

Sandtoft Scene

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News and Views from
The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft

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Information Line: 01724 711391

Fax/ Messages: 01724 711846

Website: www.sandtoft.org

e-mail: trolleybusmuseum@sandtoft.org

Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/trolleybusmuseum

Directors:

Chairman & Engineering Director	Graham P. Bilbé	grahambilbe@sandtoft.org
Company Secretary	C. Bruce Lake	brucelake@sandtoft.org
Managing Director	Steven J. Harrison	steveharrison@sandtoft.org
Financial Director (& Development)	Francis R. Whitehead	fwhitehead@sandtoft.org
Director	Nicholas G. Broxholme	nickbroxholme@sandtoft.org
Site/ Facilities Director	Anthony G. Ferris	tonyferris@sandtoft.org
Director (& Retail Services)	Christopher N. Proctor	sales@sandtoft.org
Operations Director	Ian H. Wilson	ianwilson@sandtoft.org

Correspondence should be addressed to the Director responsible for the relevant area of operation, or to the Managing Director. As necessary, letters/ emails will be forwarded to the appropriate person. A SAE for a reply is always appreciated.

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Sandtoft Scene Editor:

John Stainforth 25 Old Kennels Lane, Winchester SO22 4JP
e-mail scene@sandtoft.org

Typesetting and Layout by John Stainforth & Francis Whitehead.

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

FRONT COVER: The Museum's latest acquisition (see page 7), Notts and Derby no.353, seen in 1951 in King Street, Nottingham *Photo: C. Carter/ Online Transport Archive (428)*

Our Vision Statement is

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

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

FROM THE EDITOR



The major news item for this issue is the acquisition by the Museum of another trolleybus - and this time it is one from a British system ! We now have no.353 of the former Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Traction Company, and it features on our front cover, pictured during its days in service there. As it is now over 60 years since that system closed, not many of our readers will have ridden on 353, but a few more may remember doing so during its second life as Bradford 770. Francis

Whitehead's article on page 7 contains more news about recent events and a summary of its history. By the time you read this, 353 may already have arrived at Sandtoft: for the latest news, remember to keep an eye on our *Facebook* page at www.facebook.com/trolleybusmuseum. And, by the way, a big "Thank you" to Dave Chick for being very proactive with keeping that page up-to-date with events and happenings.

Another significant event has been the working week in March, when the normal quietness of the closed season was interrupted and the Museum was transformed into a buzzing hive of activity, thanks to the presence of fifteen aeronautical trainees and a contingent of enthusiastic working members. Much hard work was done and plenty of visible progress was achieved, as illustrated by the photographs in the report on page 5.

On the subject of trolleybus preservation in general, a less positive piece of news (page 29) has been the demise of Glasgow TBS21 following decades of neglect. Whilst the trolleybuses at Sandtoft benefit from an environment of relative safety, this event does raise questions about what steps might be possible to secure the future of significant trolleybuses not in museums and currently in private ownership. This would, of course, have to be considered against an overall background of inadequate resources to restore all but a small proportion of them in any realistic timeframe, especially those that are derelict or incomplete.

And finally, on a very sad note, we have to report the death of one of our longest-serving volunteers, Geoff Warnes, who will be especially remembered at our Museum for creating and developing the *Sunbeam Bicycle Shop*. A tribute to Geoff appears on page 4. We have also learned of the loss of Brian Wharton, who was very much involved with the Museum in its early days and had served as a trolleybus driving instructor and examiner. Our condolences go to his family.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members:

Mr Richard Ramsden (West Wickham, Kent)

Mr Stephen Gates (Huddersfield)

Please note: The news deadline for the next *Sandtoft Scene* is 3 June 2015

OBITUARY

Geoff Warnes died on 6 March aged 79. He had been in hospital for three months suffering from pneumonia and its complications, and had returned home just a few days before he passed away.



Along with Roger Holmes and Gerald Whiteley, Geoff Warnes was one of the last surviving founder members of the Doncaster Omnibus & Light Railway Society, in which he served as Treasurer, Chairman and Vice Chairman. He was a real trolleybus enthusiast and cycled the country photographing them in colour. For DO&LRS, he organised tours of many systems including Huddersfield, Tees-side and, particularly, Doncaster, Rotherham and Mexborough & Swinton. When the latter refused a final day tour Geoff organised a Rotherham trolleybus to tour the Mexborough system. Last year he donated many of the original letters between himself and managers of trolleybus operations for our archive.

He was an early member at Sandtoft and eventually managed to combine two of his hobbies by founding the *Sunbeam Bicycle Shop* with a number of cycles from his own collection, which was greatly expanded by other people's donations and is now a major attraction at the Museum.

Geoff was an early member of the Tramway Museum at Crich too, and photographed the site as acquired: for this he was invited to the TMS fiftieth anniversary event. His interests included railways and canals and pictures of these would appear at DO&LRS meetings from time to time. Geoff's photographs, dating back to the 1950s, have appeared in a variety of publications over the years.

Geoff will be greatly missed at Sandtoft and our condolences go out to his widow Sue, daughter Rachel and son Andrew. ***Jim Sambrooks and Paul Roberts***

Bob Ashton adds: Geoff became a life-long friend when I met him in 1963 at the closure of the Doncaster trolleybus system. He had many talents including the repainting of Doncaster 375 when it was stored out in the open at Premier's bus yard in Stainforth between 1964 and 1969. He did such a good job of repainting the top-deck ceiling that his work is still to be seen today. So, when I next clean the ceiling ready for the 2015 season at Sandtoft, the memories of those earlier days will be recalled.

He joined the Sandtoft Miniature Railway group in 1999 and qualified as a driver for the electric trains. When the railway closed in 2000, Geoff was able to turn the railway shed into a very successful bicycle museum and vintage shop. For many years he always had made a good cup of tea or coffee, and also provided an excellent range of biscuits for the DO&LRS tea breaks at their monthly slide shows, including those slide shows presented by Geoff himself. Thanks Geoff, wonderful memories will always be with us.

A VERY PRODUCTIVE WEEK

The Museum always welcomes new volunteers, so in March we were delighted to host a team of newcomers in the form of 15 British Aerospace engineering apprentices undertaking community work. They were with us for five days, and despite not having any air-going vehicles or related equipment to practice on, they were kept very well-occupied and carried out extremely useful work. An encouraging number of volunteer members were also busy at the Museum during the week, and - assisted by good weather and an excellent spirit of teamwork - many tasks were completed and some big improvements achieved.

The biggest challenge for the apprentices was the realignment of the kerb line and widening of the footway adjacent to the trolleybus loading area outside the Pelham Building and *Regal* Cinema. The need for this had become apparent over several years, especially on busy open days with the congestion of people queuing and generally milling around, making it difficult for pedestrians to get through, especially those with pushchairs or mobility problems. A further



By Tuesday, the apprentices have already removed the old kerbs and cleared the area for the shelter *Photo: Bob Ashton*

issue was the unusual shape of the kerb edge, which made it difficult for rear-entrance trolleybuses to pull in close enough to the kerb to enable passengers to step directly from the footpath onto the rear platform.

Our photographs show the transformation achieved in the area during the course of the week. As part of the improvement work, the period cast iron bus shelter from Lichfield that was presented to us a few years ago is being erected at the trolleybus stop. The shelter's uprights were put in place whilst the compressor and pneumatic drill were available to cut the holes through several inches of concrete. Most of the new paving was completed during the week, with a follow-



By Saturday, the trainees have left, with the new kerb and much of the paving in place, together with part of the structure of the "new" shelter. Derby 172 became the first trolleybus to test the new alignment, which was declared to be a great improvement

Photo: Bruce Lake

on task force laying the remaining slabs before Easter. The shelter will be completed later on.

Other activities included work on two of the tractors: the starter of the Nuffield tractor was cleaned out and the International tractor had its clutch replaced and starter rebuilt. Progress was made on Douglas 52: its brake master cylinder and radiator were refitted, and its headlights and starter solenoid were rewired. A major job was also carried out on Derby 172, which had its differential removed and



Hands-on engineering experience for those apprentices assisting with tractor repairs in the workshop

Photo: Stewart David

replaced by the one recovered from Bradford 711, which was dismantled a few years ago. The rear tyres were also changed and, thanks to its “new” differential, 172 now drives much better. One of the trainees also helped with rubbing down and painting under Doncaster 375’s staircase. Other trolleybuses out of the depot and receiving attention during the week were Athens 5088 and Rotherham 37.

Some additional jobs on the Museum site were dealt with, including the relaying of uneven paving in the area of the zebra crossing near *The Tea Trolley Café* to eliminate several trip hazards. The wildflower garden area was tidied-up and two rotten trees were taken down and chopped up.

Graham Bilbé writes: I think we can fairly say that the project has been a huge success, and we appear to be well placed for this to become a regular event, so we’ll need to be lining up suitable tasks for them to do in future! We certainly accomplished a huge amount in the week: the lads worked very hard, but so did we - and we certainly knew about it afterwards !

