

# SANDTOFT SCENE

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THE JOURNAL OF  
THE TROLLEYBUS MUSEUM  
AT SANDTOFT



## The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft

SANDTOFT TRANSPORT CENTRE LIMITED

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Registered Charity No.614382

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We reserve the right to alter or amend text to suit the style of *Sandtoft Scene* or the content of a particular edition. The content of individual items and articles represent the opinions of the individual contributors: they are not necessarily the opinions or policies of Sandtoft Transport Centre Limited, its Directors or its members.

### FRONT COVER PICTURE:

Spring Bank Holiday Weekend2003: A study of the now altered overhead wiring layout adjacent to the workshop as Bournemouth no.99, fresh into service, passes Glasgow no.TB78, Huddersfield no.619, and Doncaster no.22 The stories behind the overhead alterations and no.99's re-entry into service are included in this issue.

Photograph by Graham Bilbé

Our Vision Statement:

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

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

### EDITORIAL

My travels recently took me back to the Yorkshire Mining Museum at the former Caphouse Colliery, now the National Coalmining Museum.

What a change national museum status has made. The museum is much expanded with a new display hall in the area previously occupied by the café and a new licensed restaurant with education and conference rooms, coupled with a new administrative area, all housed in a purpose-built extension to the existing building.

On my previous midweek visit. my coach was the only one in the car park and with only a handful of other visitors the place was, to say the least, quiet. This time, again a midweek visit, mine was one of eight coaches in the purpose-built coach park; places on the underground tours were allocated some two hours in advance, with our guide having to wait until the previous party had move on before we could proceed. There is even a room with seats in at the bottom of the shaft for parties to wait their turn to return to the surface. Gaining National Museum status has certainly made an impact at Caphouse.

So are there any problems being a national museum ? I introduced myself to one of the managers and yes, there are ! Firstly, as admission is free, visitor numbers are much higher and more full-time staff are needed to look after them. Secondly, there are some quite high administrative hoops to jump through to gain national" status. Finally, the original members have lost a degree of control of what was their museum. The benefits, however, would seem to outweigh the problems: funding for new projects are there for them and, as the manager pointed out, there is a great deal of satisfaction in the knowledge that the museum's future is now secure. They had nothing on my first visit that we, at Sandtoft, did not have an equivalent to. How they have left us behind now ! My personal view is that we need to follow their example.

As the editor of the 'Scene I would welcome your views, particularly for publication, even if you disagree with me.

Dave Shepherd

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2003

Yes, it is that time again ! The Annual General Meeting takes place at the Museum (in the Ritz , on **Sunday 23 November 2003** commencing at 1.30 pm. Eligible members will find the formal notice and a nomination form enclosed. For legal reasons, those under 18 are not eligible to attend the AGM, but, of course, they are most welcome to join in the informal discussions afterwards in a members forum. Time permitting, we hope it will be possible to run a "twilight" trolleybus afterwards.

We look forward to seeing you !

## 2003 TROLLEYDAYS

We have just a few more Trolleydays left this year

### St Leger Rally

Sunday 19 October \*  
November Trolleyday (twilight running) \*  
Sunday 2 November \*  
Santa Days (using illuminated Maidstone no.72)  
Saturday 13 December  
& Sunday 14 December

The November date was originally going to be a Reading day, but it has not been possible to get the Reading trolleybuses together and operable. It is now projected that a big Reading operating day be scheduled for July 2006 to celebrate the 70th anniversary (1936) of the commencement of Reading's trolleybuses.

\* Free bus service operates from Doncaster (see last edition for details)

## SANTA WEEKEND

As noted above, Santa Weekend takes place on 13/ 14 December, so we need the usual support to prepare things and run the days themselves to make it a memorable time for all our young visitors. . . As happened last year, a social is planned for workers on the Saturday evening, so why not come along, unwind and join in the fun ?

## 2004 TROLLEYDAYS

We have now fixed the dates for next year:

20-21 March - our part in National Science Week  
10-11-12 April - Trolleydays (Easter weekend)  
1-2-3 May - Trolleydays (May Day Bank Holiday weekend)  
29-30-31May - Pre-war Weekend (Spring Bank Holiday weekend)  
20-27 June inclusive - Schools Week  
24-25 July - Sandtoft Gathering 2004  
14-15 August - Trolleydays  
28-29-30 August - Six Wheel Weekend (Bank Holiday weekend)  
25-26 September - European Weekend  
16-17 October - St. Leger Rally  
6-7 November - Twilight Running  
11-12 December - Santa Weekend

The more astute will notice that we are proposing to introduce Saturday opening. This is on the basis that we get some casual visitors on Saturdays anyway and trolleybuses are often out now on Saturdays, ready for Sunday running. We have our overnight sleeping facilities for workers (contact Janet Metcalfe on 0776 597 8919), and we need to be open more often for various behind-the-scenes reasons. Essentially, the chosen dates follow this year's pattern of Trolleydays. Some already have been given themes (the European Weekend and the Six Wheel event have been "swapped around for next year), but we have yet to put themes to some of the days.

