

# Sandtoft Scene

April 2017

No. 105



NEWS & VIEWS FROM  
**The Trolleybus Museum**  
AT SANDTOFT



# Sandtoft Scene

Edition No.105

April 2017

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## Front Cover Picture

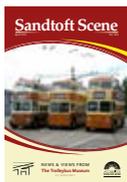
Maidstone 52, 56 and 72 lined up in Sandtoft Square on 16 June 2012. No.52 was on loan to the Museum from the East Anglia Transport Museum.

*Photo: John Zebedee*

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# Welcome

## *A message from the Editors*

Last year's operating season barely seems finished and now here's another one about to start! With it, a new chapter in the **Sandtoft Scene** saga begins: a team effort at editing. John Stainforth, the retiring editor, set a very high standard for the new team to try to match, so here we go! Thanks to John for being such a hard act to follow.

In this issue, we have a look at what has been happening at the Museum during the closed season. It is clear that a lot of people have been very busy working, even if some did get cold and a little damp in the process. New volunteers are being found, skilled, semi-skilled and looking for new challenges. For example, there is a new team looking at the fickle Dominator (South Yorkshire 2450). However, there are so many other tasks to be addressed. We still urgently need more help. So if any reader knows of someone who could help in a really worthwhile cause, please let us know.

We also feature the trolleybus systems of Wolverhampton which closed on 5 March 1967, Maidstone whose closure was on 15 April 1967, and Glasgow on 27 May 1967. All have vehicles in preservation, the latter two at our Museum. And we will be celebrating them this year: Maidstone is the theme of the Easter operating weekend; whilst Glasgow gets its turn over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend.



*A view of 72 taken in Tonbridge Road, Maidstone, from the cab of a trolleybus heading for Barming. For the full Maidstone story turn to page 11.*

The 2017 season will see several popular events returning, including a 1940s day, the 'Blues and Twos' emergency services enactment weekend, the Axholme running day and, of course, our keynote event, the Sandtoft Gathering at the end of July. Special events include a Yorkshire weekend, the East Yorkshire Thoroughbred Car Club rally, and a two-day steam meeting. Our event organisers are certainly going to be kept busy! Details of all the Museum's events can be found as usual on the back page of this magazine.

## New Members

We would like to extend a very warm welcome the following new Sandtoft members:

**Mr Paul Dicken** of Caernarfon and **Fred Priestley**, a new junior member from Doncaster.

The new production team would like to thank all the contributors to this, their first edition. We are also keen to hear from you, the readers: whether you want to share news, your photos or if you have ideas for future feature articles you would like to see in (or even write for) the magazine. You can contact us at [scene@sandtoft.org](mailto:scene@sandtoft.org) or by post at the Museum or better still, catch up with us in person at the Museum, as we open for what we hope will be another highly successful season.



## An Exciting Development

The first major development at the Museum for several years took a big step forward recently when the Board approved a scheme to construct a new building capable of housing eight trolleybuses. As members will be aware, the Museum has an acute shortage of undercover accommodation for its vehicles and several trolleybuses and buses are 'outposted' in rented storage facilities. Over the past 18 months or more, this situation has been aggravated as we had to vacate what we considered to be very convenient storage in adjacent premises and we have since been unable to find any alternative. Renting storage space has always been regarded as a short-term solution for the Museum and in more recent years, constructing our own accommodation on an expanded museum site has been the focus. Regrettably, the prospect of expanding the Museum any more than the 1.2 acres that we purchased in May 2008 took a severe knock when TA White and Sons withdrew from a long-awaited deal to sell to the BTS a large area of the field to the west of both our premises and the next-door bungalow, Burntwood. This, of course, has led both the Museum and BTS to review how best to proceed.

With the Museum having accrued sufficient funds since the 2008 land purchase to possibly build something, the Directors have considered two options for a building, both suitably insulated and fitted with doors (that operate smoothly!), capable of holding 8 trolleybuses, but of very different styles. After much debate and consideration of estimates, it has been agreed to develop the design with a firm of consulting engineers and apply for planning consent for what is the cheaper and more unconventional-looking building of the two considered. Once planning and building regulation approval has been obtained, it is planned that an order will be placed and construction should proceed at the earliest opportunity. The new depot will be located on the 2008 land, to the north of Burntwood and

adjacent to our workshop road, being accessed via the roadway we formed into the 2008 land a few years ago. The scheme will include the construction of a concrete apron in front of the building's full-width doorway to allow easy manoeuvring of towed vehicles into and out of the building.

## Vehicles

The Board has agreed in principle to kick-start a programme of vehicle restoration work. The Museum owns a number of vehicles that are part-restored or require a facelift and/or work of various sorts and degrees to get them back to operational use - or into use for the first time.

The first vehicle on the list is Reading 144: the paintwork inside and out is flaking quite badly in places and whilst 144 looks good in photographs, it is not that respectable when it comes to passenger-carrying duties. The planned Reading event next year is the catalyst for giving 144 a make-over and putting it back into service condition as so many remember it, as opposed to its special paintwork as Reading's Last Trolleybus. It is anticipated that 144 will go away to be worked on during late April.

The next vehicles to receive attention are likely to be RT3323 (which needs some mechanical attention, some bodywork, a repaint and its seats re-trimmed), Reading 113, (a BTS owned and funded trolleybus) and Nottingham 466, which requires a lot of work in the cab area as well as various tidying-up jobs before being painted and having its seats re-trimmed. No. 466 has two sponsors who have been making monthly donations for the past 13-14 years, so a very big thank you to these two generous and patient members for their ongoing support. No. 466 is a landmark vehicle in trolleybus preservation and deserves to take its place as a working trolleybus again. Is there anyone else out there who is interested in making regular donations to 466? Please contact Francis Whitehead at the Museum address, or email [fwhitehead@sandtoft.org](mailto:fwhitehead@sandtoft.org).

## Gift Aid

During December and January, two claims for significant amounts were submitted to HM Revenue & Customs for Gift Aid tax repayments, one for membership subscription payments and various donations, and the other for admission payments, the latter being made in compliance with HMRC's Gift Aid rules on admission charges and facilitated by the till system in the Reception building. Gift Aid repayments resulting from donations for specific vehicles are allocated pro-rata to those vehicles and the balance is being used to fund the restoration costs of Wellington 82. Many members of the Museum have completed a Gift Aid declaration (and those declarations continue to be valid), but there are still many, (particularly those who renew their subscriptions via a Contributing Society) for whom we don't have a declaration. So to make sure our files are complete, if you are a Museum member via the BTA, BTS or DO&LRS, and haven't completed a Gift Aid declaration for Sandtoft in the past two years, please download one from [www.sandtoft.org/giftaid](http://www.sandtoft.org/giftaid), complete it and send it to us at the Museum address. It makes your subscriptions (and donations) worth an extra 25% to us and costs you nothing!

## 2017 Trolleydays

The 2017 programme of Trolleydays and the associated marketing strategy has been designed to not only provide a variety of open days and events but also to target getting a worthwhile increase in visitor numbers. It is a mixture of tried and previously successful themed weekends and a few new events. This year, we introduce the label Trolleyday Plus for open days where we welcome in third party attractions to provide something extra for our visitors. Each Trolleyday Plus will have a dedicated TM@S event co-ordination manager to plan, liaise with the visiting attractions and promote the day(s) - all (of course) in conjunction with our normal operational managers and personnel.

Easter Saturday this year (15 April) marks the 50th anniversary of the closure of the Maidstone trolleybus system, so Maidstone will be the theme for the whole of our Easter weekend Trolleydays, with nos.56 and 72 planned to be in service.

Easter Sunday at the Museum will see the UK book launch of a new publication entitled *French Trolleybuses in France and Worldwide, 1900 - 2016* by the late Georges Muller. M. Christian Buisson, who helped write some of the chapters, will be travelling specially to TM@S from France for the occasion and will present a talk about the life, work and personality of his author friend. As a backdrop to this special occasion, it is hoped that Limoges 5 can be pressed into service and that Marseille 202 (currently out of use because of an unsolved air leak problem) will at least be posed for photographs. The BTS has been given the UK distribution rights for this new book, which will be available in the Trolleyshop, from Easter Sunday, as well as from our online shop.

## 2016 Visitor Numbers

The bottom line visitor number figures for 2016 are marginally up (by 2.2%) on 2015, but this is almost certainly because we had five private party visits on non-open days, bringing in enough additional visitors to just tip the balance: with 33 open days in 2016 (32 in 2015), visitors on open days alone were 5,078 compared to 5,490 in 2015 (i.e. 7.50% down). In 2016, visits by members (not including volunteers) accounted for 14.18% of visitors (12.90% in 2015). 1,175 visitors came to Gathering '16 with 138 at the Preview (1,040 at Gathering '15 and 187 at the 2015 Preview). 332 visitors came to the 2016 Isle of Axholme Running Day (405 in 2015).

Spend per visitor averaged £10.58 (£9.26 in 2015), with more being spent on admission (average £0.74 extra) and in the café (average £0.49 extra); there was little difference in money spent in the shop, but an average of 8p more was spent on sweets. 2016 saw admission prices increase by £1.00 for most categories (less on Gathering and Isle of Axholme Running days for concessions), and some café prices also rose in 2016, increasing the café takings by just over £2,000.

The weather clearly has a significant effect on numbers coming to the Museum and 2016 Trolleydays had more than their fair share of rain, low temperatures and wind with at least one of these features being recorded for 16 of the 33 open days - in fact it was (one day excepted) late June before we experienced good weather on a Trolleyday!

## Working Weekend 4 & 5 February 2017

The first Museum working weekend of 2017 took place on 4 & 5 February. The weather turned out to be somewhat better than it could have been - quite bright, but cold, and a handful of members braved the temperatures and got quite a few jobs done. The biggest task was to completely clear the kitchen area and the main exhibition room of the Pelham, as serious rot has become evident in the whole floor area. The indications are that the entire floor will have to come out and be replaced, and it may be that this work will not be completed before Easter, in which case the World War 1 exhibition will have to be set up in the "Skeggy" building on a temporary basis.

Other work was mainly concentrated on vehicles - see vehicle reports - although the gutter and down pipes of the "Skeggy" building were cleared of leaves and debris and the store room in the Sunbeam Cycle Shop was re-organised.

Further working party weekends are scheduled for 11 & 12 and 25 & 26 March, and most likely more help will be required during the run-up to the Easter opening to get vehicles and everything else ready, so please come along if you can and give a boost to the 'regulars'.

## Overhead Working Week

from **Graham Bilbé**

Overhead working week is now firming up as 16-21 March, and we are planning to hire in a scissor-lift, as it is so much easier and safer to work off than a traditional tower wagon, quite apart from requiring less people to operate it. Kieran Proctor has kindly volunteered (only mildly pressured!) to come along for 2 or 3 days to help and be trained up in some of the ways of the overhead. When working at 20+ feet up in the air with all those wires around you under tension, it is crucial that you work together and communicate properly as to what is intended to happen next. With practice, one develops a feel for how much tension to apply in various circumstances, and which wires need to take the extra load whilst a life-expired one is replaced. Such things can really only be learned by practical experience, and I am very grateful to Kieran for stepping up to learn the ropes (ropes?). Undoubtedly a few span wires will be in need of renewal, and a few insulators of various types: over most winters some of these get cracked by frost or just old age - bear in mind that many of our (second-hand) fittings have already been up in the air longer at Sandtoft than most systems lasted for! If all goes well with the routine stuff, we might - at last - manage to get at least part of the layby (opposite the workshop) wired up.