So, a huge “Thank you” to everyone for achieving all these things, many of which involved a colossal amount of hard work ! Nick Mundy, the British Aerospace supervisor, asked me to pass on their thanks to all our volunteers who helped during the week, and during the preparation stage. Particular thanks are due to Stewart David for preparing and documenting the risk assessments and getting the whole project on track. Special credit also goes to Janet Metcalfe, Terry and Margaret Diment for keeping us supplied with teas and coffees, and to Ian Metcalfe and John Whipham, who both played a large part in the success.



Another of the apprentices at work, sanding-down the paint-work under the staircase of Doncaster 375 *Photo:Bob Ashton*



The Cohort 16 Community Project Team, photographed early in the week. By Friday their protective clothing looked an awful lot dirtier !

Photo: Stewart David

INTRODUCING NOTTS & DERBY 353

Francis Whitehead, with assistance from Dave Hall

1949-built Notts & Derby Traction Company 58-seat Weymann-bodied BUT 9611T trolleybus no.353 (NNU 234) has been purchased by the Museum from the West of England Transport Collection (WETC). The acquisition, agreed on 5 February 2015, has been underwritten by two generous TM@S members and secures a bright future for no.353.

Fitting well into our collection policy, no.353 has been on our “radar” for some while following its transfer in 2011 to the WETC at Winkleigh in north Devon where, stored undercover, it just didn’t fit in to their collection. Just before last Christmas, it appeared for sale by auction on eBay but didn’t sell; it then appeared again on eBay at the end of January with a much-reduced reserve. With two members prepared to each make a significant donation to ensure no.353 could be secured and moved to Sandtoft, a direct approach was made to Dan Shears of WETC and a price agreed so that no.353 could be withdrawn from auction.

The Notts & Derby company operated trolleybuses between 7 January 1932 and 25 April 1953, so no.353 and its 14 sister trolleybuses were owned for just under 4 years. The batch was sold to Bradford, where 353 became BCT 770 and ran until mid-1967, remaining, more or less, in original condition. Minus its English Electric EE410 traction motor (which was retained by BCT for use elsewhere in its then thriving trolleybus fleet), no.353 was purchased by the NTA and was towed to Coven (near Wolverhampton) on 16 June 1967. It was moved to Willington, Derbyshire, in May 1968 (following vandals attacking the Coven site). On 4 September 1971 it was towed back to Bradford Corporation’s Thornbury Works for an EE410 traction motor to be fitted, and following other mechanical repairs 770 was tested within the confines of Thornbury Works. On 11 September 1971, 770 was taken to a site in Weybridge, Surrey, where it remained until 25 November 1972 when it was moved to Warnham, near Crawley, Sussex. The NTA had a cull of their fleet in 1983 as they were struggling financially and no.353 was purchased by the Bournemouth Passenger Transport Association Limited (BPTA) and moved to Mallard Road depot, Bournemouth on 15 August 1983. On 29 May 1993, 353 was moved to Hangar

102 at Hurn Airport and moved again in September 1998 to Holton Heath, Poole. By 1986, and following a considerable amount of bodywork restoration, Bradford 770 had been restored back to being Notts & Derby 353 in blue and cream livery, complete with the company logo on both sides.

If anyone would now like to contribute to a ring-fenced maintenance fund for no.353, please contact Francis Whitehead (contact details on page 2). We anticipate we will need to buy a new set of tyres and do at least some seat re-upholstery work, neither of which will be cheap ! At the time of writing (late March), we were still waiting for a date for no.353 to be transferred to Sandtoft, whereupon it will be assessed with a view to getting it operational again. The acquisition has attracted a huge interest, with our *Facebook* page news item getting well over 3,000 visits and just short of 100 "likes".

We thank Dan Shears of WETC for all his help with 353 and we pass our condolences to him following the death, on 20 March 2015, of his father, Colin Shears - a pioneer bus and commercial vehicle preservationist who saved scores of massively-important historic vehicles from the scrap man, with many passed on to other owners and many now forming the renowned WETC at Winkleigh.

NEWS ROUND-UP

Publicity: The 2015 visitor leaflet has now been printed and a copy is enclosed with this *Sandtoft Scene*. You can help to spread the word about the Museum by passing this leaflet on to a friend or relative. Large quantities of the leaflet are being distributed with the help of several volunteers and by our contractor Take One Media Limited. Tony Ferris recently participated in the annual regional exchanges of tourist literature held in Thirsk and Woodhall Spa. Please contact Tony if you know of places displaying tourist leaflets that do not already have ours, then perhaps you could help by supplying some to them.

On the radio: Sometimes we benefit from free publicity, and this happened quite spontaneously on 29 January when listeners to BBC Radio Kent's Breakfast Programme were asked to nominate their favourite museum and someone messaged in to nominate us, saying that sometimes visitors could ride on one or two old Maidstone trolleybuses ! Many thanks for doing that, Jeff !

May Day Weekend: An additional attraction on Sunday 3 May will be a performance by two traditional dance groups. The Three Shires Ladies Clog Dancers and Harthill Morris Men will be dancing for two sessions starting at 2pm.

VOLUNTEERS' CORNER

The Workshop: One small (but very important) safety improvement has been the placing of notices requesting users to unlock the vehicle entrance doors when the workshop is in use. This covers any type of workshop use and is necessary to provide an easy escape route in case of an emergency. Please always unlock these doors if you are using the workshop.

If you need to book the workshop to work on a vehicle, the booking procedure is to contact me: e-mail jimsambrooks@sandtoft.org or phone 01302 320753.

Jim Sambrooks, Workshop Superintendent

SANDTOFT'S OLDEST TROLLEYBUS TO BE RESTORED

Dave Chick

The British Trolleybus Society has launched a fund for the restoration of its oldest trolleybus, Mexborough & Swinton no.34. This Garrett "O" type with Garrett bodywork is now 87 years old and has been out of service for 70 years. There are some major components missing and it has always been known that this will be a very challenging restoration project.

It is particularly apt to launch the project this year, the centenary of the opening of the Mexborough & Swinton trolleybus system. When the company later decided to replace its trams with trolleybuses an order was placed for six "O" types with Garrett of Leiston, Suffolk. No 34 was completed on 31 December 1927 and entered service in February 1928 registered WW 4688, followed by nos. 35-39, when the section of tramway between Mexborough (Montague Arms) and Denaby was converted to trolleybus operation.

No.34 was withdrawn in 1945 and became a hay store on a farm near Thorne, where it was discovered by enthusiasts in 1973. Its purchase was negotiated with the farmer and on 29 September 1974 it was towed the short distance to Sandtoft where it has remained undercover awaiting restoration.

BTS and Sandtoft member John Zebedee has kindly made a substantial donation to give the fund a good start and others have also indicated that they are keen to contribute. The BTS is appealing for practical as well as financial help. The Society is seeking to appoint a project manager, researchers, fundraisers and restorers for this long-term project.

If you would like to offer practical help please contact BTS Chairman, Dave Chick at chairman@britishtrolley.org.uk or by post at 23 Pryor Close, Purley on Thames, Berkshire RG31 6UG. The Society, which is a registered charity, will be very grateful for any donations: please send cheques made payable to the British Trolleybus Society to the BTS Treasurer, Roy Fawcett, at 57 Sutcliffe Avenue, Earley, Reading RG6 7JN.

When fully restored, no. 34 will be a great asset to the Museum and the BTS looks forward to working with the Trolleybus Museum and its members on this project.

Mexborough & Swinton 34
making a rare public
appearance at the BTS
50th Anniversary
Weekend in 2011

Photo: Dave Chick



VEHICLE REPORTS

Compiled from notes supplied by Andrew Fieldsend, Bruce Lake, Jim Sambrooks, Geoff Welburn, John Whipham, Francis Whitehead and Kieran Proctor

Cleethorpes 54: Progress over the winter months has been confined to the fabrication of a new wooden battery box. The battery is mounted on the nearside cab floor and mainly provides power for bells and emergency lighting. Traction lighting is used in the saloons and there is no off-wire manoeuvring capability. In readiness for reinstallation of the polished wooden finishers in both decks, stocks of increasingly rare raised-head brass screws are being built up.

Nottingham 367: The light fittings have been found, ready for restoration; further woodwork has been measured up and the window glass that was in storage has been sorted out. Brackets have been made and other fittings cleaned, with some interior beadings restored and re-varnished. New glass will be required for the lower deck half-drop windows, and the frames have now been measured-up. The next job to understand is the rear dome inside: a new horizontal dome stretcher will have to be made and fitted, and the rear bulkhead panels are still to be completed.



