally. Well this certainly came to pass, but rather more elaborately than the earlier planning had suggested!

Red trolleybuses working together again ...

The Old Almondburians' Society of Huddersfield had expressed an interest in visiting our Museum, so on Saturday 14 May our three trolleybuses from that town were brought out of the depot to welcome them and to appear together for the first time in many a year.



The extended seating area in *The Tea Trolley Café* offers splendid views through the newly-uncovered picture windows, this time with Huddersfields 541, 631 and 619 on display

Photo: Bob Ashton

541 had not been seen under the wires for quite a while, so this was a opportunity to dust off her cobwebs! 541 has an unusual three-windowed top deck front, which was common to the municipality's Park Royal bodies pre-war, and after hostilities ended continued to appear with this batch. Extensive restoration work had been carried out a few years ago, but there are still a few jobs to be done before returning to passenger service. However 541 gave a very good account of herself, making a fair number of demonstration circuits.

619 has been very busy working Sandtoft Square recently, so out she came to please the public again. The drivers were able to note how heavy her steering is in comparison with her sisters!

631 worked hard for us last year, until she developed axle box problems and was sent to a local contractor for repairs. Unfortunately she suffered some body damage in the process, so has been languishing in the depot since her return. However, buoyed by the chance to work with her former stable mates again, she was persuaded to come out of the depot to join in the activities.

One enlightened visitor was heard to point out that Huddersfield trolleybuses did



Former pupils of King James' School, Almondbury, and their families, congregate in front of Huddersfield 619, 631 and 541 during their reunion event at the Museum

Photo: Bob Ashton

not have advertisements placed on their exteriors as other operators did, and this was clearly demonstrated by the "old girls". In addition to the trolleybus riding and nostalgia, the Old Almondburians enjoyed a presentation in the *Regal* Cinema by Stephen Lockwood, author of several trolleybus books and an expert on the Huddersfield system, who had been very active in the initiative to save 631 for preservation many years ago.

There's more than one way to get to the seaside for the day...

The following day saw a totally different scenario. A nostalgic array of coaches arrived, representing several fields of the old coaching industry. We welcomed our old friend Terry Moore with his Bedford PJK Plaxton Panorama midi-coach, which spent its working years in Scotland. Ken Thompson brought his two delightful ex-East Kent Dennis Lancets, which truly shone in the sunshine. Also visiting was the Aycliffe & District Bus Preservation Society's beautiful ex-United Automobile Bristol LS6G, which is a relatively recent restoration. We had two late entrants: the first being a Bedford Plaxton Paramount owned by A.S. Baldly Coaches of Holme-on-Spalding-Moor, and the second was a very shiny Nottingham City Transport Leyland National II, new in 1985 and now owned by the Notts & Derby Bus Preservation Group. Although not strictly a coach, it was said to have saved the day once by going to the aid of an excursion coach that had broken down!

But then we were in for an unexpected treat. What should come through the gate but a beautiful open car, low slung, powerful - and dare I say it? - oozing class! This was followed by another, and another, then yet another, until the central

grass arena was full of classic sports cars and coaches. The former were iconic vehicles from the Morgan Sports Car Club. The detail of the cars was wonderful, such as the crafted logo on the leather seats. It was a really contrasting line of classic vehicles that assembled for photographs in front of the Axholme Stores.

Some of our brave coach drivers took up the challenge to drive their old classics



The similarity of livery may be coincidental, but this visiting Dennis Lancet seems well matched with Cardiff 203, which has recently returned to service after several years

Photo: David Hanchett

around an obstacle course. Then we told them that the public were expecting them to do it again, this time in reverse! This was followed by a parallel parking exercise - not easy without power steering. Then, another first for Sandtoft: a trolleybus driven by Richard Jackson completed the latter manoeuvre too, to a greater degree of accuracy as well!

The two Dennis Lancets both operated the two Isle of Axholme tours, fully laden both times. The second departure was so over-subscribed that a second duplicate vehicle had to be called in at no notice. Alex Proctor went running over - and he did run! - to fetch Doncaster 33 to take the overflow. The times when the tour coaches were away were the only quiet times that *The Tea Trolley Café* had all day. It was great to see the site so busy. We welcomed a very good number of visitors, who enjoyed mixed weather, but the sun shone when it was needed. All in all, we proved that the Trolleybus Museum can be a surprising place!

An impressive double line-up in Sandtoft Square: classic Morgan cars together with a varied selection of coaches

Photo: David Hanchett



NEWS ROUND-UP

Sandtoft in the Press

We are always very pleased to receive free publicity, and even more so when it is as positive as the article that appeared in the *Hull Daily Mail* on 7 May. In a feature headed "On the buses for flashback to family fun", reporter Joanna Lovell wrote about a recent visit that she had made to the Museum with her young children, commenting "When you arrive you really do feel like you're stepping back onto streets from years gone by." They clearly all had a good time during their trip and in her review Joanna added: "The day out is perfect for enthusiasts, but also for families with children who love to explore." Her experience now features on her "Jolly Family Outings" Facebook page, and you can read the full text at the link in our Members' Area at www.sandtoft.org/members.

Recognition from Trip Advisor

The Museum continues to receive very positive reviews on *Trip Advisor* and by the end of May we had 81 postings, with an "Excellent" rating for 47 (58%) and 27 rated "Very Good" (33%). This is very pleasing, especially as visitors consistently mention that everyone at the Museum is friendly and helpful. In May *Trip Advisor* awarded us their 2016 Certificate of Excellence, in recognition of the number of reviews and their consistently high ratings over a long period.

This feedback is extremely encouraging and you can read the reviews via the link to the *Trip Advisor* page at www.sandtoft.org/members. Our *Trip Advisor* page now includes a prominent reference to the certificate and we will be displaying a printed certificate at the Museum. Well done to all our volunteers for making our visitors' experience such a good one! And thanks also to "Hrabel" (alias Dave Chick) for being the voice of the Museum on *Trip Advisor*, and for his personal replies to many of the comments posted there.

Facilities for disabled people

The plan to install a state-of-the-art changing bench in our disabled toilet unit was mentioned in 'Scene no.101, and the work was completed in time for the Easter opening. This was funded with a significant grant from Museum Development Yorkshire with the balance of the cost being more than met by a generous Gift Aid donation from one of our members. We now have disabled toilet facilities that are almost unparalleled at "heritage" tourist destinations in the area.

Model show at Crich Tramway Village

Our member John Huddleston has informed us of a model tram and railway exhibition to be held on 20 and 21 August 2016, 10am to 5pm both days at the National Tramway Museum, Crich Tramway Village, Crich, Derbyshire, DE4 5DP. Under reciprocal arrangements, members of the Trolleybus Museum will receive free admission to Crich Tramway Village on production of a valid membership card.