This year's scheduling of staff to help at Trolleydays has been a great success

and with more openings in 2004 we look to you to help make the days go with a swing. Please, put the dates in your diary and let Chris Proctor know at the Museum address or by email (see page 2).what dates you can help.

The operation of the free bus service from Doncaster is being reviewed in the light of our earlier gate opening time now, the major construction work that is taking place in front of Doncaster Railway Station (access & waiting for buses is difficult), the Saturday openings and a shortage, on occasions, of PCV drivers for the bus - the availability of PCV drivers on Saturdays is of particular concern (could you help ?). Watch this space for further news on this.

## FROM THE BOARD ROOM

The Serious Bit - A few "do's and don'ts"

The disposal of old tyres has been becoming a real problem and legislation now requires them to be properly disposed of. We have been tidying up round the back of the main depot, getting rid of the massive accumulation of old tyres. The Board have now decided that owners must be responsible for disposing of their old tyres: all tyre suppliers operate a disposal service for a small charge (around £10 per tyre plus VAT) so, please, no more dumping of tyres behind the depot - if you do, you will get a bill from us to remove them !

It seems to have become the norm for some working members to wash their filthy hands in the toilet block basins (even the disabled cubicle and the mother and baby room have been so used...). Yes, you need to get clean, but the visiting public use the same facilities and expect them to be pristine. It is also very disheartening for the few who keep the toilet block clean (and it has been brilliantly clean recently, thanks to Colin and Jenny) to discover black scum around the basins within minutes of having cleaned them for an open day ! Please use the sink in the workshop for your filthy hands, or use the box van sink, but please also remember to clean them up after use.

Talking of the Workshop sink, this is not an oil disposal facility ! We are making a concerted effort to tidy up the environment at Sandtoft and this sink area is one place we have targeted for improvement. We do not want workers washing in the toilet block, so we need good alternative facilities. Please therefore keep this area clear of junk and do not use the sink to clean down oily or greasy items - we risk prosecution if oil and the like gets into the groundwater or watercourses.

Another workshop issue is the pit: it is inevitable that oil and muck get into the pit, so , for the sake of the next person, please clear up after you. When oil has spilt, use the proper oil-absorbing granules, and not sand and gravel. And, of course, old oil has to be properly disposed of: we have oil drums for this purpose, so use them !

We ask for diesel vehicles to not be refuelled from cans in the depot, workshop or on the roadways where our visitors walk around. i.e. refuelling should be done only on the workshop road. This is because, almost inevitably, spillages occur which are potentially hazardous and certainly unpleasant to

accidentally walk in. We also ask that care is taken during refuelling and that any spills are properly cleared up using proper oil-absorbing granules that are then properly disposed of. Again, we must not allow any diesel or other oil to pollute the groundwater or watercourses and ditches (and that is where our surface water runs off to).

2004 has been designated (not by us!) as the Year of the Garden. We are discussing with North Lincolnshire Council how we might join in on this theme for next year. If anyone might be able to assist in any way with this, contact Brian Maguire at the Museum.

We have not really publicised this so far, but telephone messages (enquiries, queries etc.) can now be left on 01724 711846 and facsimiles can also be sent, by arrangement, to this number we are aiming to make this number an automatic phone message-come-fax line, but other priorities are stopping us from buying suitable equipment incorporating a plain paper fax machine (so if anyone out there could donate one ....) Our Information Line (with up to date information about the next running day) remains on 01724 711391.

Finally, to scotch rumours and set the record straight, ours is a voluntary museum, where members, and others, can work on a voluntary unpaid basis for the good of the Museum. We have to admit that there are occasions where particular (normally specialist) work has to be contracted out, and because of the nature of the work we may engage members who are self-employed specialists. We make the point that these occasions are very limited, may be in the interests of expediency, and in any event are done on a pre-agreed price and individual Board-authorised basis. Henceforth, if a situation arises where members find themselves working alongside and assisting a paid contractor, the circumstances surrounding that particular situation will be explained to the relevant volunteer members so as to avoid any possible misunderstanding. The Board is mindful of its responsibilities and is aware of concern amongst some working members; they hope this paragraph clarifies what, to some, may or could be a most unacceptable and disagreeable state of affairs. If anyone has concerns with regard to this, please make contact with any Board member to discuss it further. We need feedback on all aspects of the Museum's operation.

#### **E-MAIL INFORMATION SERVICE**

A reminder that if you are interested in receiving important or urgent Sandtoft information via e-mail as detailed in the last edition of *Sandtoft Scene*, then contact [webmaster@sandtoft.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@sandtoft.org.uk) and if there is sufficient take up, we can go ahead with this service.

#### **SPONSORING OF MUSEUM-OWNED VEHICLES**

Thank you to those members who have responded to our appeal in the last *Sandtoft Scene* for sponsors. for the 19 historic vehicles the Museum itself owns, or has on long-term loan. We do need more sponsors, so please do not hesitate any more, but write now to Francis Whitehead care of the Museum address, stating which vehicle you want to support. Standing orders to pay

direct into Sandtoft's bank account can then be set up and Gift Aid forms signed (if they haven't already been sent in).