Above: A trial fitting of the refurbished cab door

Left: The cab interior of 367 is now taking shape, with the driver's seat located in position

Photos: Andy Thornton

Wellington 82, undergoing restoration at First South Yorkshire in Rotherham, is making good progress. The wheels are now painted (cream), the seats have all been removed and one has been sent away for suitable replacement covering to be sourced and the ceiling panels have been refitted. Work on the roof is now virtually completed: this included skilful repair of the shaped side destination box panel, fitting the replacement roof-vents, repairing/ fixing an old one and fabricating and fitting a new roof "hoop" that protects the roof panels from wayward booms and holds the boom hooks (which also had to be fabricated).



Wellington 82 in the Rotherham workshops of First South Yorkshire, with its nearside panels removed to repair the underlying framework. Hydraulic lifts have been put in place in preparation for removing the traction motor

Here's how the professionals do it ! The lifts make easier work of jobs requiring access to the chassis

Photos: Bruce Lake



Bradford 558: rewiring is proving a lengthy task: damaged cable in the saloon lighting circuits has been replaced and the cab rewiring is currently still in progress. The upstairs and downstairs cleaner's light switches located on the rear platform are now working correctly as are all the interior lights. Rear flasher lights have been introduced. New wiring has been added for these circuits and has been run within the coving of the downstairs ceiling. All the bell circuits are

now working after rewiring all the bell pushes and replacing the bell solenoid using one from a 1936 Liverpool tram ! All the seat frames required welding work and replacement of all the seat brackets, and this has now been completed.



During a December morning Geoff Welburn continues work on the rewiring of Bradford 558

Photo: Stewart David



After repairs to the roof, Doncaster 33 undergoes further preparation of the paintwork *Photo: Alex Proctor*

Doncaster 33 has received the new wooden inserts for the frame which now allows the roof re-sealing work to recommence. These had to be made from scratch and by hand, and our thanks go out to one of our members who was more than up to the job! All the roof straps have been removed, re-sealed and refitted. One wooden roof stick has had to be partially replaced in

the process and most of the crazed paint scraped off the roof. New panels have also arrived to replace the bent, filled and corroded ones currently dotted around the vehicle and these will be fitted before 33 gets its new coat of "purple stripe". Replacement front wheel hub covers have been fitted, as the previous ones had been damaged prior to the vehicle passing to DO&LRS and were in desperate need of reconditioning.

Doncaster 112 has received regular attention from Mike Hirst and, until his recent illness, from John Boddy. In order to inspect the brakes the front wheels were recently removed. This unfortunately highlighted problems with several of the wheel studs, all of which were removed from the hubs and replaced with "new" ones from the DO&LRS stores. The fuel lift pump was also removed and has been reconditioned and 112's engine started briefly. Thanks to a generous donation by its supplier, 112 now has a supply of new roofing insulation to fit between the inner and outer skins of the upper deck ceiling. The offside front brake servo unit has become badly corroded: does anybody have a brake servo for a 1949 Daimler CVD6 ?

Douglas 52's engine has been refitted following its "stitching" and renewal of the flywheel seals and bearings. New inspection plates have been made and fitted, and the fuel pump and injectors have been serviced and refitted. When the fuel filter was opened up it was found to be full of unpleasant "gunge" which found its way all over Mike Hirst's hands. The filter cloth was washed and scrubbed clean ready for refitting.

Bradford 846: Following the death in 2013 of Joseph Yeomans, his executors have recently confirmed that the ownership of Bradford 846 should pass to the Museum, and this has now happened.

PERSONAL NOTES

Many congratulations to Tony and Gill Ferris on the occasion of their Golden Wedding Anniversary: somehow they managed to escape from Sandtoft for a few days to celebrate. And our best wishes for a good recovery go to John Boddy, who has been in hospital recently.

DONCASTER 375: ANOTHER YEAR OF PROGRESS

Bob Ashton

We are now well into 2015 and the restoration work on Doncaster 375 continues to bring the vehicle back to its former glory, with this year marking several anniversaries in 375's own history. First, the vehicle was new to Doncaster in 1945, some 70 years ago. It was re-bodied in 1955, which is 60 years ago, and last ran in Doncaster in 1963. Then, 50 years ago in 1965, work had started on the restoration of the vehicle in the open yard at Premier's bus depot in Stainforth. In 1971 the then Doncaster Corporation Transport Department repainted 375 and did some restoration in their workshops for the "Impel" event in Doncaster that year. Here we are in 2015, seeing 375 into its third combined restoration and repaint.

Sadly, after operating under the overhead wires at Sandtoft and carrying visitors at the Museum from 1972, it was withdrawn from service due to a list of mechanical faults in 1989/ 90. After this it languished in the depot with only occasional appearances on display for some event.

I think it was at the 2012 St Leger event when Aiden and Kieran Proctor made a start on some restoration work. On seeing this happening, I joined in with other DO&LRS members with sleeves rolled up and started helping.

As you may have read in *Sandtoft Scene*, work started in 2012 with great earnest to thoroughly clean the upstairs ceiling, strip off the outside paintwork and refurbish the motor. Then we started on stripping the lower deck for repainting of the ceiling and applying a new floor covering.

I am now putting pen to paper

(well, sort of !) to describe what has happened over the last twelve months. With some of the outside having received a coat of gloss paint, Jim Sambrooks turned his attention to sorting out some of the mechanical work, with the brakes receiving attention in March 2014. Another milestone was achieved last April when Len Smith and Bruce Lake re-connected the refurbished traction motor.

On 25 April last, 375 was moved just outside the workshop entrance and the trolley booms made contact with the live wires on the depot road, Initially no power got through to the electrical equipment, but after some diagnosis, it turned out to be one of the main fuses that had previously failed. As soon as this was



Before the latest restoration began: 375 on display at the 2012 Gathering
Photo: Bob Ashton



Left: 375's first test run in April 2014, when only the upper deck had been repainted outside
Right: Most of the exterior now painted in time for the C H Roe event in May 2014



DONCASTER 375's RESTORATION CONTINUES

Photos: Bob Ashton



Above: Contrasting with its appearance two years previously, 375 on display at the 'Gathering in July 2014, flanked by Glasgow TB8 and Doncaster 94
Below: A snowy day in January 2015



Above: 375 on a demonstration run during the St Leger Event in October 2014

Below: The first four seat frames have received a coat of gloss paint (November 2014)



replaced, the compressor burst into life and, after Ian Metcalfe located the drain valve on the compressor tank, the air pressure soon started to build up. When the “flag” indicated that the air pressure had built up, the first notch was applied and this moved the vehicle forward to the trailing frog to connect to the main line.

Away 375 went and made some test circuits. As soon as Bruce Lake had declared things satisfactory, I was permitted to ride on the vehicle with power being taken from the overhead lines. For me this was the moment I had waited about 25 years for ! And 375 glided around the circuit with Bruce at the wheel, just as it had done when I used to drive the vehicle in service at the Museum.

Work continued into May applying the final coats of paint to the exterior. On Sunday of the May Day weekend, 375 emerged from the depot and made several demonstration runs without passengers, but alas the resistance bank failed. Graham Bilbé undertook some temporary repair work enabling 375 to make another appearance on the Monday. So 375 was slowly starting to re-emerge from its hibernation. Then, it returned into the depot for further work on the interior in readiness for the Spring Bank Holiday Weekend, which featured vehicles with bodywork by Charles H Roe.

The number of members working on 375 was now much reduced, as work on the other DO&LRS vehicles got underway on motorbuses 22, 33 and 112. So that left basically myself able to continue the interior restoration. By October and with the hours of daylight reducing, we were now nearing the end of the running season. On 5 October, the last of the St Leger Rally events took place, for which 375 made another demonstration run for the visitors and the photographers.

The weather during the summer of 2014 had been basically warm and sunny, as was the autumn that had made working conditions on 375 pleasant. However, it was all change as November approached, with some very mild days then some

colder spells, making it difficult at times to carry out the repainting of the metal strip above the lower deck windows and the seat frames. Warmer clothing was needed in January, as for the second time snowfall covered the region briefly. This was in total contrast to 2014 when only briefly were a few snowflakes seen. During February work continued every Wednesday, bringing about the completion of the seat frames.

I have now started on the staircase and the interior of the rear platform. This will be quite a challenge, as I have to confess that it is some 50 years since I helped to repaint 375 in 1965 and my agility now is not as it was then.



New paintwork in the staircase area, and a contrast between old and new shades of red

Photo: Bob Ashton

Other work has to be undertaken before the vehicle can re-enter service at the Museum. Jim has identified a list of mechanical jobs and there is also much electrical work to be carried out, including permanent repairs to the resistance bank. The interior work remaining includes new floor lino, replacement of the rexine on the interior panels and possible re-upholstering of the lower-deck seats. Whilst the exterior currently looks quite presentable, consideration is being given to a further coat of paint to the lower and upper deck panels before applying any transfers or doing the lining-out. Meanwhile, Kieran Proctor has been busy behind the scenes procuring parts and equipment, the latest being lino floor covering.