There will be 15 layouts in the exhibition and an operating model trolleybus system will be on display. Other highlights include a "Reading Corporation Tramways" layout, a New England interurban system and a re-creation of the Midlands Railway branches centred on Ripley Station.

41 SEATS AND ANOTHER "5" RATING

In the last *Sandtoft Scene* we reported good progress with the project to enlarge the seating area of *The Tea Trolley Café*. Significant efforts continued during March, with the complete removal of a large display cabinet and the installation of additional tables and chairs. Alterations were required to the panelling where the cabinet had been fixed, and the carpentry work was completed with the remodelling of a tall storage cupboard. During a "final push" of effort to complete the project by Easter, our volunteer workers ensured that everything was in place and ready for use by our visitors for the first open day of the season.

Graham Bilbé writes: "They say every cloud has a silver lining, and fixing a problem with the trolleybus simulator over Easter revealed a stock of spare ceiling panels in the space underneath it - just enough to fill-in the area vacated by the display cabinet. Then Steve Harrison announced that he had sufficient pieces of the ceiling suspension grid at home, so doing the ceiling cost us nowt! The side of the new broom cupboard is actually one of the centre strips cut out of the old cabinet, of which most of the rest has been kept for re-use at a later date, so very little has been wasted".

The project has added another 9 places to the seating capacity of café, which can now seat 41 people: a significant increase achieved on a very low budget indeed. Then, on 5 April, North Lincolnshire Council's Environmental Health department undertook their annual inspection of our café facilities and again awarded us a "5"-rating; the maximum possible. Well done to Pam Besser and all the catering team for this achievement, and well



Above: Overall, the changes create a much brighter and more spacious impression inside - an improvement much welcomed by café manager Pam Besser

Photo: Graham Bilbé

Left: Now *The Tea Trolley Café* frontage takes in all the windows of the *Axholme Stores*, with the newly-extended seating area on the right

Photo: John Stainforth





During the working weekend on 8 March, Francis Whitehead and Graham Bilbé continue the process of carefully dismantling the large display cabinet, which has been "slimmed-down" for future use

Photo: Dave Chick

Ten days later, the new seating area beyond the central doors is rapidly taking shape. Here, Tony Ferris and Steve Harrison are seen taking stock of the progress made and the work that remains to be done. The floor and walls have already been painted, whilst the ceiling tiles are still to be fitted

Photo: Stewart David



And... eight days after that, the enlarged *Tea Trolley Café* is in service for the start of the new season. This view shows customers using the new seating on Easter Monday

Photo: Bob Ashton

done to everyone who had worked very hard over several months to improve the visitor experience by creating a more spacious café! Special thanks go to Steve Harrison for his work on the ceiling, and to Tony Ferris and John Whipham for making good the floor and repainting it. We are also very grateful to Andy Thornton for re-covering the various seats with easy-wipe vinyl material suitable for use in the café, and to Graham Bilbé for "hard graft" throughout the entire job.

The extra seating has already proved extremely useful on some of the rather damp days this season, and the approach from *The Trolleyshop* now looks far more welcoming. All we need to do now is to rearrange the kitchen area to be more practical. We hope to make that happen next winter, although this will cost us a good deal more than the project just completed. Meanwhile, a major improvement to the café operations has been the recent purchase and installation of a new dishwasher - something much more suited than its predecessor to the scale of the job on busy open days.

OBITUARIES

We are sorry to have to record the deaths of two of the Museum's long-standing members.

Ben Spooner died on 6 March, aged 80. Chris Proctor writes:

Ben was a regular visitor to Sandtoft. He lived at Honley, near Huddersfield, and frequently travelled to Sandtoft by public transport and on our free bus service. He will be remembered as "the big guy with a calliper on his leg and always carrying a large bag".

Our condolences go to his sister Annie and to all in his family and friends.

David Hatt, a keen supporter of Maidstone trolleybuses, died on 20 March, aged 82. Malcolm Coates writes:

David and I met by chance at the East Anglia Transport Museum in about 1999 and began talking about no.72, Maidstone's last trolleybus. David had already intervened some years earlier when there was a danger that the vehicle might be sent for scrap by Maidstone Borough Council. With the help of a local councillor, it was agreed, in 1977, that it should go to Sandtoft on long term loan.

At that time, the vehicle was operational and ran for a number of years, but as time wore on, it became in need of restoration and was moved to storage at the rear of the depot. With the help of a small committee, the Maidstone 72 Restoration Fund was launched in 2000 and over the next few years in excess of £40,000 was raised. In recognition of his fund-raising for no.72, David was granted life membership of the Trolleybus Museum.

David had a wider interest in old vehicles and for some years was Treasurer of the Historic Commercial Vehicle Society. He was well known in preservation circles nationally and for nearly 25 years ran the Maidstone Toy Fair.

I will remember David as a good friend. He was very generous and possessed a dry sense of humour. He will be missed by many people and our sympathies go to his wife, Jill, and to his family and friends. His ashes are to be scattered at the Trolleybus Museum.

SITE WORK DURING THE SPRING

As usual, work outdoors on the Museum site has continued throughout the new season. Here are a few activities caught on camera:



Care of the outdoor furniture is an important part of the maintenance regime. Following some experimenting with various colours of undercoat, including "Doncaster maroon", Gerry Carroll applied a coat of maroon gloss all over. Despite a temptation to reproduce the complete Doncaster livery, no white band or purple stripe was added.

Above: An appropriate choice of colour for this particular bench, which is to be re-dedicated in memory of Les and Jean Flint *Photo: Bob Ashton*

Infrastructure work progresses with the systematic refurbishment of the traction poles. We have over 40 of them, and they are being repainted at an average rate of six per year. Some of the poles have become quite corroded over the years; rust removal and surface preparation form a large part of the effort involved.

Right: Pole painting contractor Steve Cox at work in the centre of Sandtoft Square *Photo: John Stainforth*



Left: John Whigham busy concreting the area round the period petrol pumps *Photo: John Stainforth*

WELLINGTON 82 HAS ARRIVED

The first mention of Wellington 82 in *Sandtoft Scene* came in the July 2009 issue, in an article by Francis Whitehead entitled “Could these be arriving at the bus stop?”. Seven years later and 3½ years after landing back in England, we are delighted to report that no.82 has now arrived at the particular bus stop he had in mind.

No.82 is one of 38 British-built trolleybuses purchased to replace the last trams in Wellington in 1964. The chassis were the last BUT trolleybuses built, being of the RETB1 type: although Leyland-designed, this batch of chassis was actually assembled at the Scammell factory in Watford. Nineteen (no.82 was the first-numbered of these) received MCCW B42D bodies, made in Birmingham, and were exported as complete vehicles via Liverpool, whilst the other 19 were sent to New Zealand in “completely knocked down” (CKD) form, to be bodied locally. All 38 had English Electric control gear and EE410 traction motors. Uniquely, 82 had been tested on the Walsall trolleybus system prior to being exported, as described in “Introducing Wellington 82” written by Francis in *'Scene* no.89 (April 2013). That article contains more details of 82’s time in service, its earlier preservation, its acquisition by the Trolleybus Museum, the organisation of its shipment and its arrival back in the UK.