*Ian Metcalfe doing repairs to the overhead during June 2016's Nottingham weekend. Photo: Ian Brown.*

# Vehicle Preservation Reports

Compiled by David Hanchett with contributions from Bruce Lake, Keith Baynton, Francis Whitehead, Malcolm Coates, Graham Bilbé, Tim Stubbs, Andy Thornton, Bob Ashton, Jim Sambrooks and Ian Wilson.



Bruce Lake working on 299. Photo: Andy Thornton.

## Bournemouth 297

A number of contactor coils have had to be renewed and the last two sets were fitted over the 4-5 February working weekend. Unfortunately, this hasn't solved the problem of when the vehicle is set to drive forwards, it lurches backwards, and vice-versa! This is likely to be down to the fact that one of the line contactors doesn't close, which still needs investigation. Intriguingly, this recently happened to similar vehicle no 286 at the East Anglia Transport Museum!

## Bournemouth 299

The much loved primrose yellow of Bournemouth's municipal transport has been well represented in trolleybus preservation and rightly so. Six examples of a fleet that once numbered over a hundred electric vehicles, exist in the UK ranging from two 1935 Sunbeam MS2s (one in a later open top form), a 1950 Weymann-bodied BUT9641T and three modern-looking 1959/62 Sunbeam MF2Bs. On 13 February 2017 that number actually rose to seven, with the repatriation of the little known about no. 299 (299 LJ) following four and a half decades the other side of the Irish Sea at Castleruddery, near Dublin in the Republic of Ireland.

The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft became involved because when it was first announced that 299 was available for sale, it prompted a sequence of events: a group of TM@S members considered bringing no. 299 to the Museum, but this ambition eventually took a very different direction and led to the Bournemouth Passenger Transport Association (BPTA) selling sister trolleybus 297 (already at the Museum) to TM@S and 301 to the British Trolleybus Society, for a nominal pound each. This satisfactory conclusion for nos. 297 and 301 left 299 facing the likely prospect of being scrapped or at best reduced to a crate of parts.

Having negotiated a brighter future for 297 and 301 on behalf of a sadly shrinking BPTA, Keith Baynton's thoughts turned to no. 299 and what state this trolleybus might actually be in: it has rarely been photographed of late as it was in a dark shed, well-buried amongst other vehicles, and has been widely reported as being in a derelict state. An inspection of the trolleybus in August 2016 by Keith, along with Francis Whitehead revealed it was in a very different condition to the one alleged. It was found to be superficially very tatty, but clearly quite redeemable. It was at this point that Keith determined to do everything possible to recover 299 and commence his most challenging restoration yet. The Transport Museum Society of Ireland (TMSI) must take real credit for the fact that 299 has survived at all for almost fifty years, and, indeed, for their kind efforts assisting in its return journey to the UK.

With TM@S planning to hold a 50th anniversary event in 2019 commemorating the Bournemouth system closure, ambitions are obviously focused upon the possibility of an unexpected special guest attending and being reunited with at least two of its stable mates after almost half a decade apart. Keith does not give any promises, but let us see...

## Bournemouth 301

Now owned by the BTS, no.301 was transferred from Winkleigh, Devon, where it has resided for a few years, to the space in Reading previously occupied by Johannesburg 589, on 21 December 2016. Before that, four new tyres had been fitted to the rear wheels, but this still did not stop a leaking tyre being found during a stop at Taunton Services - quickly sorted out by a tyre firm call-out. Upon arrival in Reading, Richard Bilbé and Wayne Ball, using Richard's Land Rover, soon had no. 301 stowed in its new storage.

On 25 February, a BTS working party gave 301 a good clean, inside and out. Once accommodation is available, 301 will be moved to Sandtoft to be reunited with BTS-owned Bournemouth 99, and sister 1962 Sunbeam MF2B, no.297.



*Manoeuvring no.589 into lan's workshop: an indication of the amount of work to be carried out to the front and near-side can be seen – the rear end is worse, and the interior is totally stripped out! Photo: Richard Bilbé*

Graham Green and Richard Bilbé have spent several days working to make 589 safe and ready for its move to Dorking. Much of this work has entailed removing any loose body parts and panels that might fall off, and making sure the part-finished areas of the body were adequately secure (this required some temporary fixings being made and put in place). Graham checked the mechanical side and removed the half shafts. One problem that he identified was a turning wheel stud on the forward rear axle on the off-side, preventing the wheel from being taken off: taking the wheel assembly apart to replace the stud is a time-consuming job, but the problem had to be solved in case the wheel had to be changed en-route to Dorking. It was eventually decided to cut the offending stud off and run with nine (out of the ten) wheel nuts in place. Graham has also made a few recommendations for mechanical work while 589 is at Dorking.

Arrangements were eventually finalised for the tow to Dorking to take place on 8 November 2016, the 4-5 week delay to what was originally planned being because Ian Barrett was not ready to receive it. On 7 November, no. 589 was extracted from the storage shed and final work to prepare it for the journey undertaken - taking the tension off the booms and strapping them down. This work could not have been done sooner because of the restricted headroom in the building. The tow wagon duly arrived the next morning and with the trolleybus soon hitched up, it set off at around 9.00am for the M4, M3

## Johannesburg 589

Following on from the report in Sandtoft Scene 103 (October 2016), a large van-load of bits and pieces belonging to no.589 was sorted through, labelled, loaded up and moved from Reading to Ian Barrett's premises near Dorking on 5 October 2016. These bits included parts such as seats, windows, doors, panels and internal timber trims, all removed from 589 to enable restoration work to proceed, as well as new parts that have been fabricated in readiness for fitting as work goes on - parts such as body pillars, stress panels and mudguards.



*The extent of work done on 589 is evident in this 7 November 2016 view after it had been pulled out of its Reading storage shed. Photo: Tony Peters*

and the M25. The motorway part of the route, at a steady 45mph, was uneventful (we found we had a clear road in front of us) but once onto side roads in deepest Surrey, we encountered several low trees, one of which caused a little bit of damage to some roof-mounted gear. Nonetheless, Ian Barrett's base was reached and after a cup of tea, no. 589 was put inside to await work being able to start. The 589 Group has since had its first formal meeting with Ian, mainly to agree administration matters. Ian still needs to finish off his current restoration project, the Birmingham AEC Regent for the Transport Museum at Wythall, so it will be April before he can make a start on 589.

## **Maidstone 56**

56 has received a repaint at First South Yorkshire's Rotherham works. It was expected to return to TM@S before the end of March. Both 56 and 72 are needed for the Easter open days to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the system's closure.

## **Maidstone 72**

An earth leakage problem, thought to be in the roof area, needs urgent rectification. Renewal of the boom cable insulation is scheduled and should resolve the problem.

## **Reading 193**

Work has now started on refurbishing the trolleybase mountings, one of which failed back in 2006, primarily due to condensation causing corrosion between the two roof skins. New load-spreading plates are being fabricated for both bases and will be rather stronger than the originals which were amazingly thin for the forces they have to withstand. However, owner Graham Bilbé doesn't think the modifications will be sufficient to affect the tilt-test of old! Other work being scheduled for 193 includes an external and part-internal repaint ready for the "Reading 50 Years After" commemoration next year.

## **Rotherham 37**

Progress was made in resolving the oil leaks from both rear differentials. Two of the three seals were replaced on 8 February, and the third was stripped so that new parts could be ordered. It is planned to clean and paint the upper deck floor (i.e. the parts on the centre and offside where the original linoleum is still in place). It is then planned to submit the vehicle for its annual inspection test. Subject to this, it is hoped to get 37 back in service during 2017 and a chance once again to see it in operation.

## **South Yorkshire 2450**

2450 stopped working properly some years ago, and diagnosing the fault without the dedicated test box that we didn't inherit has proven impossible so far. However, in recent months, two volunteers with knowledge of 1980's electronic technology have come forward to help with this work. Bruce Lake has acquired an oscilloscope to assist in the process of tracking the signals through the complex electronics and this new '2450 team' is hopeful that they can solve the problem at last.

## **Teeside T291**

This vehicle is off site to be worked on: it has been re painted and it is believed it is to revert to carrying its initial fleet number at Teesside, no.11. Many window rubber inserts have been renewed and the upper deck floor has been painted (this time in the correct colour!) whilst the seats are out.

## **Walsall 864**

This trolleybus was originally sold by West Midlands PTE to the National Trolleybus Association and was subsequently purchased from them for spares, and has since been used as a store. After 46 years outside, the teak-framed body started to fall apart and become dangerous, so a decision was made to scrap the vehicle. The Black Country Living Museum Transport Group were offered anything remaining, for their sister vehicle, no.862, but as there was so little left that was of use, they were unable to take advantage. Last autumn, no.864 was reduced to just a chassis and this will be cut up in the next few weeks.



*Doncaster 94 receives attention on the back straight.  
Photo: Bob Ashton.*

## Walsall 872

Work being planned includes the final resolution of the brakes: whilst the pressure system was fully overhauled some years ago, it was then the unpressured reservoir which sprang a leak. At last, repairs are in hand, and an offer of help from our friends at Black Country Living Museum Transport Group to help set up the hydraulics is most welcome as they have far more experience with Mr. Edgley Cox's preferred high-pressure hydraulic brakes (Mr. Edgley Cox was Walsall Corporation Transport's Engineer and General Manager). All being well, 872 should have its proper launch at the end of May, at the BTS-led weekend.

## Wellington 82

Three chromed seat rails have been removed for re-chroming (under guarantee) as some of the chrome plating was flaking off. These were temporarily silver-taped to enable the trolleybus to operate last autumn. The vehicle still needs attention to its electro-pneumatic door controls: it is hoped a delivery of replacement push-buttons to operate the doors from the cab will arrive soon from our helpful enthusiast contacts in New Zealand.

## Doncaster 94

After residing in the depot for a few years awaiting some restoration, work started on 22 January. It is being carried out by a Doncaster Omnibus and Light Railway Society working group. However due to the thickening of the diesel in the fuel tank, a test trip around the Museum circuit was rather shorter than planned. The vehicle was towed into the depot and work was started to clean out the tank, pipes and filters. Some mechanical work on the vehicle's brakes was undertaken. A brake test took place on 22 February, which proved to be far more successful than the last one!

94's present body started life on Doncaster trolleybus no 393. The motor bus chassis, complete with Brush utility B35C body, was purchased from the Mexborough and Swinton Traction Co. in 1955 before the body was scrapped. The double deck Roe trolleybus body was fitted before 94 entered service. A similar bus, no 188, is owned by the South Yorkshire Transport Museum at Rotherham.