So, although much remains to be done, 375 is now in a far better state than it was a few years ago, as are many of the other DO&LRS vehicles that have been receiving attention. I look forward to being able to continue to give John plenty more updates on the developments for *Sandtoft Scene*, and look forward most of all to sending the report and photographs of 375's re-entry into service for the public. Thank you to the DO&LRS team and to the other members of the Museum for all their help so far !

ROTHERHAM 73 RESTORATION UPDATE

Tim Stubbs

Steady progress continues with the rebuild and restoration of Rotherham 73, which was last reported in *Sandtoft Scene* no.93 and was the subject of Richard Jackson's "Two days with the Rotherham 73 team" in 'Scene no.94.

This mammoth piece of work has now well exceeded its target timescale and when occasionally asked "when will 73 be ready for service ?" the answer now is "when it is finished !" As previously reported, the vehicle has now successfully operated under battery power, a temporary pack of six 12-volt starter batteries being installed to carry this out. During the test, the correct wiring of the various circuits was verified, and all the power notches and resistance connections were proven. Further testing will, of course, take place once there is an opportunity to place 73 "under the wires" and at that stage the weak field circuits, shunt field and electric braking will be tested. All this is very necessary as everything electrical and most things mechanical have been sourced from scratch, rebuilt as

needed and installed in the vehicle. In effect, this is the equivalent of building a new trolleybus as, at the outset, the shell contained no cabling, traction motor, drive shafts, differentials, half-shafts, contactors, control gear, resistances, trolley gear or circuit breakers when the project started !



Further progress on the timber framework of the driver's cab

Photo: Tim Stubbs

The windscreen frame
now in place

Photo: Tim Stubbs

Some maintenance attention has already proved to be needed. Both the driver's air brake valve and the steering box have developed leaks and these items are currently removed from the vehicle for attention.



The air brake valve is an early design with metal-to-metal faces and is the subject of some specialist attention. The steering box requires a particular size of oil seal and as this is not in stock, even at Halfords, a new one has had to be ordered. Both these items will be restored to their proper positions before the cab front is assembled as the task will be easier before the panels are installed. In the meantime there has been some progress with the timber cab body framing, the windscreen surround and the cab floor.

Other work underway at present is to make some progress with the saloon floor. This is linoleum-covered and good progress has been made with ironing out irregularities in the boarding and installing the floor covering. 34 three-metre lengths of anti-slip tread strips have been purchased and these are now being cut to the correct lengths, drilled for fixing screws, the holes countersunk and the strips painted before being installed. This task is easier said than done, over 140

individual pieces being needed, with over 1000 fixing holes in all.



Drilling the holes for the
floor treads

Photo: courtesy Tim Stubbs

BRADFORD 758

In November 2013 Bradford 758 left Sandtoft for restoration at Keighley Bus Museum, and last year the BTA launched an appeal to raise £35,000 towards the project. Serious work began last July and - as seen from these pictures - a great deal has already been achieved, but more funds are badly needed to keep the project going. The main efforts to date have concentrated on



Above: With all the front panelling removed, a new nearside corner piece has been fitted to replace the old rotten one

Left: The cab interior stripped of electrical fittings, revealing much of the original brown paintwork

Below: After completion of repairs to the front framework and wheel arches, the body panels have now been replaced and touched-up with Bradford blue

All photos: courtesy Gary Wilkinson



758's front end and cab area, with much corroded metal being repaired and rotten timber replaced. The destination boxes have been refurbished and refitted, and inside the cab all the electrical equipment and the cab floor were taken out. The cab interior has now been painted with undercoat and brown gloss, the floor frame repaired and refitted using its original wooden planks and the floor has





since received its final coat of gloss. 758's cab has a door on each side and these were removed, together with their frames. The latch mechanisms were badly corroded and repairs required complete dismantling and reassembly of the door components. These are now back in place. Substantial electrical work is also in progress and the old traction cabling has been removed from the chassis. The

Above: 758's cab with the floor temporarily removed

Right: The interior of the driver's cab freshly repainted in brown. The sliding cab door is back in place following its overhaul

Below: A start has been made on the interior of the lower saloon. Panels and seats have been removed, and this view shows the bulkhead area ready for the panels to be refitted after priming



contactor cabinet has been refurbished and new cables from the contactors to the resistance banks are now in place ready for connection. Both the cabinet and contactor panel have been refitted, together with some of the instruments and the cab heater. Much more work remains, and if you would like to support this project, please contact Gary Wilkinson g.d.wilkinson@btinternet.com

A NEW WEB EXPERIENCE

The Museum's website at www.sandtoft.org has recently gone through a major upgrade, and you can now see the results online. We are very conscious of the fact that our presence on the internet makes us visible to a vast community of potential visitors, and that we need to make the most of this opportunity to attract them. The previous version had been in place for many years and served us well, but it was looking somewhat dated and due for an overhaul.

We were delighted to accept an offer from BTS member Peter Short, a long-time sponsor of South Shields 204, who had agreed to implement the new site for us on a voluntary basis. Peter is an experienced professional in this area, and has already worked on improving the BTS website, most recently with setting up the Society's very successful online membership system. The Museum's new website has been a major piece of work done in stages over the past year, whilst the experimental version steadily took shape before finally "going live".

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft. The header features the museum's logo and a search bar. A navigation menu includes links for Home, Museum, Events, Vehicles, About, Related Links, News, Contact, Shop, and Members. The main content area is titled "The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft" and includes a welcome message, a description of the museum's collection, and information about event days. There are two photographs: one of a vintage trolleybus and another of a modern trolleybus. A sidebar on the right promotes a "Super Day Out" event, an events calendar, and a donation button. The footer contains copyright information and the CMS producer's name.

The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft

Home to the World's Largest Collection of Preserved Trolleybuses

Welcome to the Trolleybus Museum's new web site! We hope you will enjoy our new, more informative site.

Located between [Doncaster and Sounthorpe](#), The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft houses the world's largest collection of [historic trolleybuses](#), together with a number of other vehicles including period motor buses.

The Museum offers a fascinating day out for all the family. We are open to the public on specific [event days](#), generally between Easter and November, when visitors can ride on a selection of our trolleybus under the specially-erected overhead. We also operate a free conducted tour in one of a number of our vintage motor buses. Many of our trolleybuses and buses are on display and a conducted tour of these is normally available.

There are [a number of other attractions](#) including our 5-rated cafe, children's play area, 1950s / 1960s shop displays, presentations in our cinema, a 1950s Prefab home and a cycle and lawnmower shop display. The theme of our special exhibition in the Pelham Building is "[Trolleybuses during the First World War](#)". Many event days also feature themes and additional visiting attractions.

Parking
Ample free parking for visitors' cars and coaches is available.

Disabled Access
Disabled parking spaces are provided and much of the Museum (including toilet facilities) is accessible to people with disabilities, but there may be wheelchair access problems in certain areas. People with mobility problems may have difficulty boarding our historic vehicles but we will assist wherever possible.

A Super Day Out!
Come and visit us!
The museum is open to the public on Event Days only. Please have a look at our [Events Calendar](#)

or think about arranging a [private or group visit!](#)

The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft is a Registered Charity (No. 514382) run [entirely by volunteers](#). You can help us by joining or making a donation!

Donate
MasterCard Visa VISA

Like 972 people like this. Sign Up to see what your friends like.

ACCREDITED MUSEUM

Copyright 2015 - The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft CMS Produced by Peter Short

There are many aspects to the creation of a high-quality website. First, it needs to contain the information that people need. Secondly, users should find it easy to locate that information, which means having a well thought-out structure and a set of links, tabs and pointers to assist with navigation. Next is the "look and feel" aspect, which includes things like the layout, fonts and colours used in the pages, and how the text, photographs and illustrations are presented on the screen. Finally there is the underlying technology used to interface with the software on your PC or mobile device, including a variety of internet browsers This

technology needs to be sufficiently versatile to make a large and complex website easy to build, organise and keep up-to-date in the future, and to achieve this Peter chose the Exponent Content Management System as the basis for his implementation work.

Some additional technical challenges have been the creation of a password-protected Members' Area and an interface to the online *Trolleyshop*, with its ordering and payment system. It was also important to take account of how our web pages will appear on a wide variety of display devices, ranging from mobile phones to desktop PCs, tablets and laptops. A great deal of thought - including plenty of "trial-and-error" experimentation - went into organising and arranging the information pages and grouping them in as logical a way as possible under a row of tabs such as "Events", "Vehicles" and "Shop". Whilst much of the original content of the old website has been preserved, quite a lot of it has been updated and new material added. And we hope we have made it easier to get to some of those things that were previously there but difficult to find.