Wellington 82 in service on 12 August 1981 at the Railway Station, the city departure point for most Wellington trolleybus services. The destination “Brooklyn” was a short working of the no.7 route to Kingston

Photo: Michael Jarka

Clearly, transporting a trolleybus from the opposite side of the world and organising its restoration was never going to be a project for the faint-hearted, with both the logistics and the costs presenting major challenges. But, duly restored to its late 1960s condition, and with 82’s recent arrival and preparation for service at the Museum, it is now a case of “mission accomplished”! A review of some of the milestones in the process, therefore, is very timely.

Particularly significant early on were a visit to London in January 2009 by Omnibus Society of New Zealand (OSNZ) Chairman, Peter Rendall when 82 was

discussed, and then visits made to New Zealand by John Whitehead (May 2009) and Graham Bilbé (2010) during which they were able to assess 82's condition. The main financial obstacle - the cost of shipping 82 to the UK - was overcome thanks to very generous donations from two members who wish to remain anonymous. These factors enabled us to formally accept 82 from its OSNZ owners and make arrangements for its shipment. It left Wellington Tramway Museum on 15 October 2012, Wellington Port on 20 October and after two transshipments (Melbourne and Singapore), finally arrived at Felixstowe on 18 December 2012, to be collected by us on 21 December.

In anticipation of restoration being undertaken by them alongside work for the BTS on repainting and re-trimming Huddersfield 631, no.82 was taken to Swindon's Thamesdown Transport. Good news came in late-September 2013 with the award by

Arts Council England of a PRISM grant to cover the major part of 82's anticipated restoration costs, but the project suffered a setback in Spring



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2014 when, after a long delay without a start being made, Thamesdown Transport advised us that a policy change meant that they could no longer undertake contract work. A spin-off of one of the Museum's TDEs was that participating representatives from First South Yorkshire indicated that they could undertake the necessary work on 82, and in May 2014 the trolleybus was low-loaded to their Rotherham works, where work began almost immediately.

We have regularly reported progress on the project in *Sandtoft Scene* over the past two years, and, since our last news update in April, the jobs that remained to be done by First South Yorkshire have all been completed: the re-upholstered seats were received back from the trimmers and fitted in April, the entrance/ exit steps, along with the last pieces of repainting were finished-off, and a few remaining components attached, including the catwalk boards, some new boom hooks and a replacement rubber mudguard, which had been air-freighted to us from Wellington.

The quality of its restoration and repaint are a great credit to First. Following a final inspection and just short of two years after it arrived there, Wellington no.82 left Rotherham for Sandtoft on suspended tow on 13 May. Bruce Lake met it en-route to photograph and video it on the final stage of its journey. A small group had assembled at the Museum to welcome 82, and at about 1:00pm it arrived. Many photographs were taken before 82 was placed in the workshop, ready for the electrical circuitry and the mechanical side to be checked over.

One of the more major tasks was to refit all the trolley gear as this had been removed prior to 82's voyage to the UK to reduce overall length and height. One of the trolleybooms was already known to be in poor condition, with serious corrosion in the section near the trolleyhead, and there was some suspicion



Somewhat dwarfed by the massive towing vehicle, Wellington 82 has finally arrived at Sandtoft and awaits offloading from the suspended tow
Photo: Bruce Lake

about the integrity of the second one. Repairing them would not have been a wise option as they could still be in a much-weakened condition, but no immediate alternative solution could be found as, at 18'6", 82's booms are longer than any spare ones we have in stock. We then identified that 82's trolley gear is Ohio Brass (OB) equipment, almost certainly extensively used in both North and South Americas, so likely to be available from somewhere there. OSNZ told us that they have a large number of spare booms and we would be welcome to a pair (or more), but, of course, time was against moving any to us by sea, and air-freight costs proved prohibitive. Fortunately, our friends and colleagues in the USA who look after the trolleybuses at the Illinois Railway Museum were able to step in to help and within a very few days had arranged shipping, made a suitable crate, packed in two booms, some spare carbon inserts and trolleybase



Ian Metcalfe at the wheel of the Nuffield tractor during the process of manoeuvring 82 towards the workshop. Great care is required to avoid marking the front bumpers and it is going to be necessary to fabricate a special tow-bar connector for 82

Photo: Bob Ashton

insulators and transported them to Chicago for shipment to Liverpool and onward to an agent in Manchester. During this exercise, they were amused to discover on the OB carbon insert packaging the wording "Made in England"!

Soon after 82's arrival, the half-shafts were refitted and the trolleybases were cleaned, prepared, painted and refitted. In the absence of trolleybooms, Bruce Lake rigged up a 600-volt supply to the main circuits using our mobile (low current) power supply, and - very encouragingly - the compressor sprang into life and started running well to build up the air pressure. Various rubber hoses were identified as needing to be replaced and, not unexpectedly, there were stuck valves and air leaks in the air system. In particular, the door air tank was not filling and this was traced back to a valve that needed cleaning and subsequently a new seal, which was sourced and fitted by Ian Metcalfe.

Bruce also investigated the arrangement whereby the brakes are automatically applied when power is lost - one of Wellington's "fail safe" features not fitted to trolleybuses in Britain. However, on recovery after this test, only one contactor came in when the power pedal was applied, indicating a problem elsewhere. Bruce traced this to another safety feature, an interlock that requires the rear doors to be closed before the trolleybus can move. Not having any electrical manuals for 82 meant that both guesswork and "trial and error" were involved in locating and fixing these problems! We have since received photographs of some relevant pages from New Zealand.

After connecting two suitable batteries, work began on testing the low-voltage circuits. Some things worked straight away, like the new horn that had been fitted in Rotherham, but other systems proved more difficult. Particularly so were the front sidelights, as their interiors were almost totally rusted away, and it was more by luck that they held together long enough to clean up the bulb contacts and get them working. The indicators did not work to start with, but after some adjustments to the switch, the nearside ones burst into life. The offside ones still do not and these require further attention. With help from Ian Wilson, we also made a small cosmetic improvement by replacing some of the front and rear lamp glasses.

In addition to Bruce's electrical work needed to get 82 to operational condition, Jim Sambrooks made a start on the mechanical side by working through the standard checklist used for our annual vehicle testing. A small number of problems were identified and (as of mid-June) these are steadily being dealt with.