## Doncaster 112

Mike Hirst has just celebrated his 114th working session on the vehicle. Work has now turned to the platform and staircase area; beading straps, removed before DO&LRS acquired the vehicle in 1986, have been refitted. Three risers had rusted through and replacements made, their temporary absence is providing access to the area under the stairs. Consideration is being given to fitting trafficators, never carried in service but deemed necessary in modern traffic.

## London RT3323

This vehicle has been suffering with fuel problems. It recently spent some time in the workshop for this. There is more work to do on the bodywork, and it is to be painted before it can be independently inspected ready to re-enter service.

# Doncaster 375

February 2017– Bob Ashton

Work on 375 has progressed so fast that is hard for me to keep up with the camera! John Stanfield and Eric Moy have moved the restoration work forward very quickly. There have been some real challenges to overcome. Perhaps the hardest for Eric and Mike has been the removal of the nearside seats on the top deck, particularly as some of the screws that the seats are fixed to had to be replaced. It is hard to imagine just how many seat frames we have had to sort out and store so that there is room to do all the other jobs. We have had to store some seats and cushions outside the vehicle, next to David Needham's Nottingham motorbus. David was contacted about this and he is only too pleased to let us do this and thanks us for the courtesy of contacting him.

Some other recent work carried out:

🚍 All ceiling painting completed including the red metal strip

🚍 Work has started on painting the window pans after careful selection of a metallic paint from a supplier at Bentley. Front and nearside top windows completed

🚍 Offside top deck panels painted and the panels with the boarded Rexene have been replaced (including a new one for the offside). New hardboard was used

🚍 Rear panelling and destination box newly painted  
🚍 If finances were available it would have been ideal to re-chrome the ceiling air-vents. Other parts on the vehicle could benefit from some similar attention such as the two opening vents on the side of the drivers cab and the front window frames

🚍 The floor lino is in a reasonable condition but will require some inserts. Eric and Mike have brought some from stocks at the chapel at Westgate. After its fitting it is intended to repaint the floor but this will probably be one of the later jobs after the majority of the top deck restoration has been completed



Pat Ashton cleaning seats. Photo: Bob Ashton

🚍 Some of the seat cushions have been examined to see if they could be reused after a good clean. It will be a while before expenditure is available to have them recovered

🚍 Finding a match for the Rexene for the side panels, the interior of the top deck rear dome and the panel on the offside by the entrance was made possible by a trip by Eric to Sheffield. It is somewhat thicker than the original but seems to be doing a good job. At the time of writing only two more require this treatment. Five of the hardboard panels were somewhat brittle and were damaged upon removal and were replaced

Perhaps one of the most difficult areas of 375's restoration will be its mechanical and electric traction equipment problems, of which there may be plenty according to Jim Sambrooks, the Workshop Superintendent. Items like king pins are the kind of things that he has mentioned. There will be many other mechanical defects since if I recall there have been problems that have occurred over the years. For example one of the resistance banks failed when the vehicle was about to give a demonstration at the St Leger Rally Event on 5 October 2014. I have been advised of a firm that can repair and supply the parts we may require and an estimate of £300 has been given for this work.

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## Future Funding

Whilst many members have felt able to make donations towards this ongoing restoration work, there are possibly some parts of the project such as the resistance bank that may require larger expenditure than individual members can afford. Applications to funding bodies such as the Big Lottery Fund and the Transport Trust are being investigated. There is still plenty of work to be undertaken to achieve the ultimate goal of getting the trolleybus back into service at the Museum. In the meantime, whilst work on 375 with its 1955 body continues apace, I wonder how much work there would have been to do to the vehicle if it still had its original 1945 body fitted!

## Easter Sunday 16 April

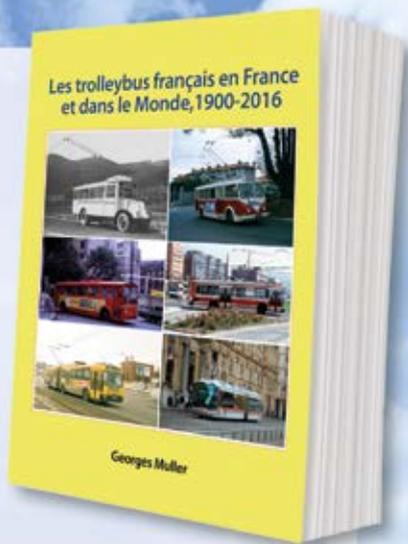
Special UK book launch event - *French Trolleybuses in France and Worldwide, 1900 - 2016* by Georges Muller. Guest speaker Christian Buisson.

Published on 14 April, which would have been the author's 75th birthday, this book will be available at a special UK launch event two days later at the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft, which has the largest collection of historic French trolleybuses outside France. Christian Buisson, who helped to write some of the chapters, will talk about the life, work and personality of his friend Georges Muller.

The A4 book has 365 pages, 853 photographs, 64 network diagrams, 68 diagrams and 102 technical diagrams. French language text.

Georges' career included the development of trolleybuses for Swiss cities as Project Engineer for Sécheron, responsibility for the modernisation of Lyon's trolleybus network (1973 - 1982) technical adviser to the District of Nancy for the construction of the trolleybus network. He next became Technical Director of SEMITAG 1982 - 1990, in charge of the construction in Grenoble of two trolleybus lines and the first tramway line. From 1990 until his retirement Georges was Project Manager for the new tramway in Strasbourg. He also worked as a technical consultant for tram and trolleybus operators around the world.

Georges survived a serious car accident in 2005 but despite his resulting major health problems persevered with work on his "great history of the trolleybuses of France", a true bible started in 1985 in collaboration with Christian Buisson. Sadly he passed away on 9 December 2016 and so didn't live to see his major work published.



## Easter Saturday, Sunday and Monday

Remembering trolleybuses in Maidstone, 50 years after the network closed.



*A view of 72 taken in Tonbridge Road from the cab of a trolleybus heading for Barming*

# Maidstone Corporation

## Trolleybuses 1928 – 1967

Personal Reflections from Eric Baldock

*All photos from Author's collection*

My first-hand knowledge of Maidstone trolleybuses is limited to the period after moving from Canterbury in 1965. It was not my first experience of trolleybuses, as I had family in Ipswich and my interest in buses was developing mainly due to my uncle, who was an Inspector for East Kent. I was now travelling from my home in Aylesford to my school in Maidstone by bus. The main journey was by Maidstone & District bus, which terminated in the Lower Stone Street Bus Station. My school was some three quarters of a mile south, up the fairly steep Upper Stone Street, which was the trolleybus route to Loose and Park Wood. In the morning I would usually catch the trolleybus up the hill to near the school, although a Leyland Titan on the Oxford Road service was also an option. In the afternoon the downhill walk was more attractive and I would only catch the bus if it was raining. Just after my arrival in Maidstone the first batch of the trolleybus replacement Leyland Atlanteans entered service, but even so I managed to clock up a considerable number of journeys on the trolleybuses.

Maidstone Corporation began tram operation in 1904 with a route between the town centre and Barming, followed by Loose in 1907 and Tovil in 1908. Motor bus operation began in 1924, but it was decided to replace the Barming trams with trolleybuses.

Tenders were invited for the supply of eight six-wheeled double-decker trolleybuses in the spring of 1927. Ransomes, Sims and Jeffries of Ipswich were the successful tenderer and



*Ransomes no.12 (KO 8543) stands at the High Street (Queen's Monument) when new in 1928. This was the stop that lost its regular service to Barming in 1930.*

they were the first of this type RSJ had built. The first of the batch was exhibited at the 1927 Commercial Motor Show and they were delivered to Maidstone in March and April 1928 and entered service 1st May 1928. Although the route was nearly two miles long only half a mile of tramway could be lifted, as it was still required for the movement of trams between the depot and the other routes.



Ex Hastings 89 (BDY 818) at Barming Fountain Inn - the pub is now an Indian Restuarant.

The lightly used Tovil tram route was converted to motor-bus operation, but the Loose route was converted to trolleybus. The last tram ran on 11 February 1930 and a through trolleybus service between Barming and Loose and a new branch along the Sutton Road started the following day. To obtain the through service the route towards Loose and Sutton Road ran via the steep and narrow Gabriel's Hill, south from the High Street (Queen's Monument), but the inward service ran via the old tram route along Mill Street.

This resulted in the main town centre stop for Barming moving to the Cannon stop. This soon provoked complaints from the residents of Barming, who had enjoyed a service from the Queen's Monument since 1904. As a result some peak hour short workings from the Queen's Monument were introduced.