Overall, there is a massive amount of information now on the website. Some of it is of an "introductory" nature, aimed at the first-time visitor, whilst for those interested in more detail, the "Vehicles" section contains a brief summary of every vehicle currently kept at the Museum. A rough count of all the web pages gives an idea of the scale: about 70 pages covering the Museum and its facilities, supplemented by around 80 vehicle pages (one for each exhibit) and 12 attraction pages (one for each attraction inside the Museum), all accompanied by a very adequate - and much more complete - set of photographs.

The Members' Area has also changed, providing a password-protected part of the website with information reserved for members. At the moment this contains the latest *Sandtoft Scene*, together with the past eleven issues, and over time it will be populated with more material limited to members only. All members who received a copy of 'Scene no.96 should have found a slip inside with the login and password, and we will try to include this information for new joiners when they receive their first magazine. If for any reason you have missed out, please contact Aiden Proctor - webmaster@sandtoft.org.

With the new website established and a few initial glitches ironed out, Peter's work is complete and further changes are now "business as usual", being taken care of by Aiden and Bruce Lake. Please take a look ! If you discover something that doesn't work or if you can provide more details where they are still missing (about any of the vehicles, for example), then don't hesitate to let Bruce know - brucelake@sandtoft.org. With something like this there is always more that we could do and we still need to continue with making updates and additions. Also, due to the sheer number of them, we were not able to test all the possible mobile devices, so if you see a problem then please let us know.

Finally our thanks go to Peter Short for his sustained efforts with this project and for being very responsive to suggestions. Thanks also to Aiden, Bruce and Francis Whitehead for their contributions, and to those who helped by reviewing the new website before it went live in early March.



THE ROUTE TO SANDTOFT

BLACK ROD KNOCKS ON THE DOORS - OF SANDTOFT !

“Black Rod”

PART 12: Plumtree – the “Golden Days”?

It was July 1965 and the Nottingham Trolleybus Group (NTG) had survived a break-up from the National Trolleybus Association (NTA). Plumtree now had four vehicles stored on site: Nottingham 466 and 493, Manchester 1250 and Barton 816 - a Leyland TD4 motorbus that had been purchased by the Chairman in a somewhat “cloak and dagger” fashion. It was ostensibly bought for use as a towing vehicle but no moves appeared to be made for suitable modifications to take place. The site had been rented from British Railways at a cost of £1 per week. This was, of course, the rate for one vehicle but if there was a rent increase – well, we would handle that when it happened. The NTG ran by decisions made by a committee and recorded in the official minute book(s) – currently, sadly, mislaid or lost.

Your scribe had resumed being secretary earlier in the year after taking a “back seat” whilst working for prolonged periods away from home. No.493, the latest arrival at Plumtree, had been purchased outright by yours truly. However, I must stress that the purchase was made as secretary of the Nottingham Trolleybus Group and I could not therefore regard the vehicle as a personal purchase. I was, at the time, accused of financing 493 because it was my “favourite” trolleybus of the type (well, we all have them !). For the few of you old enough to remember or were told this at the time, I now assure you that - unfortunately for me - this was not the case. My personal favourite of Nottingham series 483-495 (BUT 9611T/Roe) was 495, following a “spirited” run down Mansfield Road one quiet evening.

The NTG had also been interested in saving Nottingham 460: one of the last two Roe-bodied utility trolleybuses in the UK. Since it was known that the NTA was going to bid for the vehicle, it had been decided (in an uncharacteristic NTG fashion) to restrict our offer to one trolleybus, namely 493. It must be said that following the NTG’s successful offer for 493, we really did expect to read that 460 was going to be happily towed away to an NTA site. It remained parked in the Manvers Street Yard of Nottingham City Transport (NCT) whilst the 2-axle fleet was removed to various scrap merchants. By mid-August, only three remained: 460, 461 and post-war Karrier/ Roe 481. Consequently we felt certain that 460 would survive. Sadly, on 18 August 1965 a Nottingham scrap merchant arrived and towed the trio to a yard in Dunkirk, Nottingham. It was dismantled in September. I was informed at the time that the NTA offer had been considered “derisory”. Only when David Bowler’s excellent publication *Nottingham Trolleybuses* was published did I read that the offer had been £10. Knowing that the asking price was at least £50, did the NTA really think that their offer would be acceptable ? If they had not bid, it is highly likely that the NTG would have “stumped up” £50 that might have secured a future for the vehicle. Since the NTA had been fortunate enough to have had vehicles “presented” to them (e.g. Huddersfield 541 and Wolverhampton 616) were they sufficiently arrogant to

believe that £10 would be acceptable to NCT when they knew the likely acceptable cost ? Although 460 had been listed as a preferred preservation candidate in the report by Mr Richard Cromwell, many NTG members believed that this was merely another ploy by the NTA to thwart progress at Plumtree. Steve Collins rightly stated in his article that from an NTG perspective “the legacy of all this was a distrust and dislike of the NTA which lasted for many years”. I wonder why ?! Again, I would ask that if there are any members of the NTA who can shed light or clarify exactly the reasoning, please respond via the editor. I would really appreciate knowing the rationale behind the NTA bid. Personally, perhaps surprisingly, I do not hold the NTA *wholly* responsible for the destruction of 460 for reasons that will subsequently be revealed.



Nottingham 518 became a strong candidate for preservation by the NTG. Photographed in Carlton Road on 30 September 1965 from the top of tower wagon 802 (now at Sandtoft), 518 is travelling outbound on service 39, on the last day that this route was electrically operated. 518 was stored a few days later – probably due to NTG interest indicated during an interview between your author and the NCT general manager, Mr John Wake. It returned to service in May 1966 and lasted until system closure on 30 June 1966

Photo: “Black Rod”

However, despite the demise of 460, August 1965 was not to be altogether a bad month for the NTG. I had been asked to collect some documentation pertaining to 493 from Parliament Street Depot. A chance meeting was with Mr Wake. This was the first time that I had spoken to him without a specific objective to be discussed and we were able to talk informally at some length. He asked about NTG objectives, particularly for the future following the NTA debacle. I was able to inform him that it had long been the NTG’s desire to save a 9641T. Trolleybus 518 was the final Nottingham trolleybus to be treated to a full overhaul and repaint, although 521 had received a “lighter” overhaul some weeks later. A phone call to relevant staff revealed that 518 was, indeed, considered to be in the best condition of the declining trolleybus fleet. It would be a complete lie to state that a promise for 518 to be “donated” was made. However, there was a definite

inference that this might be considered. Additionally, some discussion did take place regarding Nottingham's "last trolleybus celebrations". Steve mentioned that "The Teacher", in his appeal for 578, had mentioned that 493 might be considered as a participant during the closure. Steve dismissed this as "tripe", but this is not so - it just might have happened. Again, I cannot state that any definitive assurance was made, but it was certainly to be considered. The conversation with Mr Wake was, of course, reported back to the Chairman, NTG committee and duly recorded in the minute book.

Ashton 80 was still being funded jointly between Howard Piltz, secretary of the Omnibus Select Society (OSS), and myself. Hopes had been high when the OSS had saved 80 that a diesel generator trailer might be acquired and shared with a preserved Huddersfield trolleybus. Unfortunately, this scheme did not materialise. However, 80 was moved to an engineer's back yard in Denton, Manchester, but again, this was not a satisfactory site. It was therefore decided that 80 should come to Plumtree. An abortive tow was made with a Land Rover that ended up with an extra £13 bill when the tow failed at Knutsford Services on the M6. The trolleybus had to be retrieved by a more conventional towing lorry and returned to Manchester. Howard claimed in a subsequent Newsletter that he believed that 80 was the first trolleybus to use a motorway. Even if this claim is incorrect, I cannot imagine that Knutsford Services had witnessed too many trolleybuses through its portals !

Eventually, following some frantic phone calls, 80 became finally scheduled to arrive at Plumtree on Sunday, 28 August 1965. It was an eventful journey. When passing through Derby, the Ashton overtook a Derby trolleybus in normal service. Apparently the Derby driver's face was a picture when this unfamiliar "foreign" trolleybus sped by him ! There was also an incident at the low railway bridge at Tollerton, where 466 had become temporarily "wedged" some months earlier. Despite warnings, the "crew" towing no.80 thought that to save time, the direct approach to Plumtree, i.e. under the bridge, was worth a try. Naturally, once close up to it, they realised this was just not a practical proposition and nobody really wanted an open top Crossley "Empire". Much to the amusement of a Barton Transport bus driver held up by 80's antics, the trolleybus was turned



Ashton 80 about to receive a headache ! On tow from Rusholme to Plumtree on 28 August 1965, 80 is halted before turning round at the low railway bridge at Tollerton

Photo: courtesy Howard Piltz

around in the road using its traction batteries and disaster was avoided. No.80 duly arrived at Plumtree unscathed and swelled the ranks of vehicles on site to five. I would again remind you that the rent was, officially, for only one.