The consignment from Illinois duly reached Liverpool on 24 May and arrived in Manchester a couple of days later. We naively expected to just go and pick it up, but with a 19-foot long crate, this is not so easy to arrange. Neither was getting it released from customs, as the import process has changed since we acquired Edmonton 189 a few years ago. New rules require an EORI (Economic Operator Registration and Identification) number to import anything to the EU: we had to apply to HMRC for one and, aggravated by a bank holiday shut-down, this delayed the pick-up significantly. Slow administration, combined with the consequential difficulties in synchronising its release with haulage from Manchester, meant that the crate did not reach Sandtoft until the afternoon of

Wednesday, 8 June, less than 3 full days before 82 was expected to be run!

During that period, other progress was made: fleet numbers received from New Zealand were applied, as were locally-sourced "Wellington City Transport" lettering for each side and a host of other vinyls for both inside and outside. A supply of information leaflets for visitors, describing 82 was prepared and printed.

With 82 having arrived at Sandtoft many weeks later than originally expected, it was clearly going to be a serious challenge to complete everything in time for the Worldwide Weekend on 11-12 June, and with the delayed arrival of the trolley-booms, the odds were heavily against achieving any movement under the overhead in time for that event. In order to try 82's electrics on full power, fitting the roof gear was essential and it was a case of "all hands to the pumps": accordingly, the booms were quickly unpacked and lifted onto the roof of 82 on that Wednesday evening (8 June), clamped into the trolleybases on the Thursday and new boom cables fed through and crimped to their respective ends late Thursday and early Friday. At last, proper testing could commence! Unfortunately, although 82 now drew power correctly, the brakes were stuck on, so another foray underneath was required. After sorting that out, 82 went for some test runs; more minor adjustments and testing followed and good brake test results were easily achieved. The second (lower) front bumper had previously been removed for towing, and with this refitted, the trolleybus was declared fit to operate for demonstration runs.

Visitors arriving on the Saturday morning saw a very smart no.82 parked in the workshop road and receiving a wash. At around 1.00pm, and to the sound of the New Zealand national anthem, Bruce drove no.82 into Sandtoft Square. After a short commentary given by Graham Bilbé, no.82 went on a public demonstration run. Further demonstrations took place during the course of the afternoon, and



On the move again after over 20 years, Wellington 82 in front of the picnic tables on a demonstration run on Saturday 11 June

*Photo:
Andy McDougall*

many people commented on 82's smoothness and quietness, as well as its excellent appearance with new paintwork and lettering. The only significant problem was the troublesome safety feature on the rear doors, which required physical assistance to hold them firmly closed to prevent the power to the traction motor from cutting out. This was resolved on Saturday evening ready for Sunday's demonstrations by adjusting the mechanism that engages the rear door microswitch. On the Sunday, just after 2.00pm, a similar ceremony took place for that day's visitors and no.82, even after just a little more running, seemed to be performing much better.

Priorities now are to attend to various snags that have become apparent. This will enable 82 to be passed for passenger-carrying operation, and as we go to press, we are on track for launching 82 into service on 'Gathering Preview Saturday, 30 July.

A number of members, non-members and organisations have helped make the "82 Project" come to fruition and on behalf of the Museum, the Board of Directors wishes to put on record its grateful thanks to all who have helped in any way. At the risk of managing to omit someone, particular thanks go to our two anonymous shipping sponsors, to OSNZ, Peter Rendall, Mike Flinn and others in New Zealand, John and Rosemary Whitehead, Mediterranean Shipping Company and its various agents, Rigton Insurance Services, Derek Spall, Chris West, John Shearman, Stephen Oliver, Nigel Peart, Arts Council England and its staff who administer the PRISM fund, First South Yorkshire and its local management and proficient works staff who have ably met our requirements, Illinois Railway Museum (particularly Richard Schauer), various suppliers and, of course, our own museum staff, notably Ian Metcalfe, Ian Wilson, Bob Whittington, Jim Sambrooks and Graham Bilbé.

Two people deserve special recognition for this momentous achievement: Francis Whitehead coordinated the project from inception to completion and secured the PRISM grant, whilst much credit must go to Bruce Lake for overseeing the restoration and liaising with First South Yorkshire as work progressed. Bruce has also been the main force in completing the project against a tight schedule since 82's transfer to the Museum.

Whilst the restoration costs are significantly up on our initial estimate, there is no doubt that much of this is due to the poor state of the all-steel structure, particularly in the roof area and on the near-side, found when the framework was uncovered in the early stages of the work. On reflection, 82 has lived outside more or less since it was new (there was no under-cover depot in Wellington), so 50-odd years of being exposed to rain and condensation was bound to lead to some serious deterioration. With a few invoices still awaited, the overall cost of acquiring, transporting and renovating no.82 is set to exceed £71,000. Donations and the PRISM grant have come to £29,900, so the balance has been met from Museum funds. Now that a resplendent 82 can be seen and experienced, donations to help offset our costs would be ever so much appreciated. Francis Whitehead can be contacted via the Museum address (see page 2) and will be delighted to hear from you!

BOURNEMOUTH 297 and 301

**Dave Chick
with input from Keith Baynton & Dave Hall**

Two of Bournemouth's iconic Weymann-bodied Sunbeam MF2B trolleybuses now have a secure future following an agreement between the British Trolleybus Society, the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft and the Bournemouth Passenger Transport Association Limited. Both vehicles date from 1962 and were part of the last batch of new trolleybuses ever built for service in the UK.

No.297 is already part of the operational fleet at Sandtoft and has been purchased for a nominal sum by the Museum. In lieu of the "dowry" normally required when a vehicle's ownership transfers to the Museum, we are taking over the BPTA's extensive stock of trolleybus spares and equipment.

No.301, which was the very last new trolleybus to enter service in the UK, has been bought by the British Trolleybus Society. It is currently on display at the West of England Transport Collection at Winkleigh but will eventually join the rest of the Society's fleet at Sandtoft.

On 30 May, BPTA Trustee Keith Baynton visited the Museum for a formal handover of the two trolleybuses. In the photograph, Francis Whitehead (*right*) receives ownership of 297 (*in the background*) on behalf of the Museum from Keith (*centre*) symbolically in exchange for a (genuine, preserved) £1 note. Although 301 could not be there for the occasion, Dave Chick (*left*) formally accepted ownership of 301 on behalf of the BTS.

Bournemouth 301 - The Route to Sandtoft

Bournemouth's 39 Sunbeam MF2Bs came in three batches, the last to be delivered being a set of nine built during 1961/62. This unusual size of batch resulted from the chassis of a tenth vehicle ordered being destroyed in a fire at Weymann's factory prior to the construction of its body. Bournemouth Corporation's Transport Committee decided not to replace it and the depleted batch, numbered 295 – 303, began entering service in July 1962. The last to be delivered was 301, which, along with 302, entered service on 1 November.