TROLLEYBUS SERVICES															
MONDAY — FRIDAY															
LOOSE—PARK WOOD—BARMING															
LOOSE dep.	pm 2 26	pm 2 23	pm 2 28	pm 2 38	pm 2 50	pm 3 02	pm 3 14	pm 3 26	pm 3 38	pm 3 40	pm 3 44	pm 3 46	pm 3 49	pm 3 57	pm 3 58
PARK WOOD dep.	pm 2 27	pm 2 32	pm 2 37	pm 2 46	pm 2 52	pm 3 08	pm 3 10	pm 3 13	pm 3 16	pm 3 20	pm 3 22	pm 3 25	pm 3 28	pm 3 31	pm 3 34
Nottingham Avenue	pm 2 29	pm 2 34	pm 2 39	pm 2 43	pm 2 49	pm 3 01	pm 3 03	pm 3 09	pm 3 11	pm 3 13	pm 3 15	pm 3 17	pm 3 20	pm 3 23	pm 3 26
Grove Road	pm 2 31	pm 2 36	pm 2 41	pm 2 45	pm 2 51	pm 3 03	pm 3 05	pm 3 11	pm 3 13	pm 3 15	pm 3 17	pm 3 19	pm 3 22	pm 3 25	pm 3 28
Wheatshaf	pm 2 32	pm 2 37	pm 2 42	pm 2 46	pm 2 52	pm 3 04	pm 3 06	pm 3 12	pm 3 14	pm 3 16	pm 3 18	pm 3 20	pm 3 23	pm 3 26	pm 3 29
Bishops Way	pm 2 39	pm 2 40	pm 2 45	pm 2 51	pm 2 57	pm 3 03	pm 3 09	pm 3 15	pm 3 21	pm 3 27	pm 3 33	pm 3 39	pm 3 45	pm 3 51	pm 3 57
West Station	pm 2 40	pm 2 41	pm 2 46	pm 2 52	pm 2 58	pm 3 04	pm 3 10	pm 3 16	pm 3 22	pm 3 28	pm 3 34	pm 3 40	pm 3 46	pm 3 52	pm 3 58
Milton Street	pm 2 44	pm 2 45	pm 2 50	pm 2 56	pm 3 02	pm 3 08	pm 3 14	pm 3 20	pm 3 26	pm 3 32	pm 3 38	pm 3 44	pm 3 50	pm 3 56	pm 4 02
Depot	pm 2 47	pm 2 47	pm 2 53	pm 2 59	pm 3 05	pm 3 11	pm 3 17	pm 3 23	pm 3 29	pm 3 35	pm 3 41	pm 3 47	pm 3 53	pm 3 59	pm 4 05
Barming, Fountain arr.	pm 2 48	pm 2 54	pm 3 00	pm 3 06	pm 3 12	pm 3 18	pm 3 24	pm 3 30	pm 3 36	pm 3 42	pm 3 48	pm 3 54	pm 4 00	pm 4 06	pm 4 12
BARMING, Bull arr.	pm 2 51	pm 3 03	pm 3 03	pm 3 15	pm 3 15	pm 3 27	pm 3 27	pm 3 39	pm 3 39	pm 3 51	pm 3 51	pm 4 03	pm 4 03	pm 4 15	pm 4 15
LOOSE dep.	pm 3 50	pm 3 53	pm 4 02	pm 4 03	pm 4 12	pm 4 22	pm 4 32	pm 4 33	pm 4 42	pm 4 43	pm 4 47	pm 4 49	pm 4 52	pm 5 00	pm 5 08
PARK WOOD dep.	pm 3 57	pm 4 02	pm 4 07	pm 4 09	pm 4 17	pm 4 27	pm 4 31	pm 4 35	pm 4 37	pm 4 39	pm 4 41	pm 4 43	pm 4 45	pm 4 47	pm 4 50
Nottingham Avenue	pm 3 59	pm 4 02	pm 4 07	pm 4 09	pm 4 12	pm 4 17	pm 4 22	pm 4 27	pm 4 29	pm 4 31	pm 4 33	pm 4 35	pm 4 37	pm 4 39	pm 4 41
Grove Road	pm 3 55	pm 4 02	pm 4 07	pm 4 12	pm 4 17	pm 4 22	pm 4 27	pm 4 32	pm 4 37	pm 4 40	pm 4 42	pm 4 44	pm 4 46	pm 4 48	pm 4 50
Wheatshaf	pm 4 03	pm 4 10	pm 4 15	pm 4 15	pm 4 20	pm 4 26	pm 4 31	pm 4 36	pm 4 41	pm 4 46	pm 4 49	pm 4 51	pm 4 53	pm 4 55	pm 4 57
Bishops Way	pm 4 04	pm 4 11	pm 4 16	pm 4 21	pm 4 21	pm 4 26	pm 4 31	pm 4 36	pm 4 41	pm 4 46	pm 4 49	pm 4 51	pm 4 53	pm 4 55	pm 4 57
West Station	pm 4 08	pm 4 15	pm 4 20	pm 4 25	pm 4 25	pm 4 30	pm 4 35	pm 4 40	pm 4 45	pm 4 50	pm 4 53	pm 4 55	pm 4 57	pm 4 59	pm 5 01
Milton Street	pm 4 11	pm 4 18	pm 4 23	pm 4 28	pm 4 28	pm 4 33	pm 4 38	pm 4 43	pm 4 48	pm 4 53	pm 4 56	pm 4 58	pm 5 00	pm 5 02	pm 5 05
Depot	pm 4 12	pm 4 19	pm 4 24	pm 4 29	pm 4 29	pm 4 34	pm 4 39	pm 4 44	pm 4 49	pm 4 54	pm 4 57	pm 4 59	pm 5 01	pm 5 03	pm 5 05
Barming, Fountain arr.	pm 4 15	pm 4 22	pm 4 27	pm 4 32	pm 4 37	pm 4 42	pm 4 47	pm 4 52	pm 4 57	pm 5 02	pm 5 07	pm 5 12	pm 5 17	pm 5 22	pm 5 27
BARMING, Bull arr.	pm 4 15	pm 4 27	pm 4 27	pm 4 37	pm 4 37	pm 4 47	pm 4 47	pm 4 57	pm 4 57	pm 5 07	pm 5 07	pm 5 17	pm 5 17	pm 5 27	pm 5 27
LOOSE dep.	pm 4 50	pm 4 48	pm 5 00	pm 5 03	pm 5 10	pm 5 13	pm 5 20	pm 5 18	pm 5 30	pm 5 33	pm 5 37	pm 5 40	pm 5 43	pm 5 45	pm 5 50
PARK WOOD dep.	pm 4 52	pm 4 57	pm 5 02	pm 5 07	pm 5 12	pm 5 17	pm 5 22	pm 5 24	pm 5 27	pm 5 29	pm 5 31	pm 5 33	pm 5 35	pm 5 37	pm 5 39
Nottingham Avenue	pm 4 54	pm 4 59	pm 5 04	pm 5 09	pm 5 14	pm 5 19	pm 5 24	pm 5 27	pm 5 29	pm 5 31	pm 5 33	pm 5 35	pm 5 37	pm 5 39	pm 5 41
Grove Road	pm 4 55	pm 4 57	pm 5 02	pm 5 05	pm 5 07	pm 5 12	pm 5 15	pm 5 17	pm 5 22	pm 5 25	pm 5 27	pm 5 32	pm 5 35	pm 5 37	pm 5 42
Wheatshaf	pm 5 03	pm 5 05	pm 5 10	pm 5 13	pm 5 15	pm 5 20	pm 5 23	pm 5 25	pm 5 30	pm 5 33	pm 5 37	pm 5 40	pm 5 43	pm 5 45	pm 5 50
Bishops Way	pm 5 04	pm 5 06	pm 5 11	pm 5 14	pm 5 16	pm 5 21	pm 5 24	pm 5 26	pm 5 31	pm 5 34	pm 5 38	pm 5 41	pm 5 44	pm 5 46	pm 5 51
West Station	pm 5 08	pm 5 10	pm 5 15	pm 5 18	pm 5 20	pm 5 25	pm 5 28	pm 5 30	pm 5 35	pm 5 38	pm 5 42	pm 5 45	pm 5 48	pm 5 50	pm 5 55
Milton Street	pm 5 11	pm 5 13	pm 5 18	pm 5 21	pm 5 23	pm 5 28	pm 5 31	pm 5 33	pm 5 38	pm 5 41	pm 5 45	pm 5 48	pm 5 51	pm 5 53	pm 5 58
Depot	pm 5 12	pm 5 14	pm 5 19	pm 5 22	pm 5 24	pm 5 29	pm 5 32	pm 5 34	pm 5 39	pm 5 42	pm 5 46	pm 5 49	pm 5 52	pm 5 54	pm 5 59
Barming, Fountain arr.	pm 5 15	pm 5 25	pm 5 25	pm 5 35	pm 5 35	pm 5 45	pm 5 45	pm 5 55	pm 5 55	pm 6 05	pm 6 05	pm 6 15	pm 6 15	pm 6 25	pm 6 25
BARMING, Bull arr.	pm 5 15	pm 5 25	pm 5 25	pm 5 35	pm 5 35	pm 5 45	pm 5 45	pm 5 55	pm 5 55	pm 6 05	pm 6 05	pm 6 15	pm 6 15	pm 6 25	pm 6 25

\* To Queen's Monument

↑—This Bus departs from Queens Monument 4.08 p.m.      ↑↑—This Bus departs from Queens Monument 4.18 p.m.

A page from the final trolleybus timetable showing some of the short workings.

To resource the new mileage seven English Electric six-wheeled double-deckers were obtained.

Both batches had single pivot wheeled booms with a 15 inch gap between the two wires and to obtain reverse the booms had to be swapped over. Carbon heads were deployed during the war to reduce flashing in the blackout.

There were no major developments until two utility Sunbeams arrived in 1943, followed by 3 more in 1944 to support the ailing original fleet. Twelve more Sunbeams were delivered over 1946 and 1947 and allowed the original fleet to be withdrawn. These were to be the last new trolleybuses in the fleet and included 72 (HKR 11).

Around this time the wiring was renewed with 24 inch spacing. The long discussed extension from Barming Fountain Inn to Bull Inn commenced from 22 May 1947.



*At the entrance to the depot in Tonbridge Road after the tour with Inspector Jack Atkinson on the right. Trolleybuses had to reverse from here onto the main road behind.*

In 1949 additional wiring at the Cannon junction allowed short workings from Loose and Sutton Road to run direct. The Sutton Road terminus moved from Grove Road to Nottingham Avenue from 21 June 1954 and was further extended into the new Park Wood estate (Brishing Lane) 4 May 1959. The final extension from 18 July 1963 was to Park Wood shops. The service ran in a loop round the estate, so a short section of overhead only four years old was therefore abandoned. Both Grove Road and Nottingham Avenue were retained as turning circles.

The anti-clockwise turning circle at Loose was reversed to a more conventional layout in 1963 and a small section of ring road (Bishop's Way) opened on 13 December 1964, which moved the Barming bound stop to a very remote location by the river, which further increased the demand for the peak hour short workings.

Latterly the system relied on purchases of both vehicles and equipment from other systems that had closed. Two utility Karriers came from Llanelly in 1952, but were not used until 1954. In 1959 two BUTs from Brighton arrived, quickly followed by five Sunbeams from Hastings. The final development was



*The Southern Counties Touring Society tour on 9 April 1967 was the first appearance of 72 (HKR 11) in its decorated form. This view at Loose shows (L-R) unknown, Walter Kershaw (General Manager), Reginald Piercy (Rolling Stock Superintendent) and Leonard Harrison (Traffic Officer). This is from a commercial postcard, produced by SCTS for their members.*

the rebodging of the five original utilities with Roe bodies in 1960, and their return to service then allowed the two Llanelly ones to be withdrawn.

The system had some interesting operating features. The depot at Barming, built for trams, was very cramped and trolleybuses could not turn round and thus had to reverse into the Tonbridge Road; a fraught manoeuvre even with the traffic levels of the time.

With the introduction of carbon heads there was often a need for them to be replaced during the day in wet or icy weather. From 1949 the routes were revised so that they interworked and every vehicle would get a layover at Barming Fountain about every two hours.

The tower wagon could then sit here and change them all over in a minimum period.



*Ex Llanelly 54 (CBX 533) in the short-lived livery of the mid 1950s (mid brown relieved only by white lower deck window surrounds and black wings) at Barming Fountain Inn. This picture by PJ Snell was probably taken on the SCTS tour of 3 October 1954.*

The sequence was initially Bull – Loose – Fountain – Sutton Road – Bull, but changed in 1959 to Bull – Park Wood – Fountain – Loose – Bull; this pattern continued until the end.

Frogs were all hand operated except for the automatic one at the Wheatsheaf junction (power on for Loose, coasting for Sutton Road) and a powered one at Barming Fountain Inn.

Approval for closure came on 29 April 1964. Operations were run down after the arrival of the first batch of Leyland Atlanteans in 1965, with several trolleybuses being used for spares. The extra vehicles required some trolleybuses to be stored elsewhere, including the former Loose trams shed.

With closure looming there were enthusiast tours most weekends from February 1967. My school transport society hired trolleybus 66 for a tour over the whole system including many of the short working loops on 2 April 1967, while on 9 April number 72, decorated as the civic last trolleybus made its first appearance for a Southern Counties Touring Society farewell tour.

72 was the last trolleybus to be painted and was to be preserved by the council after closure. It ran round the system the following week, but not in service. The final day of operation was 15 April 1967 and used 9 vehicles in service.