The co-operation policy appeared to be working well. Thanks to Howard and further contacts that he had made, Newsletter no.8 of the Northern Trolleybus Federation revealed that, in addition to the OSS, the NTG and the Huddersfield Trolleybus Preservation Fund (HTPF), members also included the Manchester Trolleybus Preservation Fund (MTPF). It was hoped that we could all contribute to a national trolleybus museum site. Whilst these developments were officially welcomed in Nottingham, there still appeared to be some quiet chatter regarding steam rollers, traction engines, motorbuses and vintage cars that could be kept at Plumtree. However, the next trolleybus to arrive at Plumtree would stir up controversy, despite the kindly actions of a well-respected General Manager.

Rotherham 37

The early days of Rotherham 37's preservation appear to have been clouded in some mystery until recently. As this has now been clarified a little, it seems opportune that the situation should be placed on record. Regarding this subject, I read with interest and amazement the letter headed "The Route to Sandtoft - a few queries answered" from your correspondent, Dennis Vickers, published in *Sandtoft Scene* no.64 in January 2007. In his letter, Mr Vickers states: "Shortly, when I have discovered all the relevant papers, currently well buried after 40 years, I plan to write a history of Rotherham 37's preservation". I suggest that you do look out your records, Mr Vickers, since your memories seem to be at some variance with those of others. Those of you still with sufficient patience to be following this series of articles will recollect that an approach was made to Rotherham Corporation in January 1962 by the NTG, asking if they could preserve a single-deck Daimler trolleybus. A friendly letter had been received from Mr I.O. Fisher, the Rotherham General Manager, explaining that he hoped that these vehicles would be exported to Spain. However he also stated: "If the deal is not finalised, I would certainly consider selling one of these vehicles to your Group". Sadly, as I have recounted, this was inadvertently overlooked and the trolleybuses were broken up. Mr Fisher did promise to view favourably any effort that the NTG made to save a double decker.

It had been announced that Rotherham's last normal trolleybus service day would be 2 October 1965. Tours were permitted on the following day, with the NTA operating one tour and the other being under the banner of MTPF/ NTG. In accordance with the NTG's vehicle preservation policy, a letter had been sent to Mr Fisher indicating our intention to try and purchase one of the remaining trolleybuses and also reminding him of our previous unsuccessful single-decker attempt. On Sunday 3 October 1965, the NTA utilised no.44 on its tour and the MTPF/ NTG tour used no.30. Living locally, Mr Vickers organised the latter event. Being the last day of trolleybus operations in Rotherham, it was obviously going to be a memorable day and Mr Vickers ably organised the tour on no.30.

As Steve Collins outlines in his article, there was "rivalry" to be the final trolleybus into the depot and some subterfuge was employed on both sides. However,



On 3 October 1965, the last day of Rotherham's trolleybuses, 44 leaves the Ewers Road terminus at Kimberworth whilst operating an NTA tour. It was initially preserved by the NTA and operated in Manchester and Wolverhampton before acquisition by a private individual and eventual transfer to Sandtoft. The vehicle is presently in store pending restoration

Photo: "Black Rod"

no.30 was finally the last Rotherham trolleybus to operate. During the tour on no.30, there was an appeal by the NTG to save a Rotherham trolleybus. This was not, as suggested in Mr Vickers' letter, a speech from The Teacher, who did not attend this tour. The appeal was made by Howard Piltz and myself. Now, you might have thought that if anybody else on the trolleybus was considering preserving a Rotherham trolleybus, they might have said something. Possibly they might have offered assistance or spoken to us after the appeal to indicate their intentions. But Mr Vickers saidnothing.

It was a wonderful surprise to receive a letter from Mr Fisher indicating Rotherham's decision to donate a vehicle to the NTG. It was also a surprise to

Rotherham 30 also seen on the last day of the network on a MTPF/ NTG tour. Only two trolleybuses were in operation on the last day in what the local newspaper reported as a "duel" to become the final trolleybus to enter the depot.

When Rotherham kindly agreed to present a trolleybus, we thought that it would be no.30, since - along with no.44 - it had closed the system. It was rather a surprise to us when no.37 turned up instead !

Photo: "Black Rod"



see that this was a copy letter with the original sent to Mr Vickers. It was an understandable error since the various groups had been involved in the tour on no.30. I immediately wrote to Mr Fisher and arranged an appointment to explain the circumstances. Mr Vickers' letter states: "Black Rod and The Teacher told him of this wonderful site at Plumtree which was to become a trolleybus museum, and persuaded Mr Fisher to give 37 to them". The Teacher did not attend this meeting. Present were "Black Rod" – myself, indeed - and also Mr Vickers. The other attendees were Howard Piltz and Carl Isgar (now the highly-respected editor of *Trolleybus Magazine*). Carl's role was simply that of observer and he attended since he had a motor car, lived in Manchester and was therefore able to drive Howard to the meeting ! The situation was explained to Mr Fisher. The NTG had a site at Plumtree, had been writing to him for four years and already had five vehicles on site. Mr Vickers saidnothing. If there was a site at a Sheffield bus garage, it certainly had not been communicated to anybody in the NTG during the tour or afterwards. Mr Fisher decided that it had been the NTG to whom it had been intended to donate the trolleybus. He finally asked us all in turn if we were happy with the outcome or if we wished to make any further points. You might have expected a response from Mr Vickers - however, he said nothing.

Although running a little ahead of the sequence of events, Steve also graphically described a young lady dashing up to me in Bradford prior to an NTG tour on 27 February 1966. She "booted" me on the ankle, seemingly with no provocation, and for years Steve has never believed that I did not know the girl. However, the letter from Mr Vickers confirms how he and his friends actually incited the young lady to take their "revenge" by telling her that we had "stolen" 37. He claims that the lass was "a few coppers short of a shilling" and one wonders, if this was the case, whether any true "friend" would persuade her to commit such an act. She did not strike me (no pun intended !) as particularly "simple" or "demented", just a teenage girl with a "crush" on somebody - that somebody, I believe, being Mr Vickers. I suppose that she might have done more or less anything to try and cultivate this friendship. After the "assault", fortunately Howard arrived.

Howard was able to explain to the young lady that the vehicle had not been "stolen" and the NTG had been corresponding with Rotherham for some years. The poor girl was totally devastated when she learned the facts and became very distressed. Now, you might think, it would have been appropriate for Mr Vickers to offer some support or comfort upon seeing her tears. Mr Vickers saidnothing. I promised to contact her after the tour to let her know how my ankle progressed and she scribbled down her telephone number. Unfortunately, it was very windy day and when I reached home the telephone number plus several precious Bradford trolleybus tickets were blown out of my hand. So I was not able to keep my promise. So, if Susan is still out there or anybody knows the whereabouts of Susan, please let me know so that I can apologise for not keeping my promise. Mr Vickers, however, to his lasting credit, did play a large part in 37's preservation at a later date as we shall see.

As Steve noted, Rotherham Corporation even towed the trolleybus to Plumtree.

Rotherham 37 being overtaken by Nottingham trolleybus 516 on the damp day (28 November 1965) when 37 was towed from its home town to Plumtree. Whilst several trolleybuses from other systems had passed through Nottingham, your author is not aware of any being photographed alongside a member of the "home" fleet whilst in service.

Photo: "Black Rod"



However, this tow was different. Ludicrous though it seems now, we had never thought to photograph trolleybuses being brought to Plumtree against the local Nottingham fleet. It was arranged that 37 should enter Nottingham via the remaining trolleybus route - a minor diversion. Rotherham 37 was in a blue livery, somehow reminiscent of the Notts & Derby trolleybuses, and for this reason it was decided to ask the towing crew to undertake a brief diversion to record the event. The tow paused briefly at Nottingham Road terminus of service 36 at Valley Road junction. Whilst it was a dark, rainy day, a few photographs were taken of no.37 with NCT trolleybuses at their Nottingham Road terminus: a memory of the day, a blue trolleybus again travelled alongside the green and cream NCT vehicles.

Incidentally, we all thought that it would be no.30 that would be selected for the NTG, given its status as the last trolleybus. We were quite surprised when 37 became nominated as the trolleybus donated to the NTG. No.44 was also generously donated to the NTA - did the "Cromwell Report" specify that **two** Rotherham Daimler/ Roe trolleybuses should be preserved ? I assume that former rumours relating to the preservation of no.30 were due to the fact that it was used on tour. It is therefore also assumed that Rotherham's choice of no.37 was made solely on their judgement on the condition of the remaining trolleybuses.

From Sunday 28 November 1965, there were now six vehicles at Plumtree, The NTG had recovered from its split from the NTA. The policy of cooperation appeared to be successful and there appeared to be an excellent relationship with NCT. These were considered "golden days" at the time ! However, sadly, this was to change very rapidly

To be continued

ONE THAT GOT AWAY

compiled from information supplied by Brian Deans and Robin Symons

The number of British trolleybuses preserved in the British Isles currently stands at 113, according to the list compiled by John Zebedee on the BTS website. It is quite remarkable that, over the past 43 years since UK trolleybus operation ended, this total has hardly changed and that very few trolleybuses once preserved have ended-up being scrapped. Apart from the single notorious instance of Walsall 850 (formerly Cleethorpes 63), which was disposed of by the BaMMOT museum in Wythall many years ago, the only losses seem to have been relatively insignificant “duplicate” vehicles where a conscious decision was taken to cannibalise them for the benefit of more deserving restoration projects. Those instances were Bradfords 711, 731 and 843, each of which represented types with several identical survivors remaining.