The MF2Bs had a life expectancy of 25 years, which would have seen them operating until 1987, but a change of council policy in 1963 led to the abandonment of the system, which closed on 20 April 1969. On the day of the closure, a large number of trolleybuses formed a procession in the town centre, with no. 301 at the back with the Mayor and the Transport Committee on board. The Mayor turned 301 on the Christchurch turntable and drove the vehicle when inside Castle Lane depot at the end of the journey.



Photo: Chas Allen

In July 1969 the Corporation accepted the BPTA's tender of £150 for 301 and the Association then stored it at Mallard Road depot. Since then it has had several interesting outings. In 1977 it ran at line voltage within the depot using a trailer-mounted generator and to celebrate the 75th anniversary of Bournemouth Corporation Transport was towed around the town. In 1986, 301 attended a historic vehicle rally organised by the BTS and was on display near the Great Western Society's Didcot Railway Centre.

In 1990, no.301 received its second ever repaint and was taken to the Black Country Living Museum to join 297 which was already being used in service there. The following year 301 was transferred for static display to the British Commercial Vehicle Museum at Leyland on a 20-year loan, returning to Bournemouth in 2010. When, in the summer of 2011, the BPTA had to transfer ownership of much of its vehicle collection to Dan Shears of the West of England Transport Collection at Winkleigh, in Devon, the two Sunbeam MF2B trolleybuses were retained: no.301 moved to Winkleigh during the July and currently remains in covered accommodation there.

It was during a feasibility study by an enthusiast group led by David Lovegrove and John Zebedee into repatriating no.299 (a third surviving member of the 1962 Bournemouth MF2B batch) from Eire following it being offered free of charge by the Transport Museum Society of Ireland that concern about the perceived vulnerability of nos.297 and 301 was raised. As a result, and involving representatives from the Museum and the BTS, an exploratory meeting was held with BPTA trustee, Keith Baynton. Although that meeting was inconclusive, different options were subsequently explored by the "MF2B Group", BTS and TM@S with funding needs and sponsorship possibilities to the fore. Further discussions with the BPTA, and the "MF2B Group" having secured robust sponsorship pledges of cash to provide an additional place in the BTS's proposed depot building as well as towing and ongoing costs, allowed a plan to evolve for the BTS committee and custodian trustees to agree to no.301 being added to their collection. Of utmost importance to the BTS is the need to avoid any risk to its existing collection by depleting resources and overburdening the Society with the needs of an extra vehicle. One by one, the various elements of the plan (which also involved the synchronised transfer of 297's ownership to the Museum) have fallen into place and all parties involved, including the BPTA, are satisfied with the outcome.

Bournemouth 301 on the turntable in the Dolphin Inn yard, Christchurch, on 20 April 1969

Photo: Cliff Essex



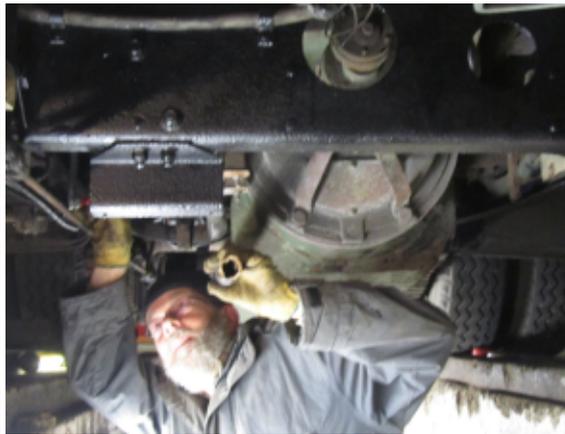
VEHICLE REPORTS

Compiled with information supplied by Bob Ashton and with acknowledgements to DO&LRS

Bradford 792 spent a week in the workshop in April, enabling its owners to make good progress with de-rusting and painting the chassis, together with some of the other steel surfaces underneath. These have suffered a great deal of surface corrosion in recent years and preventive work was definitely due. After extensive scraping and wire-brushing, a layer of rust converter was applied before putting on the protective top-coat. The new lighting recently fitted in the workshop pit was a great benefit - thanks to all involved! After five days' work, 792's owners had completed just over 50% of the total area requiring treatment, so another session (or two) will have to be scheduled to finish the process.



An underside view of Bradford 792, with treatment of chassis frame and body bearers complete in the area behind the rear wheels



Andy McDougall painting the steelwork in one of the awkward cavities beside the traction motor
Photos: John Stainforth

Doncaster 33's entrance steps had deteriorated badly and a replacement set was constructed and fitted during the week prior to the Diesel Weekend.



Doncaster 33's new steps taking shape (left) with DOLRS members Alex and Chris Proctor at work on the project (right)

*Photos:
John Stainforth*



Walsall 342 was transferred to long-term storage at Thorpe-in-Balne on 13 May, being taken there by the towing vehicle that had delivered Wellington 82 that afternoon. Prior to the move, Geoff Welburn and Bob Ashton gave 342 an exterior wash and an interior clean

Photo: Stewart David



DO&LRS TRIPS, RALLIES AND RUNNING DAYS

Doncaster Omnibus & Light Railway Society will be attending these events. Participants will be welcome; the timings and pick-up points are listed below. The pick-up location in Doncaster is outside Ward Brothers shop at Waterdale.

Tuesday 2 August – Optare Visit: a guided tour around the Optare factory

Places must be booked due to restricted numbers

Depart Sandtoft 1530 and Doncaster (Waterdale) 1615

Sunday 21 August – Sheffield Bus Running Day

Depart Sandtoft 0815 and Doncaster (Waterdale) 0900

Depart Sheffield 1730 Arrive Waterdale 1830 and Sandtoft 1915

Sunday 11 September – South Yorkshire Transport Rally (Aldwarke)

Depart Sandtoft 0815 and Doncaster (Waterdale) 0900

Depart Aldwarke 1630 Arrive Waterdale 1730 and Sandtoft 1815

Provisional: Sunday 25 September – Showbus

This trip is subject to passenger numbers and may be cancelled if there is insufficient interest. Please register your interest through Alex Proctor ajp1989@hotmail.co.uk at the earliest opportunity

Sunday 6 November - Lincoln Running Day

Depart Sandtoft 0745 and Doncaster (Waterdale) 0830

Depart Lincoln 1730 Arrive Waterdale 1900 and Sandtoft 1945

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members:

Mr David Bell (Beckenham)	Mr Michael Kay (Westcliff on Sea)
Mr D Bonsall (Melton Mowbray)	Mr David Land (Castleford)
Mr David Burrows (Stowmarket)	Mr Nigel Leahy (Poole)
Mr Phill Button (Biggleswade)	Mr Michael Lloyd (Bath)
Mr Wayne Collins (Clay Cross)	Mr Steven Spall (Sheffield)
Mr Michael Crowther (Sheffield)	Mr Roger Tabor (Watford)
Mr Douglas Fayers (Thornton Clevellys)	Mr Alan Whenman (Spalding)
Mr John Haydon (Peterborough)	



THE ROUTE TO SANDTOFT

BLACK ROD KNOCKS ON THE DOORS

E - OF SANDTOFT !