The last public journey was so full that a motor-bus relief had to be provided. 72 worked the final journey at 23.30 from the town hall to the depot with the civic party, while it was preceded by a partially decorated 54 carrying senior transport staff. Alas I was too young to be allowed to stay out that late and had to make do with a farewell ride earlier in the day. **EB**



*872 being taken to the workshop in 2016  
Photo: Ian Brown*

## Spring Bank Holiday Weekend

This weekend's events at the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft will be presented by the British Trolleybus Society and will have a 1960s theme.

On **Saturday 27 May** Glasgow TB78 will be in service as a tribute to the city's trolleybus system, which closed exactly 50 years ago today.

On **Sunday 28 May** Walsall 872 will be re-launched and will then enter service for the first time in many years. Wellington 82 will also be in service to recreate "When 872 met 82", based on Wellington 82's operation in Walsall on 25 November 1963. We will also recreate "When 872 met 82" on **Monday 29 May**.

A group of visitors on **Saturday 27 May** will enter into the spirit of the weekend by dressing in a 1960s style. Why not join in? We encourage visitors on any of these days

to wear something or bring something which recalls the 1960s.

On **Sunday** and **Monday** Dave Hall will be in the Regal Cinema presenting a range of shows with the subjects Glasgow Trolleybuses, Walsall Trolleybuses and the histories of the British Trolleybus Society and the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft.

Supporting the 1960s theme, Bob Ashton will also be making presentations about pirate radio.

All the usual attractions will be available including the Isle Tours, prefab, cycle shop and "The Trolleybus during the First World War" exhibition in the Pelham building.



# 50 Years Since Glasgow Closed

Brian Deans takes a silent journey down Memory Lane.... starting in Yorkshire!

I first came across the phrase "*Tempus Fugit*"\* during compulsory - and, admittedly, rather boring - Latin lessons at my Glasgow secondary school. It wasn't a particularly great start to the day. But at least my journey there was made more interesting by the regular appearance of a shiny new trolleybus, TB96, humming its quiet efficient way up Craigton Road to nearby Bellahouston terminus. Fifty years on, in the words of the contemporary 'hit', it still seems like "Only Yesterday", but at least you can visit Sandtoft and live the memory by travelling on sister vehicle TB78.

**Photograph:** *Glasgow's inaugural batch of trolleybuses is illustrated by this view of TB24, one of 34 BUT 9641Ts with 70-seat MCCW bodies delivered in 1949. To speed up production, they were based on the LPTB's Q1 design and were followed by thirty Metro-Cammell bodied Daimler CTM6s of a similar outward appearance. TB24, seen in its final colour scheme, was on duty when the High Street services ended on 30 April 1966. Photo: D.J. Ramsay*

Some transport enthusiasts find it rather bizarre that anyone can find an interest in such an apparently soul-less vehicle as the trolleybus. For some reason, though, in a city once renowned throughout the world for its tramway system, I found it quite normal. My first experience of travelling on an actual trolleybus, though, was not in Scotland, but just a few miles from the present Sandtoft Museum. My father's work had taken us to live in a small mining village near Doncaster, so in 1953 we left Glasgow's St Enoch Station on the so-called Thames-Clyde Express for the five-hour steam-hauled journey south to Leeds City, ending the lengthy trip to our new home on a local stopping service from nearby Leeds Central station. As in most factories, my father worked every Saturday morning, but, looking back now, it was amazing just how many places we managed to visit in his precious free time, all on public transport, and usually by United Services' or 'Trackie' (Yorkshire Traction) buses. On occasion, we travelled by train from nearby South

Elmsall to either Leeds - with its still extensive tram system - or to Doncaster.

Doncaster was a favourite destination, and shopping and dining were sometimes accompanied by a visit to a local attraction. My own favourite was the one which involved a short trip in a smart maroon and cream four-wheeler on service 3 to HEXTHORPE. On the way, the driver had slowed the bus right down as it turned right to cross the bridge over the former LNER line linking London and Scotland. The vehicle had just navigated through the complex overhead junction with the Balby route, accompanied by the intermittent 'buzz' of the dewirement indicator as the trolley heads negotiated the 'dead' sections. At the end of the run, the trolleybus swept round a neat turning circle outside the main attraction, the local park. During the autumn, it held a series of autumn illuminations which, if not quite rivalling those in Blackpool, at least shared something in common - they were both served by electric traction! On another Saturday

afternoon, I was lifted onto my dad's shoulders for a fleeting glimpse of the occupant of an open limousine taking a VIP to the St. Leger. No mere trolleybus to the Racecourse for Sir Winston Churchill!

My local primary school was a test bed for new ideas and every year ran a coach excursion, linked to a class learning project. It was notebooks and pencils at the ready as we boarded the gleaming Everett's coach for a trip to Kingston upon Hull and the Wilberforce Museum. On approaching the City boundary, I caught sight of a 'streamlined' blue and white double-deck trolleybus on the Hessle Road - and promptly wrote down "trolleybus", the first time I'd recorded the word in my life...and it certainly wasn't to be the last! Sadly, all good things come to an end, and towards the end of 1956, my father announced that he had found a job in Glasgow, so it was back to Scotland - but without most of our furniture, which was caught up in a nationwide strike. On visiting Doncaster for a final time, I noticed that the



*Glasgow's George Square is dominated by the imposing City Chambers built in 1888. BUT-Crossley TB105, one of ninety trolleybuses delivered in 1957-8, was photographed en-route for Queen's Cross on the final day of service, 27 May 1967. Photo: Brian Deans*

trolleybus wiring on North Bridge Road, which served as a separate terminus for the Bentley route, had gone - an early warning sign that the system itself might have a rather limited life.

However, on returning to Scotland's largest city on Hogmanay 1956, it seemed that, far from being in retreat, the trolleybus was in the ascendancy. My new Glasgow primary school was located in the former Burgh of Govan, once a world leader in shipbuilding. So it was no surprise that an early trip out for the 'qualifying class' (age 11) was a visit to see a launch at a local yard, in this case, a subsidiary of the famous Belfast firm, Harland & Woolf. As the 'crocodile' of pupils snaked its way down to the slipway, passing the Glasgow Subway sheds in Broomloan Road, there was plenty of evidence of newly-erected trolleybus overhead and some freshly-painted support poles in Govan Road....progress at last, so many thought. Some of the old Standard trams - not to mention the track - were 'getting on a bit' by that time and, like so many things then, "the war" was used as the reason for their increasing state of decrepitude. As we well know now, a lack of planned consistent long-term transport investment reflected the truer reality of the situation.



**Photograph:** Alexander, then based in Stirling, bodied TG5, one of five Sunbeam F4As introduced in 1953 - Weymann of Addlestone completed the remaining fifteen. Although none survived, Sandtoft does have the only remaining Alexander-bodied trolleybus, namely 2450, SYPTE's experimental Dennis of 1985. An East Lancs-bodied BUT RETB1 single decker follows in this 1953 view. Photo: D.J. Ramsay

Anyway, when the summer holidays came along, it was always time for cheap travel, at least on Glasgow Corporation Transport's trams and trolleybuses. On weekdays during the whole month of July - but strictly only between the hours of 10am and 4pm - it was possible to travel anywhere for 1d, less than half a new penny! Incredible though it may seem today, the policy had its roots in the 'hungry 'twenties' when unemployment was high and offered poor families a 'breathing space' to enjoy the many fine parks on the outskirts of the city. One particular favourite was Hogganfield Loch, still an important bird sanctuary, which initially involved a seven-mile trip - all for one old penny - on a no.7 Standard tram. By July 1958, the same visit was made by a BUT/Crossley trolleybus like Sandtoft's TB78, working on new service 106, introduced only a couple of weeks earlier. The journey appealed to me for one very practical reason - compared with the tram, there were six more seats on the lower saloon, which my non-smoking mother preferred; so I didn't have to give up my seat if the trolleybus got too crowded! It soon became apparent why, in the days of coloured tram route boards, the service became known as the 'Yellow Peril': very few stayed on for the end-to-end journey, but there were plenty of 'two fare stagers' getting on and off - and that was at off-peak times. There was only one flaw in the 1d travel system - you had to be right on time for the journey back. The conductress was always 'in charge' and that became very clear when we set off from the terminus just before 4pm - but by the time she came round to collect our fares, it was 4.02pm and my mother had to stump up the extra 2d for the 'normal' 3d child fare. No argument!

By the end of the 'fifties, the post-war re-planning of Glasgow was well under way, and my father's workplace moved out to East



*For a short time in the autumn of 1964, TB78 appeared in this experimental 'reversed' livery, along with a few diesel buses. Public reaction was hostile - some complained they'd missed the bus as they didn't think it was a Corporation vehicle at all! On 14 November 1964, enthusiasts' tour vehicle TB78 was positioned beside TBS20 at Paisley Road Toll, the regular daytime terminus of service 108. Driver Mike Cornin, chief driving school instructor, holds the short hooked-end wooden pole used by Glasgow clippies to change manual frogs on the system. Photo: D.J. Ramsay*

Kilbride, the first New Town in Scotland and eight miles from the centre of town. So, after attending no less than three primary schools and one secondary, it was time for yet another 'fresh start'. However, it did widen my horizons as far as the Glasgow trolleybus system was concerned. One Central SMT bus route, as well as the local train service, went back into the city by way of Clarkston so, for a large part of the journey, you could keep your eye on the variety of four- and six-wheeled trolleybuses on services 105, 104 and 107. The other bus route was busier and gave you the chance to observe 101 service trolleys at Rutherglen, the 106 between Bridgeton Cross and Bellgrove, and all the busy High Street services, including, if you were lucky, the earlier single deckers TBS1-11. I had figured out the Transport Department's vehicle numbering system, with only one exception - why on earth were the vehicles which proudly carried the yellow triangular 'Sunbeam' badge numbered TG1-20 when I thought they should have been TS1-20. The answer would have to wait!

The 'cars' - as they were always called in Glasgow - went out with style on 4th September 1962 when an estimated 1/4 million people turned out to watch the Last Tram Procession. I paid my most expensive fare ever (2/6d, or 12.5 'new' pence) for a

front seat in Coronation tram 1283, but it was well worthwhile. Somehow, it seemed to signal the end of an era in the city's history as more and more people were being re-housed and long-established industries declined. By the year end, both the Govan shipyard and the North British Loco Company, which had a large works at the end of the Polmadie route, had gone. Although the newest trolleybuses were less than four years old, the Transport Convener had already cast doubt on their future, citing ever-mounting deficits and their so-called 'inflexibility'. Two services - the 103 and 104 - had gone and the policy which brought 100 new trolleybuses - including TB78 - onto the city streets in 1957/8 had already been turned on its head. And a final blow came as power costs mounted following sale of the Department's own Pinkston power station to the nationalised electricity board.