Given this background, there was a degree of surprise when we learned that another preserved trolleybus has very recently been scrapped: this time TBS21 - one of the two Glasgow 35-foot long single-deckers that have been in preservation since that system closed in 1967. In this article we trace the difficult life of this much-travelled but little-loved vehicle.

Glasgow had experimented with single-deck trolleybuses in the early 1950s, when eleven dual-entrance 30-foot long “standee” vehicles were introduced to provide a total passenger capacity similar to a double-decker on busy routes. These were joined in 1958 by ten even longer single-deckers, bought to replace the tramcars on service 108, which was Britain’s last tram-to-trolleybus conversion. These were numbered TBS12-21 and had Leyland-built BUT RETB1 chassis and Burlingham 50-seat bodies, being 35 feet (or - more accurately - 34 ft.5ins) in length.

TBS21 was delivered to Glasgow’s Hampden Garage on 12 November 1958 and was licensed for service on the 108 route on 1 December. It operated for just over eight years, and last ran in public service on the 108 on 3 March 1967 – the



TBS21 (FYS 996) leaves the Mount Florida terminus of Service 108 on 2 February 1967, just over a month before it was withdrawn

Photo: Brian Deans

TBS21 arrives at Hampden Garage at 00.19 hrs on 28 May 1967. The destination blind and front poster read "Scotland's Last Trolleybus". The other posters advertise "S&H Pink Stamps" who provided sponsorship to the NTA for its purchase

Photo: Brian Deans



final day of single-deck operation in the city. During May 1967 it was repainted inside and out by GCT at Larkfield Bus Works, and was subsequently purchased by the National Trolleybus Association. On 27 May it toured the system and participated in the closure events, running behind the last GCT service 105 trolleybus from Queen's Cross to Hampden Garage. Specially-made destination screens read "Last Car" and "Scotland's Last Trolleybus", but that honour actually fell to no.123 which made a special "Last Trolleybus" trip from Hampden to Gorbals Cross the following morning.

But that was not the end of TBS21's days as an operational trolleybus. After moving temporarily to Wolverhampton, it participated in a tour of the Cardiff trolleybus system on 3 September 1967, and ran under the wires again in a farewell tour of the Bournemouth system on 9 May 1968. During the following years, it was stored at many different sites in the South-east and spent a long time at Four Marks, near Alton, where it stood out in the open at the end of a row of NTA-owned trolleybuses.

In 1983 the NTA began the process of disposing of the majority of its fleet for



Still in good condition, TBS21 stands beside Reading 174 at Four Marks, Hampshire. Also there were Wolverhampton 654, Huddersfield 541 and Walsall 864 (now both at Sandtoft) and Walsall 850. The date is c.1970

Photo: John Law



Making a slight detour before arrival at Sandtoft in June 1985, TBS21 pictured under the turning circle at the end of the experimental trolleybus test track alongside Doncaster Racecourse. The trolleybus was not connected to the wires !

Photo: Robin Symons

further preservation, after abandoning its plans to establish a museum in the South of England. There was little interest in TBS21, but in January 1985 it was finally sold to Michael Roulston, an avid collector of former Glasgow Corporation buses. Later that year, it began its journey back to Scotland, being towed as far as Sandtoft, where it arrived on 15 June and stayed for almost a year. This was merely a further period of storage and there was no intention to operate it there. Photographs of TBS21 arriving at and departing from Sandtoft were taken by Jim Sambrooks (reproduced in 'Scene no.86) and it left the Museum on 1 June 1986 to be towed to Whitburn in Scotland by a Wigley's recovery vehicle.

During subsequent years, moves between a variety of storage locations followed, and in April 1990, it was relocated to Spittalfield in Perthshire, then, in 1992 to the Scottish Vintage Bus Museum at Lathalmond in Fife. In Spring 1994 *Trolleybus Magazine* reported that TBS21 was now in extremely poor condition, having been vandalised and lost many seat cushions and other fittings, including the trolley booms. For pictures showing TBS21 damaged and neglected in an open yard in Spittalfield, see the link at www.sandtoft.org/members.

However, the future began to look brighter when its owner established the Beith Transport Museum, about 20 miles from Glasgow, with TBS21 joining the fledgling collection in February 2001. Sadly, this museum did not enjoy long-term success and by 2011 it had closed to the public, although the collection did remain intact for a further two years or so. As far as we know, TBS21 spent most of its time there indoors, but its condition, already very poor, continued to deteriorate. On a visit to Beith Transport Museum in 2011, Jim Sambrooks recorded TBS21 - sadly looking much the worse for wear.

After that, TBS21 was once again put up for sale, and this time there was a real possibility that it might have come permanently to Sandtoft, if an offer made by Bruce Lake and a friend had been accepted. That did not happen and, since then, the vehicle's recent history has

TBS21, undercover at Beith in 2011

Photo: Jim Sambrooks



become rather blurred. In 2014 it was acquired by a preserved vehicle collector living in Hampshire, and was seen on a low loader on the M74 not far from Glasgow, where it was photographed parked in a service area - for a link to these views go to www.sandtoft.org/members. We do not know how far south it actually travelled or where it ended its days: clearly its condition had become very poor indeed and restoration would have been a very large and costly project. Without doubt its derelict state was a major factor in the new owner's decision to part with TBS21 relatively soon after acquiring it, and this would also have discouraged others from taking it on. Although we have received no details, we did learn from its owner that its disposal late last year took place after his concerted efforts and ultimate failure to find a permanent museum home for this once-remarkable vehicle: the only preserved trolleybus to have run on systems in England, Scotland and Wales.

This chain of events was particularly disappointing because the number of British single-deck trolleybuses preserved is very small indeed. On a more positive note, it is fortunate that TBS21 (unlike Walsall 850) was not the very last example of its type, and sister vehicle TBS13 remains preserved in the Glasgow Museums' Resource Centre at Nitshill. Currently TBS13 is not on general public view, but at least the possibility remains that one day this trolleybus will be on display again, albeit as a static exhibit.

A SEASON UNDER THE "GREEN P" Richard Jackson

As a sequel to "Reaching the Blunt End" which appeared in 'Scene no.95, here are some tales from the trolleys of a provisional trolleybus driver.

For those of you unfamiliar with our progression routes at the Museum, after passing the driver's examination one then gains "probationary" status. This is a period of monitoring and guidance by the Museum to ensure all new drivers are confident at the controls of the trolleybuses. For example, if a driver has never driven a particular trolleybus before, it is common for a "buddy" to accompany the probationary driver for a couple of circuits to ensure that they are confident and safe before taking it into service. The period of probation is an indeterminate time-frame, during which their overall driving performance is observed to ensure safety. It factors-in many criteria, including a driver's approach to the job, their flexibility and attitude to the Museum. Once this period of probation has been completed, the new driver achieves "established" status and then progresses on to the world-wide trolleybuses. Because these all have their individual peculiarities, safety considerations require a driver to demonstrate competence by taking a test on each one before carrying passengers.

Before starting to write this article, I was wondering how honest I should be ! Mistakes on trolleybuses are generally noticed by everyone, so there's no point trying to pretend I've had a faultless season ! For starters, I *almost* managed a complete season without having a dewirement. That is to say, a dewirement which I was responsible for. Earlier in the season I was overtaken by a trolleybus on the same set of wires. This happened for a mixture of reasons, but both sets of trolleys came off the overhead and gave the public something entertaining to

watch. The dewirement that I *do* have to admit to was on the last day of the running season [I know - so close !]. I turned the trolleybus too tightly in Sandtoft Square and “undercut” the wires a bit too far. This dewirement was easily solved: the booms went back on and I just reversed and had another go. It was, however, a lesson in how far the bus can stray from the overhead before it jumps off. A valuable lesson. Luckily for me, it happened before the Museum opened for the day.

The other source of endless amusement is the electric frog. As I’ve ranted about it in previous articles, I will keep this brief. From my perspective it is one of the more exciting parts of the circuit. Each trolleybus requires a slightly different approach to get it to “fire” and some vehicles can start the season allowing drivers to work it every time, but then stop doing so for no apparent reason. London 1348 has been such a ‘bus. On the odd occasion I have managed to get 1348 to fire the frog successfully, but normally at the expense of blowing the breakers out. Once I attempted this before the museum had opened to the public, when I was able to approach it at a run, faster than would be permitted during opening hours. This method works, but only because at that speed the driver can hit a higher notch more easily. That’s my theory anyway.