PART 16: Aftermath

“Black Rod”

All photos by the Author

I cannot explain to you my feelings following the closure of the Nottingham system. Having tried to mount a campaign to change the abandonment policy and then being involved in purchasing representative examples of the fleet, with the system closed I was just totally gutted. Simply, I did not wish to live in the city any longer. Within weeks of the last trolleybus I had purchased a house near Burton upon Trent, closer to my workplace. I have never lived in my home town of Nottingham since that date. This partly explains why I lost touch with people in Nottingham. Also, I was not particularly interested in setting up a regional transport museum at Plumtree. Whilst I applaud the preservation of different types of vehicles, my interest has always been in trolleybuses and tramcars. Personally, there were obviously issues of trust in that I still felt betrayed by the circumstances described within these articles. Therefore, for me, sadly, following the Nottingham abandonment there was little to do but record the ongoing demise of dwindling ranks of other trolleybus operators.

However, magazines of the time, particularly *Modern Tramway*, described a more progressive transport policy in many European countries. I had read of the coastal tramway in Belgium and in August 1968, Manchester enthusiast Howard Piltz and I spent a weekend in Belgium, concentrating on the Bruxelles tramways. This was followed in August 1969 with a return Belgium visit with Howard and Carl Isgar. These trips, in hindsight, were a real life-changing experience for me and created an immediate interest in overseas transport systems. I realised that whilst most of the tramways in the UK had closed and the end of the remaining trolleybus systems was in sight, other countries were not following these policies. I had enjoyed a holiday in Spain during 1963 and seen both trams and trolleybuses (some double-deck) in Barcelona. However, the Belgian trips were the first full transport visits and “kicked off” my interest in foreign systems. I do believe that, during this period, UK trolleybus enthusiasts “divided” into two main categories. Many started to concentrate mainly on preservation, and these enthusiasts, thankfully, are responsible for the trolleybus museums that exist in the UK today. We are therefore privileged to be able to experience UK trolleybuses today through the efforts of these particular individuals, Sandtoft, of course, having the largest collection of preserved trolleybuses in the world – a remarkable and fantastic achievement. The other sector of UK trolleybus enthusiasts started to investigate and explore overseas systems and I clearly started to fall into this latter category.

This really should be the end of the story, but I had one further opportunity to become involved with trolleybus preservation at this time. A change of job at this time allocated Nottingham as part of my sales territory although I still lived near Burton upon Trent. Shortly after the second Belgian trip I was walking through

Nottingham's Old Market Square and I bumped into... Steve Collins. Indeed he recollects this meeting in Part 8 of his articles in an episode entitled "The arrival of bad news." Hmm - thanks Steve! As he recounted, inevitably a visit to Plumtree ensued. Ashton 80 had eventually departed on 27 March 1967 but Derby 175 had returned from its under-cover sojourn in Lincoln. Other vehicles had joined the collection as Steve has described. The site was depressing, to say the least. There was graphic evidence of various vehicles having been "tampered with" by persons who clearly had no idea of what they were doing. The serious preservationists reading this article will recognise the symptoms. A perhaps well-meaning idiot tries to take apart a contactor cabinet, removes panels, seats, handrails, etc., with no earthly clue as to why they are removing them and no idea how to put them back together again.

Steve wrote in his article "None of the vehicles looked well cared for, though with hindsight, this was the middle of winter, and they were all kept out of doors, so to be fair we were probably being over critical". No, Steve, we were not: the vehicles were in a deplorable state, as some photographs I took at Plumtree early in 1970 clearly confirm. The vehicles were simply being allowed to deteriorate, with Nottingham 466 in a particularly poor condition with evidence of "work" started and left uncompleted. I was still the "official" owner of Nottingham 493. My immediate reaction was to become involved again and give any assistance needed to get things moving and secure the future for the ailing trolleybus collection. This, bless him, is exactly what Steve did!

Prior to these events, at one of the UK trolleybus closures, I had bumped into Mike Dare and he had talked about Sandtoft. The site was in its infancy; remember, the first trolleybus to arrive there (Reading 193) had only recently arrived, on 1 November 1969. I had asked Mike directly if there would be accommodation for the Plumtree trolleybuses if an emergency arose. He said that there would indeed be room for them, but he cautioned "no wrecks". Clearly a considerable amount of money would be required to assist the Plumtree situation. Steve, with his fresh involvement, was able to inform me that the "old guard" were still the leading lights, namely "The Chairman" and "The Teacher". From the conversations that I had with enthusiasts on the many (sadly) valedictory tours for UK route and system closures, it became apparent that the "politics" that seemed to characterise the general trolleybus preservation movement were still alive and well. Carl Isgar and I were already planning further and more adventurous continental excursions. Any decision to become involved with preservation again was succinctly brought into focus by my "better half". She correctly pointed out "there isn't the money to run the house, for you to be involved in preservation and to travel overseas as well". "Anyway" she added, "other than Steve and a few others, how can you ever trust any of them again?" I could not fault her logic! When Steve approached me shortly after the Cardiff closure regarding the future of 493, there was no hesitation in suggesting that he made contact with Mike Dare and Sandtoft.

With Steve's renewed enthusiasm and obvious commitment, my verbal assurance from Mike, and the fact that Carl and I had already planned our next



Left: Lyon 470 in June 1980 in a small tunnel entering a short trolleybus "reservation" at Neyret, Colbert. Lyon line 6 passes through narrow streets with sharp corners and some steep climbs. Consequently a batch of 21 trolleybuses was ordered specifically for this service in 1963. Heavily rebuilt in 1984/5 this trolleybus was

given a "retro" livery and renumbered to 1704. In this form it is preserved at Sandtoft but will need much work to restore to operational use. Happily, in Lyon, trolleybuses still weave their tortuous route through the former silk weaving area from Hotel de Ville to Croix Rousse on service 6.

Right: Another Sandtoft resident, Limoges 5; one of a batch of 33 trolleybuses that opened the system in 1943. This vehicle must demand the full skill of its Sandtoft drivers due to its curious control method utilising three driving pedals. The left one must be fully depressed before the vehicle will move. To start, the driver must take his foot off this pedal. When approximately 15 mph is attained, the right hand pedal must be depressed to increase speed. The centre pedal is the brake. Who says that the French do not have a sense of humour?