Eventually, I found an antidote to this sense of decline when I responded to a small advert in a bus magazine for a six-hour tour of the Glasgow trolleybus system. The date was Sunday 30 August 1964 and the vehicle was newly-outshopped six-wheeler TB20, one of the batch of MCCW-bodied BUT 9641T six-wheeleders which opened the system in 1949. Organised by the late Brian Longworth, the tour took in most of the extensive 43 route



*TB78 returned to Scotland on 22 April 1973 for renovation and repainting in its original livery of green cream and orange. It is seen with Scammell towing vehicle DKY462 - which had previously hauled a number of Glasgow tramcars south for preservation - on the old A74 at Beattock Summit. Photo: Les Flint*

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mile system, starting and finishing at Hampden Garage and visiting Govan garage, which was always known as LORNE SCHOOL on green and white trolleybus destination screens. TB78 had moved there after Dennistoun Depot closed in November 1960, but at the time of the tour, was under repair and overhaul at Larkfield Bus Works, following an accident - sadly, an all-too-common fate for Govan's BUT/Crossleys. Ten weeks later, a freshly-renovated TB78 was used for another enthusiasts' tour, this time to mark Glasgow's first major trolleybus wiring abandonment between Golspie Street, Linthouse and Shieldhall, used at workmen's starting and finishing times. This was due to

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construction work on permanent approach roads to the recently-opened Clyde Tunnel. TB78 had been painted in an eye-catching 'reversed' colour scheme, but the ever-conservative public didn't like change, so there was a limited time to catch it on camera.

Ending speculation about the future, a closure programme was announced in June 1965, just as I was about to leave school. Although I knew that the large London system had already gone, it still seemed a shame that a modern trolleybus system should suffer such a fate, so I expressed my concern by posting a handwritten letter to editor of The Glasgow Herald....no internet in those days! After recovering from the shock that it had even been published, I wanted to find out why the trolleys were going and then write an historical article for *Buses*, the Ian Allan monthly. And I thought I might solve the mystery of the TGs at long last! However, to my surprise, I was approached by the late Ian Cormack, secretary of the Scottish Tramway Museum Society (STMS) who offered to publish a booklet on the system. Glasgow Trolleybuses appeared in September 1966 and was an unexpected sell-out, although some dyed-in-the-wool tram enthusiasts had been initially sceptical. By then, High Street services 101 and 102 had gone, ending six-wheel operation altogether,

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*GCT's Ibrox open air bus garage on 22 October 1967. With doomed sister trolleybuses in the background, TB78 is ready to be hitched on to towing vehicle KJH900 for the 250-mile journey south for preservation. Its initial home was the former Methodist Chapel at Westgate owned by Mike Dare. When the system closed, all remaining double deckers were moved out of Hampden to avoid the annual rates demand. Although only 8-9 years old, all except TB78 were scrapped. Photo: Brian Deans*



*Pictured at its former home in the Kelvin Hall Transport Museum, TBS13 is currently being prepared for exhibition at the Riverside Museum to mark the 50th Anniversary of the end of the Glasgow system. This Burlingham-bodied BUT RETB1 was one of ten pioneering 35'-long trolleybuses which heralded extensive use of longer single-deck buses in the UK. Photo: D.J. Ramsay*

and all four remaining routes were scheduled for conversion to motorbus operation by the middle of 1967.

The lengthiest service, the 9.5 mile 106 from Bellahouston to Riddrie or Millerston, finished on the same day that the Newcastle-upon-Tyne system closed, a soaking wet Saturday 1 October 1966. Then early in March 1967 came the end of services 107 and 108 (Mount Florida-Paisley Road Toll), the latter operating the last single deck trolleybuses in the United Kingdom. When word got around that one of the special 35'-long vehicles used only on the 108 (TBS13) had been set aside for preservation at the special request of Transport Manager E.R.L. Fitzpayne, thoughts turned to saving one of the remaining double-deckers too. There was no space in the Coplawhill Museum of Transport. As regular readers of Sandtoft Scene know all too well, those were the years before its establishment, so there was great uncertainty that, even if premises were found, that they would be safe and suitable and, critically, that finance would be available to sustain a long-term project. Raising the £125 required to save one of the BUT/Crossleys from the scrapman

turned out to be the easiest part, but after inspection of the options available by Francis Whitehead, it was agreed between the STMS and Reading Transport Society that, having so recently been overhauled, TB78 would be a better long-term prospect than TB123.

Inspired by London's 'Last Tram Week' posters of 1952, I persuaded GCT to plaster TB78 and TB123 (the last of the 90 delivered) with LAST TROLLEYBUS WEEK posters, designed by the ever-helpful Tom McLeod, who was publicity officer at their Bath Street headquarters. The end came shortly after midnight on Saturday 27 May 1967 when the last 105 service trolleybus, TB65, entered Hampden Garage, followed by STMS tour vehicles TB78 and TB123. Bringing up the rear of the convoy was TBS21 which was being purchased for preservation by the National Trolleybus Association in a promotion involving S&HPinkStamps. Although displaying a specially-made screen reading SCOTLAND'S LAST TROLLEYBUS, the Transport Department's bus engineer William Maclachlan had other ideas and, on the following morning 28 May 1967, he drove TB123 - the last of the batch of 90 BUT/Crossleys - from Hampden to

Gorbals Cross in a final powered run. 69 years of electric street traction in Glasgow had come to an end. The remaining vehicles were towed for storage at Ibrox Bus Garage, prior to their disposal. Sole survivor TB78 was collected from Ibrox in October, being towed south by Tony Belton in Dennis Lancet KJH900. No motorway over Beattock or Shap then, so the journey took the old A6, up which all 90 of the BUT/Crossleys had been towed from their builder in 1957/8. Subsequently, with the new M6 motorway open, TB78 made two easier return trips home to Glasgow, firstly in 1973, towed by 1945 Scammell DKY462 for repainting in the original green, cream and orange livery and secondly behind converted Leyland Tiger towing bus CSF226 in April 1978 when it took part in the Strathclyde Transport Parade of

historic and contemporary vehicles. And in June 2009, TB78 was reunited with the Glasgow trams it replaced for a brief appearance at a 1950s Weekend held in the Crich premises of the National Tramway Museum.

Sadly, as described in an earlier issue of Sandtoft Scene, single-decker TBS21 did not survive to mark the 50th Anniversary. But at least, from this coming May, some compensation can be found at the Glasgow Riverside Museum when sister vehicle TBS13 returns to public display. After being exhibited from 1973 to 1987 at the first Glasgow Museum of Transport housed in the former Coplawhill tram works, it was put on show at Kelvin Hall Museum from its official opening in April 1988 until June 2007 when towed to the east end for temporary storage at



*TB78 is positioned under the recently-erected overhead at Sandtoft. The date 14 September 1972. Photo: Brian Deans*



*In 1978, TB78 returned to Glasgow as a participant in the well-attended Strathclyde Public Transport Parade. Captured by camera in George Square North on 15 April of that year, it was en-route for the city's first trolleybus garage at Larkfield. There, a two-day public exhibition was held, attracting a number of former driving and conducting staff. Photo: Brian Deans*

the Glasgow Vintage Vehicle Trust's Bridgeton premises. For the past six years, TBS13's home has been Glasgow Museums' Nitshill store and only available to view by appointment. Thanks to the late Brian Longworth, TBS13 is being made ready for public exhibition again and, for the first time since 1967, the public will have the chance to go on board and view the driving position and interior, albeit through a protective screen.

It will be wonderful to see both TB78 and TBS21 in May, a full half century since the Glasgow trolleybus system closed down. This year also marks a welcome retirement from paid work, but the trolleybus still very much features in my life. After helping Colin Barker with his recently-published Middleton Press book, researches continue for my own tome on

the full history of how and why it took so long for the city to adopt the trolleybus. Looks like a busy 2017 ahead for all of us. See you all at Sandtoft on 27 May. **BD**

*\*Postscript: 'Tempus Fugit' is also the nom-de-plume of a local film-maker who has published on YouTube a short film taken in 1978 during TB78's journey from Glasgow back to Sandtoft. Worth a look.*

**Editor's note:** *There is an answer to why TG1-20 were not TS1-20. TB = Trolleybus BUT, TD = Trolleybus Daimler and TG = Trolleybus Guy (who owned Sunbeam). It gets more complicated than that but your humble editors are waiting for Brian's book to explain all!*

# Remembering Wolverhampton

by Eric Challoner

Black Country Transport Group

On Sunday 5 March 1967, the Wolverhampton trolleybus system finally closed down and 2017 will see the 50th anniversary of that sad closure; an event still mourned to this day.

First seen on the streets of Wolverhampton on 29 October 1923 when an initial service opened to Wednesfield, terminating at a junction with Neachells Lane by the Dog & Partridge public house, the service proved to be an instant success and expansion followed rapidly, helped in no small way by the General Manager - Owen Silvers, who was rightly famed for his work in transforming the image of the early "Rail-less" cars into a vehicle in its own right and who would in time be regarded as the father of the modern trolleybus as we know today. Wolverhampton was only the second tramway system to convert to trolleybus (after Birmingham) and was at one point in the 1930s the largest system operating in the UK.



*Sunday 5 March 1967. 654 starts the tour, passing service trolleys 'wrong road'. (Author's Collection)*

In common with several other industrial towns, trolleybuses were loaned from south coast systems during the Second World War to help with the increased operating requirements for munitions workers, etc. during the emergency, 12 such vehicles arriving from Bournemouth for the duration. Post-war, expansion continued during the golden years of the 1950s, culminating in 21 distinct routes plus many short workings and cross-town services. Additionally, there were several peak hour specials that worked from points across the network directly into the Courtaulds factory, running some distance into the works to their own terminus loop. With the combined benefit of the three largest manufacturers on the doorstep (Guy, Sunbeam and Karrier) the system went from strength to strength, with a total of

454 trolleybuses entering service over the lifetime of a system that peaked at 49 route miles with 153 trolleybuses in service by 1960.

The first route closure came about due to the start of ring-road construction in 1961. This closed off certain roads into town, effectively suspending trolleybus operation on routes 4, 9, 11 and 32 with 21 Daimler CVG6 motorbuses hired in from Birmingham Corporation to cover the suspension of services until the resumption of trolleybus working on services 4, 9 and 11 on 22 May 1961. Although advised as a suspension of service, trolleybuses were never restored to route 32, motorbus service 46 to Warstones Estate being given an increased frequency to compensate.

Progressive closure of the system followed rapidly over the next six years as the Council strove to rid themselves (some would say with undue haste) of all vestiges of trolleybus operation and no amount of

protesting, nor the hard evidence which time and again proved the Council's claims of cost and loss making to be false, would divert them from their course. The retraction and closure of each route was comprehensively recorded for posterity by enthusiasts and researchers alike and many tours of the remaining routes were operated by the National Trolleybus Association (NTA) and other groups, using a variety of trolleybuses including preserved NTA vehicles from both Huddersfield (no.541) and Rotherham (no.44).

The final weekend was covered in some style, with two tours and attendance by both the press and television stations. That same weekend saw diesel trains to London being replaced by electric ones; the reason being given by British Rail (BR) was that



*Female trolleybus crews including Amy Davies seen in the centre of the front row. (Author's Collection)*

they were cheaper and more efficient. At the same time, Wolverhampton Council was trying to tell us that diesel engined motorbuses were cheaper and more efficient than electric propelled trolleybuses. We now know that on this occasion, BR got it right and the Corporation got it very wrong. The abandonment of the trolleybuses also left Wolverhampton with a bit of a problem with their women trolleybus drivers. At the time, women were not permitted to drive PSV vehicles but were permitted to drive trolleybuses. Unfortunately, these drivers had to return to the ranks of the conductresses. By the time the system finally closed in 1967, there was only one left, this being Amy Davies who drove her trolleybus (Sunbeam W4 no.437) with pride and total professionalism throughout that final weekend.