Other perils of trolleybus driving seem to linger around the special event days. These provide a good change from normal weekends, but bring with them a new set of challenges. For example, visiting vehicles are a key aspect of these events, but sometimes they get a bit lost on the site. When you meet a classic car on the wrong side of the road, it certainly helps to keep you alert! On that occasion I think the car driver got a bigger shock than me when he came face to face with a 10-ton London trolleybus. Also, I can’t swerve as much as they can: he quickly went back to driving on the British side of the road !

Whilst I’m on the theme of admitting my minor shortcomings, I did also manage to get stuck under a dead section and to drive through one (I did pass the driver’s exam – honest !). Annoyingly it was the same dead section both times. On the first count, I was coming back into the loading bay and the trolleybuses hadn’t been moved up to the stop, so they were all backing up further and further. I thought (OK - wrongly) that I could sneak through the long dead section before the loading bay and stop on the other side. This wasn’t possible ! Luckily there is a set of parallel wires to change the booms onto and then move a bit further. On the second count, we had only been doing inner circuits, and when we came to return to the loading bay, I forgot that there is a “double dead” to pass through and accidentally powered through one of them. This knocked the overhead power out, and because we generally have only one trolleybus running at a time, it was quite obvious who was to blame. Having said all that; in my defence, it’s all a learning curve ! Has there ever been a driver who hasn’t misjudged the position of a “dead” section ?

Another valuable asset which I believe the Museum can be proud of is the camaraderie amongst the staff. It’s one thing for staff to all get along, but if the visitors themselves can see strong working relationships then this massively enhances the visitor experience. I’ve worked in various museums and railways

and visited many more, and there is a striking difference between places that operate with paid staff versus those that operate with volunteers. Anyway, back to my point. The relationship between conductor and driver is an integral part of the overall visitor experience. If the two of them just perform their duty as their job description states, then the Museum may operate effectively but it loses a “personal” touch.

Many visitors come to our museum with memories of the glory days of British transport, when conductors were more than just a ticket machine. There is a vast social history embedded within all domains of transport. Therefore, when there is strong camaraderie between the staff, it enables the visitors who remember those days to reminisce, and those of my age who don't, to learn another side to these wonderful vehicles which we proudly operate.

For example, in my case I always like to try to activate the automatic frog. If I have a trolleybus which I know to be problematic at doing this, I will often (yes, Stewart, depending on the situation !) say to the conductor: “If it doesn't fire, let me go round again”. This doesn't sound like much, but it allows the passengers on the lower saloon to get drawn into the experience. Many conductors will explain about the network as they are travelling round. This whole “working-together” approach helps in opening-up the “trolleybus experience” to the public - which is, after all, always our aim.

One of the other ideas that we, in the Traffic Department, are trying to implement is to always keeping a trolleybus moving. This is simply because the public are expecting to visit a “living museum”, so we always try to get a 'bus driving round whilst the visitors are arriving. This all forms part of the welcoming visitor experience. People don't want to enter a stagnant museum and it appears much more professional when the vehicles are already operational. Very often in the morning we are running empty 'buses for the first 20 minutes but, whilst visitors are in the café enjoying a slab of home-made cake, they can watch and listen to the unique sound of trolleybuses trundling past. It all creates the image of a lively and vibrant museum.

Our Museum, of course, is a hive of activity before the public arrive and after they go. The “simple” process of getting the trolleybuses into and out of the depot is in fact an arduous task. With the margin for error only a matter of inches at best, trying to squeeze some of our fleet into the depot can be a painstakingly slow job. I once found myself behind the wheel of a trolleybus whilst it was being pushed into the shed by tractor power. This has to be one of the most disconcerting experiences I've had at the Museum. Whilst it may be a necessity to bunch the 'buses up closely together, when you have no control over the motive force behind you, it's slightly surreal. From the cab I was watching the depot wall coming closer and closer, with three or four other people shouting distances back to Bruce on the tractor, and all I could do was steer !

The Museum is now starting to get a number of staff passed-out to assist with driving the tractors for this job. There have been days where an extra tractor driver would have been useful, so this has now been acted upon. Jim Sambrooks

has already spent time helping to familiarise me with the two tractors we use for shunting duties, and once the Museum opens again for 2015 I will hopefully have an opportunity to put this new skill to use. It's all these extra skills that make our museum a varied experience for the staff.

Finally, thank you to all who have followed these articles in *Sandtoft Scene*. 2014 has been a very successful year for both the Museum as a whole and for me personally.

DEAR 'SCENE

Dear 'Scene

I had the pleasure to have visited and joined the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft during the 'Gathering back in August 2014. When I saw Edmonton 189, I really had the feeling that I rode it whilst in Edmonton. You see, I am originally from Dayton, Ohio - the city of trolleybuses. In July 1995 I left Dayton at age 20 to work for Sperry Rail Service in the detector cars inspecting railway rails for internal cracks and defects. With Sperry I got to Boston to ride the trackless trolleys (as they call them there) in November 1995.

I kept putting in my bid to work in Canada and got sent up there at the start of 1997. Not too soon after, we were in Didsbury, Alberta for the weekend. I rode an overnight Greyhound to Edmonton to ride the trolleybuses on Saturday 1 February 1997, and I'm pretty sure that on the Saturday and Sunday I rode all the routes that were in service. On the Saturday morning, though, I rode the Route 5 up to the Coliseum Station. After eating breakfast at an interesting restaurant, I



came out and got on no.189, having taken the accompanying picture first.

I also got to ride in Vancouver in April 1997 with Sperry, then have also rode Seattle, San Francisco and Guadalajara (Mexico) on a couple trips on my own, so remembering specific numbers is next

to impossible but, at least in the case of 189, my hunch was correct. Whilst scanning pictures from the 1990s for a slide show recently, I found that I had a picture of 189.

I don't know how many pictures of 189 in service you get, but at least I can say I rode one of the trolleybuses at Sandtoft in service !

Jim Bainter, Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

RUNNING DAYS IN 2015

(Open 11.00am - 5.00pm unless stated otherwise)

May Day Bank Holiday Weekend Trolleydays VE Day+70 – a period weekend featuring our pre-war & wartime 'buses with visiting military vehicles and other attractions Special attraction – Sunday only: The Three Shires Ladies Clog Dancers and the Harthill Morris Men – at 2:00pm	Saturday, 2 May  Sunday, 3 May Monday, 4 May Free Bus
1940s Trolleyday with free bus link to nearby Thorne's 1940s day	Sunday, 10 May
Spring Bank Holiday Big City Weekend Trolleydays <i>featuring trolleybuses from Britain's big cities</i>	Saturday, 23 May  Sunday, 24 May Monday, 25 May Free Bus
Weekend Trolleydays & Vintage Coach Rally <i>with visiting vintage coaches (vintage coach trip bookings invited !)</i>	Saturday, 6 June  Sunday, 7 June Free Bus
Worldwide Weekend Trolleydays <i>featuring our trolleybuses from overseas</i>	Saturday, 20 June  Sunday, 21 June Free Bus
Weekend Trolleydays and Teddy Bears' Picnic	Saturday, 4 July  Sunday, 5 July Free Bus
'Gathering Saturday Trolleyday - a preview of 'Gathering Day itself: twilight trolleybus operation & real ale beer tent	Saturday, 25 July  (Open 11.00am - 10.00pm)
Sandtoft Gathering 2015 <i>with visiting historic vehicles, transport flea market, live music, real ale beer tent & lots for the family to see & do</i>	Sunday, 26 July Free Bus (Open 10.00am - 6.00pm)
Weekend Trolleydays	Saturday, 15 August  Sunday, 16 August
Blues & Twos Weekend & Trolleydays <i>late summer bank holiday weekend featuring dramatic emergency services displays and demonstrations</i>	Saturday, 29 August  Sunday, 30 August Monday, 31 August Free Bus
European Trolleybus Day & Weekend Trolleydays <i>celebrating modern trolleybus technology & operation</i>	Saturday 19 September  Sunday 20 September Free Bus
Weekend Trolleydays & Rotherham Trolleybus Memories <i>commemorating 50 years since Rotherham's trolleybus operations ended</i>	Saturday, 3 October  Sunday, 4 October
Isle of Axholme Running Day & Rally	Sunday, 18 October Free Bus
Twilight & After Dark Trolleyday (open 11am - 7pm) <i>with twilight & after-dark trolleybus operation</i>	Saturday, 31 October 
End of Season & Twilight Trolleyday (open 11am - 6pm)	Sunday, 1 November

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

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

ADMISSION (charges include a Gift Aid donation):

Adult £7.00 Senior (61+) £6.00 Concession £5.00 Family (2 Adults + up to 4 Concessions) £22.00

On days shown on red background:

Adult £9.00 Senior (61+) £7.50 Concession £6.00 Family (2 Adults+ up to 4 Concessions) £28.00

For full up-to-date details, visit www.sandtoft.org