Below: Marseille 202 (also at Sandtoft today) working on its "home system" in January 2002. "Eagle-eyed" readers will notice that it would be impossible for trolleybuses to use this turning circle due to an inconsiderately-placed traffic island! The Chutes-Lavie location of this photo



was the original turning point of service 81. It was extended in 1983 to Metro St Just, but this circle was initially retained for emergencies and/ or possible short workings. Clearly, it was decided that this facility was not required and the island installed. Of course, the final batch of vehicles such as 202 are fitted with auxiliary diesel engines so there is little problem

trip - to Holland - I was happy for Steve to take on 493 when he offered. As a footnote, in September 1970, Steve did join Carl and me on a European jaunt. As well as several tramways, we (quite unexpectedly!) came across trolleybuses in Bonn, saw the remnants of the Liège system and explored the long trolleybus line in Aachen. We saw the one-and-a-half-decker (no.22) in the Aachen depot whilst passing on a service trolleybus, but were obviously unable to take a photograph. Little did we realise that some two years later no.22 would be in the UK and, after May 1973, it would be with 493 at Sandtoft! As he recounted in his articles and to his lasting credit, Steve went on, with others, to secure a future for the Plumtree trolleybuses.

I never did get involved with trolleybus preservation again.

Conclusion and comments

Hindsight is “20/20 vision” and it is truly remarkable that so many British trolleybuses have actually survived into preservation, some 31 systems being represented. (Note: this number might vary by one or two depending on the interpretation of Cleethorpes, Grimsby, Grimsby-Cleethorpes, etc., and the several second-hand vehicles that could, arguably, represent both operators). This total is quite some achievement given the extremely limited resource of the people concerned and the comparative rapidity of the decline of the trolleybus fleets in Britain. Despite there being around 130 UK trolleybuses extant (obviously not all in operational condition) one would lament the passing of several types. Sadly, in some instances, attempts were made but thwarted by “officialdom”, such as Mike Dare’s attempt to save a Hull “Coronation”. Other attempts failed due to lack of finance and many deserving pre-war models disappeared before the preservation movement came into being.

Although this is a purely subjective judgement, several worthy preservation candidates that could have been saved were not. For example, the Glasgow system contained several types, and it is regrettable that none of the earlier BUT RETB1/ East Lancs. “standee” single-deckers survived, whilst two of their BUT RETB1/ Burlingham 35-foot long single-deckers were saved ([although the second of those survivors has recently gone - Ed](#)). Perhaps one of the TD-class Daimler CTM6/ MCCW trolleybuses would have been a worthwhile exhibit, given the comparative rarity of Daimler trolleybuses? Also lost were the TGs, including a quintet of unique Alexander-bodied Sunbeam F4As! All the foregoing lasted into 1964/65 - well into the trolleybus preservation era. Perhaps the Glasgow enthusiasts were still recovering from the loss of their tramway system, from which (thankfully) numerous examples were preserved. Equally thankfully was the saving of two of Newcastle’s 3-axle trolleybuses, largely representative of the post-war fleet. However, there were some 86 post-war 2-axle models, none of which survive. Why are there three identical Walsall Sunbeam F4A/ Willowbrook units in existence whilst the unique front-entrance no.866 (the final “Edgley Cox rebuild”) was allowed to be sent for scrap? I have already “banged on” sufficiently regarding the fact that a Roe-bodied utility should be with us today. Late in the day - as late as 1970 - was it not a travesty that one of the majestic and handsome Cardiff 1955 BUT 9641T/ East Lancs trolleybuses did not survive into

preservation? There are many further examples and I am sure the subject could form the basis of several articles, if indeed it already has not!

The previous paragraph serves to illustrate the fragmentation of the trolleybus fraternity with duplication of some vehicle types and a lack of others. In the 1960s I, with several others, tried to avoid this situation so that we could all “club together” for a “National Trolleybus Museum”. But were we right? Sandtoft fulfils this role and has an amazing trolleybus collection, justifiably acclaimed as the world’s largest and, equally amazingly, still growing - albeit with overseas examples. But back in 1965, I would never have believed that it might be possible to still take a trolleybus ride during the next century at four different UK locations: Sandtoft, Dudley and Carlton Colville, with Beamish (irregularly) and the possibility of a fifth in future at Ipswich. For me, part of the present fascination of trolleybus preservation is the occasional opportunity to ride on a trolleybus away from its usual museum base. Would these special events have been possible if the single museum site had been adopted? I doubt it. So - just maybe - the various factions and groups actually did us a favour after all.

In his article, Steve Collins pays tribute to several enthusiasts who, in the early days, worked tirelessly and took many financial risks to ensure that many of the trolleybuses still survive. I wholeheartedly endorse all his plaudits. Sadly, many of these early characters are no longer with us. “The Teacher” died some years ago and “The Chairman” passed away in January 2006, after suffering failing health for some time. I truly regret that our paths had not crossed since 1966. I sent my condolences to his widow and son receiving a gracious reply. This letter included the following passage: “....he went into everything he did with enthusiasm and passion and belief that things would always work out....” This statement is true. I therefore bitterly regret that, in my opinion, he appeared to become misguided and misdirected by some others whose motivations seemed questionable. I was desperately sad to read in Steve’s article in ‘Scene no.76 “Plumtree - Part 11: Stagnation” that by 1971 he “... had not seen The Chairman for two years, and what I found shocked me, he was a broken man...” The Chairman had deserved better than this. Prone to wild imaginative impossible ideas, he was a really decent man. He had the ability to motivate and enable you to believe that at least some of the schemes might be practicable. He was an undoubted pioneer of trolleybus preservation and deserves greater recognition for these efforts. Whilst handing out accolades and not being personally associated with the latter days at Plumtree, I must also pay tribute to Steve Collins - the man himself! His account graphically illustrates the difficulties encountered and there is no doubt that without Steve’s intervention in the 1970s many (possibly all) of the remaining trolleybuses at Plumtree might have been scrapped. As it stands, they all still exist. It is therefore appropriate to record publicly a “Well done and thank you!” to Steve. I also appreciate that he was also aided significantly by Tom Bowden and others.

I had not seen any of the Nottingham Trolleybus Group (NTG) members for years until I was approached by David Bowler to see if I would assist with his Nottingham Trolleybuses book. It was launched in Nottingham on 20 January



Rotherham 37 promoting the launch of *Trolleybooks* "Nottingham Trolleybuses" by David Bowler in January 2007. Now a regular and popular performer at Sandtoft, 37 stands outside Parliament Street Depot in Stanhope Street, with traces of trolleybus and tram operation still evident. Whilst many employees did not remember trolleybus operation from the depot, all concerned made a great fuss over the vehicle. Tim Stubbs adds: "I received a call to see if 37 could be made

available for the event. The rear tyres were not up to the job of a long road haul but funding was available from the book publishers who bought us four new tyres. When the tram operator in Nottingham required a method statement as to how 37 would cross the tram lines to get to the main square, they weren't amused by the suggestion to put up one pole and use a skate!"