By the time of the final closure, sufficient amounts of wiring, overhead equipment and traction poles had been recovered from closed routes to maintain the Dudley section in good condition for many years without any outside purchase being



*402 on the Coppice Road reverser in Finchfield on 8 August 1962. (Author's Collection)*

necessary: indeed, extension of the overhead layout into nearby housing developments would have been entirely practical and Bilston depot, by then virtually surplus to requirements, could have held upwards of 40 of the withdrawn and perfectly good Roe re-bodied trolleybuses in storage - enough to re-equip routes 8,58 and 61 twice over. Some of these vehicles had bodies that had barely seen five years service and notwithstanding the swinging conditions imposed on them by the Council, the mechanics at Cleveland Road depot had fought hard to maintain them in good electrical and mechanical condition.

The trolleybus service to Dudley had viable life for a further 20 years and could have continued to operate economically for at least that period with very little cost to either the Transport Department, the ratepayer in Wolverhampton or, indeed, take-over of the system. The route was self-contained, directly connected to the depot and well clear of any town centre streets destined for 'improvement'. That the Council later came to regret their decision, cannot be doubted, however, the closure of the Transport Department and takeover of all bus operation, together with those of neighbouring Walsall, West Bromwich and Birmingham as they merged into the newly-formed West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive on 1 October 1969, effectively meant that any further recriminations from members of the general public, understandably indignant at the scandalous waste of public money, were likely to remain unanswered for all time.

We are fortunate that three trolleybuses survived the carnage to be preserved, albeit in very different circumstances.

**433** – This is based at the Black Country Living Museum and is generally in operation, though it is likely to be withdrawn at some time in the not-too-distant future for a substantial backlog of repairs and overdue maintenance to be dealt with.

**616** – This was presented to the Railway Preservation Society in 1964 following withdrawal from service. It has had several homes over the years and is now at the Wythall premises of BaMMoT, having arrived there in July 2004. Cosmetically restored, it requires a fair amount of work both structurally and electrically if it is ever to return it to full operating condition.

**654** – The last Guy trolleybus built, no.654 was donated to the NTA in September 1965 by Wolverhampton Corporation Transport and was used by its new owners to tour the remains of the network on the last day of trolleybus operation. Like no.616, this trolleybus has had several homes. Sadly, it was badly vandalised at one stage whilst in open-air storage, suffering many broken windows; it now requires a lot of work to restore it and it is in semi-open storage near Northampton. It is understood that the NTA have plans for its restoration, but it is having to wait its turn.

There is one other remarkable survivor that deserves mention - no.78: having been sold out of service on 30 August 1945, the afterlife of this hardy survivor is somewhat of a mystery. It was re-discovered many years later, lying derelict in a farmyard at Callan, near Kilkenny in Southern Ireland. A massive recovery operation was launched and it was towed on a 100-mile journey to Dublin, thence by ferry to Liverpool, with a final trip - by suspended tow - to Dudley, arriving on 10 July 1990. It is now under the care of the Black Country Living Museum and awaiting the finance for eventual restoration.

Sadly, not all preservation efforts were to bear fruit. The lack of a member of the 402 class being a good example and it is regretted by many that more serious efforts were not made to preserve such a vehicle: no.408 was a very popular trolleybus in good mechanical order and would have been a worthy candidate, completing the trio of body styles to be seen in the closing years of the system. Sadly, there were also some trolleybuses that did not quite make it to the safety of preservation. Following the closure, three trolleybuses were stored by Wolverhampton Corporation for possible preservation and display: reserved for Birmingham Science Museum, no.432 was finally scrapped in April 1971; no.446 (which worked the very last trip) suffered the same fate in September 1968. The third trolleybus, which survived somewhat longer and almost made it, was no.449: after being towed direct to Don Everall's Bilston Road yard (following failure in service on the last day), it had been transferred to Gammell's scrapyard at Dudley Fields by 1 April 1967. On 3 December 1975, it joined 433 at Bilston Street No2 depot, prior to moving into the Black Country Living Museum. In 1976-7 it was dismantled for spares, ostensibly to assist with the full restoration of 433. **EC**

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## News from Other Museums

### Black Country Living Museum

The museum still has three operational trolleybuses, Walsall 862, Bradford 735 (painted controversially in a Walsall livery) and Wolverhampton 433 although the latter has a front leaf spring away for repair, expected back any time. They have moved Wolverhampton 78, a 1931 Guy, into the workshop to assess it for further work. Funding for this immense project is being sought. It is no simple job as the nearside lower deck is completely missing.

The museum has announced plans to build a new village using buildings moved from locations around the Black Country. The plan is to use dwellings and commercial premises from the 1940s and 50s and would have a second trolleybus route going through it. Funding applications are now at an advanced stage.

### East Anglia Transport Museum

The museum has formed a working group to plan the future of its new site extension, a purchase of over 5 acres - effectively doubling the museum's size. Featured high on its requirements list is vehicle depot space. The initial plan is to prioritise trolleybus operation on the new development rather than trams.

### Beamish

Ground work has started on a major new project at Beamish, supported by a £10.9million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The centrepiece will be a reconstructed 1950s town. A trolleybus route looping from the entrance suite to the new development and back (similar to the trams) is planned. This will require the procurement of many traction poles, overhead equipment and a number of trolleybuses of course.



## Traffic Department Report

Stewart David

During the 'closed season' there is little or no activity as far as Traffic operations are concerned and as a result little to report. There are plans to train a new conductor at Easter. David Bowler is coming over from Switzerland to continue his driver training. Ian Brown is also in the process of training as a trolleybus driver. A school visit is booked for Wednesday 8 March. We have a number of private party visits already booked for 2017 season and the expanded TDE sessions for this season are almost fully booked with 27 of 28 candidate places taken. As far as volunteer recruitment is concerned I have again advertised locally via Facebook and local press, in particular for more resource for the café and site maintenance roles, we shall see what results they produce!

*Photo: John Zebedee captured Chas Allen giving Ian Brown a driving lesson on London 1348 with Chris O'Hea being the brave conductor.*



## Visits to Rallies and Running Days

Pickup in Doncaster is outside Ward Brothers Shop at Waterdale.

### Sunday 16 April – Kirkby Stephen Running Day

Depart Sandtoft 0630 and Waterdale 0700

### Sunday 14 May – Bus Running Day (Aldwarke)

Depart Sandtoft 0845 and Waterdale 0930

### Sunday 18 June – Peak Park Rally

Depart Sandtoft 0830 and Waterdale 0915

### Sunday 9 July – Heath Common Rally (Wakefield)

Depart Sandtoft 0815 and Waterdale 0900

Depart Heath Common 1630 Arrive Waterdale 1730 and Sandtoft 1815

### Sunday 23 July – South Yorkshire Transport Trust

Depart Sandtoft 0845 and Waterdale 0930

### Sunday 27 August – Sheffield Bus Running Day

Depart Sandtoft 0815 and Waterdale 0900

Depart Sheffield 1700 Arrive Waterdale 1800 and Sandtoft 1845

### Sunday 10 Sep – South Yorkshire Transport Rally (Aldwarke)

Depart Sandtoft 0845 and Waterdale 0930

Depart Aldwarke 1630 Arrive Waterdale 1700 and Sandtoft 1745

### Sunday 5 November – Lincoln Running Day

Depart Sandtoft 0745 and Waterdale 0830

Depart Lincoln 1730 Arrive Waterdale 1900 and Sandtoft 1945

# My Sandtoft Story

Patrick Wilkinson

## **When was your first visit to Sandtoft?**

I first visited Sandtoft when I was 11 in 2009. We had attempted to come once before but as is the problem with the Museum's location we got lost on the way, gave up and went to Cleethorpes instead! I remember three buses were on service that weekend; one was Maidstone 72 which for a long time was my favourite because of the registration plate, HKR 11. (Hull Kingston Rovers!) I can't remember what the other two were though I think one was red and one was blue so I assume it would have been a Huddersfield or London and a Bradford. Following this first visit my Dad and I could be found here almost every weekend for the next five years before I was finally allowed to volunteer as a conductor!

## **What sparked your interest in trolleybuses?**

The first time I'd seen or even heard of a trolleybus was when I visited the Black Country Museum on a National Coach Holiday the year before I first came to Sandtoft. What first attracted me to them there was how silent they were and how quickly they accelerated compared to other vintage buses I had ridden on.

## **Why did you decide to volunteer at the Museum?**

### **When did you start?**

I started volunteering in March 2014 as a conductor being trained by the late David Croft. Having visited the Museum very regularly for five years I quite fancied seeing what it was like on the other side! I also liked the idea of almost being in a

by-gone age doing a job that no longer exists on a mode of transport no longer seen on our streets!

## **What do you get up to at Sandtoft?**

My job is mainly chatting to the visitors and trying to give them the best day out that we can. Most have travelled a long way and many have come to look for a specific vehicle that they remember from their youth and we must do our best to

accommodate them. This is of course interspersed with drinking lots of tea and handing out the occasional ticket! The traffic department are the ambassadors of the Museum and we are the people that our visitors will remember, therefore we have to be on our best behaviour!

## **What would your advice be for anyone thinking of volunteering at Sandtoft?**

Go for it! We are always in need of volunteers in all departments. It doesn't matter if you can only spare one weekend a year or fifty, you will still be a great help!

## **What's your ambition for the future of Sandtoft?**

For the Museum to claim its rightful place as the National Trolleybus Museum! We must keep expanding our

events diary and of course our site to ensure that these 'beasts of the road' are preserved for future generations. We are competing with other museums such as Beamish and Crich as well as other activities altogether such as steam railways, theme parks and seaside resorts. We must improve our advertising and persuade people that we offer as good a day out as any of those places!



*Richard Jackson and Patrick Wilkinson pose in front of Rotherham No. 37 during the Charles H Roe centenary event weekend. Patrick passed his conductor's test on Easter Sunday, 20 April 2014. photo: John Zebedee*

## **Are you Interested in Volunteering at Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft?**

Our team of volunteers play a vital role in the Museum's development. At the moment we are actively seeking new volunteers for the café and site maintenance roles, but if you are interested in volunteering in any area do visit us at the Museum and discuss options with one of our Directors (look out for their lapel badge), or contact us by email at [trolleybusmuseum@sandtoft.org](mailto:trolleybusmuseum@sandtoft.org)





# Twilight Running Day 12 November 2016

*Richard Jackson, Mike Johnson and Ian Brown*

The 'Twilight Experience' at the Trolleybus Museum is always a popular event amongst all demographics of visitors. Our younger ones enjoy watching the unusual sight of all the bus lights going out and then relit every time the vehicle passes through a 'dead-section'. The enthusiasts are stationed on every corner searching for a unique angle for a photograph of a now rarely seen spectacle, and us drivers enjoy the challenge of keeping under the wires without street lighting and with archaic head-lamps and not forgetting the conductors trying to keep watch of the trolleyheads against a dark sky to ensure we all keep on the correct set of wires.