2007. Given the number of Nottingham trolleybuses in preservation, of which two are operational, it is a great pity that one of them could not have been brought to this high-profile event, given the publicity opportunity. A big "thank you" is due to the Rotherham Trolleybus Group, and in particular Tim Stubbs who enabled Rotherham 37 to grace the book launch. It was particularly appropriate since it was 37 that had been originally stopped on its way to Plumtree for photos alongside native Nottingham trolleybuses back in 1965 - possibly the only Plumtree exhibit to be so photographed. Our original press secretary was on hand, together with Neil Lewin who possesses (probably) the most comprehensive latter-day collection of Nottingham trolleybus colour slides. Several of these can be seen in David's book. A subsequent East Midlands Weekend at Sandtoft in August 2007 permitted further meetings with later NTG members such as Keith Turner and John Foster.

I am still privileged to count Carl Isgar as one of my closest friends. He and I have travelled under many overhead wires, both trolleybus and tramcar, in the following years right up to the present date. In fact at the time of writing (July 2009) we have just visited Gent, unfortunately to witness the last trolleybus in that Belgian city. We have also arranged to go to Arnhem together for the 60th Anniversary of their trolleybus system. During 1977 my career changed to becoming involved in export sales, and this enabled me to travel extensively and experience at first hand many international transport systems that would have been a mere "pipe dream" back in the 1960s.

Of course, there is one name in this list of credits that I have not mentioned so far - that of Mike Dare. As these articles have shown, Mike was not responsible for the formation of the NTG, the preservation of Nottingham 466 or Plumtree. However, he was responsible for providing the trolleybuses at Plumtree with a secure home at a time when their future was bleak. This was in addition to the

many other trolleybuses that he was instrumental in saving. As I have said, I do not claim to have been close friends with Mike, but I do believe that we maintained a respect for each other. I had not seen him since the Bradford closure in 1972 until I visited the Sandtoft Gathering in 1975. He espied me and walked over with a big smile. "What do you think?" he said, waving at the site. "You've just got to be impressed", I replied. Mike paused and lit the inevitable cigarette and said: "Do you remember the conversations we had in Walsall back in 1962?" He carried on: "Sandtoft is based on that principle, you know. I think it's worked out quite well really, don't you?"

Yes, Mike, largely thanks to you, I think it worked out extremely well.....



Arnhem 101 might seem an odd choice of vehicle to conclude the photographic selection of these articles. However, it seemed appropriate to end on a positive note regarding trolleybuses. No.101 is shown in September 2009, passing through Velperplein during the 60th anniversary celebrations of the system. The poster is advertising a depot open day as part of the occasion and a trolleybus from Solingen in Germany was also brought over for the event.

Arnhem remains a progressive system and opened a substantial extension soon after this anniversary. Five new Hess Swisstrolley-4 units arrived in March 2016 with a further ten expected next year. At the time when the Nottingham system will have been closed for 50 years, it is likely that Arnhem will be extending its wiring again in the future. What have we missed? Oh that we had such a system in the UK! Arnhem 101 is now preserved and, after all, it is a BUT!

VOLUNTEERS' CORNER

David Croft

David was taken ill at home on the morning of Easter Saturday and he underwent cardiac surgery in Leeds General Infirmary a few days later. He has since been very poorly but is now making a steady recovery in hospital. Several of David's friends and colleagues from Sandtoft have been visiting him, and we all send him our very best wishes as his recovery progresses.



Congratulations, Margaret!

Regular volunteer Margaret Diment has been seen working in *The Trolleyshop* over the past year, after many years of platform duties. At the staff briefing for the May Day weekend, Margaret was presented with a specially-made cake to celebrate her birthday, and she received a card signed by everyone there on the day.

Photo: Dave Chick

DEAR 'SCENE

Dear 'Scene

Following my collecting of the Museum's 2016 tourist information leaflets in early March, I have been doing my normal exchanges of leaflets. These are often with preserved railways, either by visits, or through personal contacts. An interesting situation has arisen this year: in March one contact had been asked to be sparing with their leaflets, only giving them out individually rather than swapping larger quantities. In April two other preserved lines had not yet got their leaflets printed!

So, congratulations are due to our directors and to others involved for getting an important task done in good time - something that some of our peers may not be achieving.

Andy Thornton, Nottingham

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Dear Bruce

I just wanted to thank you and your colleagues at Sandtoft for making our recent visit such a success. What a treat it was to see the three Huddersfield trolleybuses looking so well! You could not have done more to make us welcome and I'd like to take this opportunity of wishing the Museum well in the future.

I was so inspired by the visit that I ended up bidding for a Huddersfield trolleybus model that I spotted on eBay. It cost me the princely sum of £5 and as it is in mint condition I reckon that's a very good investment that will give great pleasure as I admire it on display on my shelf! I'm certainly looking forward to a return visit.

Kind regards

Roger Dowling, Media Editor, The Old Almondburians' Society

RUNNING DAYS IN 2016

Open 11.00am - 5.00pm unless stated otherwise

<p>'Gathering Saturday Trolleyday - a preview of 'Gathering Day itself: twilight trolleybus operation, real ale beer tent <i>and featuring the launch into service of our trolleybus from New Zealand, Wellington no.82</i></p>	<p>Saturday 30 July  (Open 11.00am - 10.00pm)</p>
<p>Sandtoft Gathering 2016 with 100-plus visiting historic vehicles, transport flea market, live music, real ale beer tent and lots for the family to see and do</p>	<p>Sunday 31 July Free Bus (Open 10.00am - 6.00pm)</p>
<p>Blues and Twos Weekend & Trolleydays featuring visiting historic 999 vehicles with dramatic emergency services displays and demonstrations</p>	<p>Saturday 20 August  Sunday 21 August Free Bus</p>
<p>Late Summer Bank Holiday Weekend Trolleydays</p>	<p>Saturday 27 August  Sunday 28 August Monday 29 August Free Bus</p>
<p>European Trolleybus Day & Weekend Trolleydays celebrating modern trolleybus technology and operation</p>	<p>Saturday 17 September  Sunday 18 September</p>
<p>Weekend Trolleydays</p>	<p>Saturday 1 October  Sunday 2 October</p>
<p>Isle of Axholme Running Day and Rally</p>	<p>Sunday 16 October Free Bus</p>
<p>Twilight & After Dark Trolleyday with twilight and after-dark trolleybus operation</p>	<p>Saturday 12 November  (Open 11.00am - 7.00pm)</p>

 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) See website for details of additional journeys on 'Gathering Sunday and Isle of Axholme Running Day

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