This year's Twilight Trolleybus event was a cool and damp affair. The morning saw some heavy rain with light showers present for the rest of the day. A quick change of plan was needed first thing when London 1348 failed the earth leakage test despite efforts to warm it up. Fortunately Huddersfield 619 was able to perform in 1348's place after passing a fitness to run examination. Joining 619 in service were Bradford 792 and Wellington 82.

The dull conditions meant that interior lights were on all day. 619 and 792 have traction supply fed lighting which is both atmospheric and practical on a day like this. 82's lights are battery fed so the afternoon saw a pit-stop change of batteries for fully charged ones. It wasn't at Formula One pace but was quick enough that 82 sat at the bus stop without delaying service runs!

As usual at this event the early part of the day was quiet for visitors but a pleasing number came later in the day given the weather. The café's hot beverages went down well as did the heaters on 792. For the crews, one thing that did brighten up the day was a tray of home baked apple strudel made from fruit picked from TM@S's own trees by Joanna Hanchett.

*Pictured above: Bradford 792 turns in Sandtoft Square with Huddersfield 619 waiting at the Regal Cinema bus stop. Photo: Ian Brown.*

# A Visit from London Transport Museum Friends

Report by David Hanchett

On 22 October 2016, some forty enthusiastic members of the London Transport Museum Friends arrived at the motorway services on the M18/ M180 junction on a very posh Epsom Coaches Setra vehicle, driven by one of their members. They did not require refreshments there because they were coming to Sandtoft! They were met at the services by Sheffield Leyland Atlantean 1357 which conveyed them to the Museum - their coach dutifully following at a discrete distance.

Our team of traffic, catering and engineering staff heartily greeted our guests and kept them very busy during their visit. Initially the party split into two groups, the first being welcomed in the Tea Trolley Café for some soup and a cold buffet with a selection of cakes. The second group headed towards Doncaster 33, to be taken on an Isle of Axholme tour, with Tony Ferris giving the commentary.

After the groups had swapped over, the entire party enjoyed an introductory talk about the trolleybus, followed by a guided tour of the depot by Patrick Wilkinson. Three trolleybuses were in operation - London 1348, Bradford 746 and Wellington 82 and a London themed display was lined up to include RT3323, Mike Hirst's fine 1956 FX3 taxicab and Bruce Lake's 'almost London' Renault RN100.



*The assembled tour party in front of London RT3323 and trolleybus 1348. Photo: Geoff Ragg*



*Somewhere "under the rainbow" the Friends set off to explore the Museum, with a line of trolleybuses waiting to provide the rides. Photo: Geoff Ragg*

Unlike many of our private group visits, our new friends were very interested in the technical details, and during the museum tour, Patrick Wilkinson and your scribe were kept very busy answering some very detailed questions. We are keen to encourage this type of interaction between transport groups, hoping that it will foster a greater understanding of what each of us does, and perhaps learning a little about how others do things! The Friends' offer to host a reciprocal visit to the London Transport Museum reserve collection depot at Acton, West London sounds very attractive and should provide a good opportunity to do exactly that.

We are seeing quite a rise in the number of private groups visiting us for their own special operating day at the Museum, and we would love to hear from groups that have not yet visited. They should contact Stewart David by email ([stewartdavid@sandtoft.org](mailto:stewartdavid@sandtoft.org)) who would be very happy to make the arrangements.



*Patrick Wilkinson tells the visitors about our longterm restoration projects, with Nottingham 367 providing a perfect illustration of the process. Photo: Geoff Ragg*

# Sandtoft Scene

celebrates its Pearl Anniversary! Happy Thirtieth!

by David Hanchett

What a coincidence! Maybe it is fitting that our publication should change editorship for this particular issue, as Sandtoft Scene no. 1 was issued in April 1987, thirty years ago. I read it cover to cover late one night when I should have been asleep as I had an important early meeting at work!

The publication was eight pages long, and included items on vehicle work undertaken, the suggestion of having a summer raffle to swell funds, a board meeting briefing, a recipe for fish risotto without the need for fresh fish, a history of Cleethorpes 54 and a junior members page.

I notice that in issue no. 4, the editor, Andrew Fieldsend, asks for someone to take over the editorship. He continued doing a splendid job of it for a long time to come!



In those early years, such publications were produced on a Gestetner-type duplicator. This involved typing directly onto a sheet of wax. The type writer keys punctured the wax, leaving a granular letter imprint behind. A piece of black tissue provided behind the wax allowed the typist to see what they had typed. If one wanted pictures or diagrams, a special 'burner' would be used to scan the picture, and electrically burn out

an image on a wax sheet. This could then be cut out and glued onto a typed wax page for printing. When the page was complete, the tissue would be removed from the back. The wax product was 'hung' onto the roller of the machine by way of special eccentrically placed holes above the page. On turning the machine's handle, the ink soaked drum rotated and some of this passed through the wax and onto paper, which was mechanically applied to the turning surface. This was a long, laborious process, and ink usually managed to get itself over things unplanned. Those early editors really did work hard!

Now we are changing again, with the final production of the magazine being taken on by a professional company, which will undertake the layout, printing and dispatch of the magazine using state-of-the-art software and digital printing techniques. What technologies will change magazines such as ours in the next thirty years? It would be fascinating to know!



A Gestetner 160 from the Gestetner collection (Netherlands)  
Photo: Roland York



# Possible Vehicle Acquisition Projects

by Graham Bilbé

## ***Two vehicle acquisition possibilities have recently risen above the surface again!***

The Board had previously agreed to investigate the possibility of a Skoda 9Tr from the world's longest trolleybus route – the amazing Simferopol-Yalta line in the Crimea (Ukraine) where many of this type were known to be still in service, despite having worked this challenging route for over thirty five years. A selection party was about to be arranged just over two years ago when the Russian 'annexation' of the Crimean peninsula took place, which subsequently has precluded any further visits, although we understand that the numbers of 9Trs still in use is, inevitably, steadily declining. More recently, an offer of assistance to acquire one from the city of Rivne, in 'Western' Ukraine (outside the Crimea the largest remaining operator of this type) has been received, including substantially-reduced or even free transport costs, prompting a timely review of this project. Opportunities to acquire one are fast running out, so if anyone would be interested in helping to fund this project, please could they contact me (By post via the museum or [grahambilbe@sandtoft.org](mailto:grahambilbe@sandtoft.org)).

The other possibility is a low-floor 2-axle vehicle from Wellington New Zealand. ("Oh, No, not another!" I hear you say!) But seriously, there is nowhere else in the world where we could acquire a right-hand drive (British style) low-floor, disabled accessible vehicle, and potentially one of the three prototypes (301/2/3) could be available when the system closes. It is intended that the longer 3-axle production-batch 'Designline' trolleybuses will be converted to alternative power sources, but the 3 smaller ones will be surplus. So, how about it? We already have some experience of arranging shipping from New Zealand, though this one is bigger and therefore more expensive by volume, BUT, to improve our disabled facilities some grant may be available to help. How would you, the members, feel about this? These are attractive, modern vehicles, with a nice bright yellow livery on the one hand, but on the other, they were prototypes so spares may be limited, and of course, they are half-a-world away... would any of you out there care to contribute, or even help manage one of these projects? I must emphasise that at this point neither of these prospects are by any means certain, or even agreed at Board level, but their likelihood to succeed will depend largely upon the level of support from the membership... over to you!

*Pictured Above: Škoda 9Tr in Rivne. Photo: Dmitriy Vasilenko, cc-licenced*

# RUNNING DAYS IN 2017

**NOTE:** Certain 2017 dates publicised before 15 December 2016 have had to be changed: please ensure you are aware of the corrected dates as shown below.

**Open 11.00am 5.00pm unless stated otherwise**

<b>Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>remembering trolleybuses in Maidstone 50 years after the network closed</i>	 Saturday 15 April	Sunday 16 April  Monday 17 April
<i>May Day Bank Holiday weekend:</i> <b>Yorkshire Weekend Trolleydays Plus</b> <i>with Trolleybuses and Buses from Yorkshire, and</i> <b>SUNDAY ONLY - LIVE MUSIC FROM ROOM 21 BIG BAND</b>		 Saturday 29 April Sunday 30 April  Monday 1 May
<b>Weekend Trolleydays</b> with, <b>SUNDAY ONLY</b> , free hourly bus service to and from Thorne North Station and Thorne 1940s event		 Saturday 13 May Sunday 14 May
<b>Spring Bank Holiday Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>Presented by the British Trolleybus Society</i>	 Saturday 27 May	Sunday 28 May  Monday 29 May
<b>1940s Trolleyday</b> with buses to & from Haxey 1940s event		 Saturday 17 June
<b>Trolleyday Plus</b> with <b>East Yorkshire Thoroughbred Car Club Rally</b>		 Sunday 18 June
<b>Worldwide Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>featuring our trolleybuses from overseas</i>		 Saturday 1 July Sunday 2 July
<b>Gathering Saturday Trolleyday</b> - a preview of Gathering Day itself with twilight trolleybus operation, BBQ & real ale beer tent		 Saturday 29 July Open 11.00am - 10.00pm
<b>Sandtoft Gathering 2017</b> <i>with visiting historic vehicles, transport flea market, live music, real ale beer tent and lots for the family to see and do</i>		 Sunday 30 July Open 10.00am - 6.00pm
<b>Trolleydays Plus - Blues &amp; Twos Weekend</b> <i>- featuring visiting historic 999 vehicles with dramatic emergency services displays and demonstrations</i>		 Saturday 19 Aug  Sunday 20 Aug
<i>Late Summer Bank Holiday weekend:</i> <b>Big City Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>- featuring trolleybuses from big cities home &amp; abroad</i>		 Saturday 26 Aug Sunday 27 Aug  Monday 28 Aug
<b>Trolleyday</b>		 Saturday 16 Sep
<b>Trolleyday Plus</b> with <b>Vintage Coach Rally</b>		 Sunday 17 Sep
<b>Weekend Trolleydays Plus</b> with <b>2Day Steam Rally</b>	 Saturday 23 Sep	Sunday 24 Sep
<b>Trolleyday Plus</b> with <b>Isle of Axholme Running Day &amp; Rally</b> presented by Doncaster Omnibus & Light Railway Society		 Sunday 15 Oct
<b>Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>and it's Hallowe'en!</i>		 Saturday 28 Oct Sunday 29 Oct
<b>Twilight &amp; After Dark Trolleyday</b> <i>with twilight and afterdark trolleybus operation</i>		 Saturday 18 Nov Open 11.00am - 6.00pm

 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).

 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). NOTE: Additional journeys will run on Sandtoft Gathering Day (Sunday, 30 July) and on the Isle of Axholme Running & Rally Day (Sunday, 15 October) visit [www.sandtoft.org](http://www.sandtoft.org) for times

**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 Sandtoft Gathering 2017 Day (30 July 2017) shown above on dark 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)