#### **MUSEUM NEWS**

##### **General:**

Actions speak louder than words. And has there been some action at the Museum recently!?!? .....

The major work has been the installation of the overhead "siding" adjacent to the workshop and associated overhead realignment and modification work. As the Stop Press in the last edition of *Sandtoft Scene* reported, Huddersfield no.631 became the first trolleybus to use the new loop on 9 July 2003. A more detailed account of the construction work (which had been contracted on a price to Peter Price) appears on page 15. As an interim measure until kerbs and paving are put in to for the passenger loading island, white hatching road markings have been painted.

The Board having agreed to relocate the old stores prefab at the back gate corner of the Museum to use it as a café, work quickly started on preparing the area. Vehicles stored in the area have been moved, a new road layout to form a T-junction linking to the proposed overhead extension onto the old airfield was set out, tried for alignment using various vehicles and adjusted.

Since the last edition of *Sandtoft Scene* appeared, - and before the 'Gathering - much work has gone on in this area, where a new kerb line, on the north (airfield) side of the junction, has been put in, some courses of bricks laid ready to receive the café building structure, and paving slabs laid to form a new footway. This allowed the 'Gathering entrance point to be safe and tidy. As part of this work, new pipe ducts have been laid across the concrete roadway from the central grass area to the new building, and a water pipe also put in. In fact, the water supply to this area is to come from a completely new supply point, so that we get an adequate pressure in the supply.

In connection with the new junction layout, several "new" traction poles were shot blasted and painted and were put in just after the 'Gathering - and very smart they look too, just like new and putting most of our other traction poles to shame. The slabbing around these new poles has now been completed.

Other overhead work has included correcting the rake of the traction pole holding the feeder near the prefab and the painting of various poles at the road end (front) of the Museum.

Some of the silver birch trees around the Museum have been lopped. The old miniature railway track bed has been allowed to become a nature trail, proving very popular with our schools visitors.

Severe rot has been discovered in the Huddersfield tram shelter and urgent repairs will take place over the winter period.

It has been a long haul, but at long last the old stores building has been substantially emptied, the contents sorted and relocated and considerable quantities of, worthless "tat" binned - it is amazing what had accumulated!

Some professional video of various activities of the Museum have been shot recently, producing material that can be used for promotional and educational purposes. We might even use it to produce our own "official" video of the Museum.

And something completely different: during August the Museum was used as a background for a professional modelling photoshoot. The photographs of two models were taken for the photographer's promotional purposes and used some of our tatiest vehicles - Rotherham no.44, Grimsby no.81 and one of the 84x Bradfords !! We will be interested to see if they get published anywhere.

#### **Vehicle News:**

**Bournemouth no.99** re-entered passenger service as scheduled, on 25 May 2003 and as recorded in the last edition of *Sandtoft Scene*.. A full account of the lead up to the "launch" appears on page17.

**Doncaster no.122:** has been completely rubbed down and re-painted externally. If you thought it looked good before, you should see it now!

**Huddersfield no.541:** as recorded in Bruce Lake's article (page9) no.541 operated under power for the first time at Sandtoft on 13 July 2003. Prior to that there had been much frantic activity, to get it ready and it looks magnificent with its external paintwork completed (apart from the driver's cab door) and transfers applied.

**Huddersfield no.619** is also looking good and is a real credit to Cheryl Crowther and Bruce Lake's tireless efforts over the past couple of years.

**Liège no.425** has now been completely refurbished inside, with new framing, panels and hardwood beadings. No.425 was suffering from woodworm and extensive rot in both the steel and timber areas. It has now been repainted inside and out, with signwriting applied to the exterior. A set of new tyres has also been fitted. The vehicle has been completely re-wired over the last two years, or so, and as recorded in Graham Bilbé's article (on page19) no.425 re-entered service at the European Weekend at the end of August to become our oldest operating trolleybus (it was new in 1932). The work on no.425 has been inspired by a very generous donation some time back from Mike and Beryl Dare - thank you both for making it possible for no.425 to run again.

**Maidstone no.72**, in its decorated Christmas guise, was displayed with its lights on at the end of the main depot over the 'Gathering weekend. The lower deck has since been stripped out, thus re-starting its restoration after its "time out" as the Golden Jubilee trolleybus last year. The lower deck light fittings have been sent away to be re-chromed and it is scheduled to complete the lower deck in time for no.72's duty as the illuminated Christmas trolleybus over the Santa Weekend (13 & 14 December). Following that, all the decorations etc. will be removed and the outside dealt with, ready for no.72 to visit Maidstone next Summer to mark 100 years since the town's electric trams were inaugurated. We hope to bring you details of what is planned next time.

**Nottingham no.466:** the front lights have been prepared for refitting to the vehicle. No.466 has not had a traction motor in it since its acquisition for preservation back in 1962, but we do have a suitable motor in store and it is hoped that this can be overhauled and fitted in the coming months. It is all coming together slowly on this Museum-owned vehicle!

**Rotherham no.37:** Despite strenuous efforts to complete the necessary work to get no.37 ready for operation on Six Wheel Sunday(14 September 2003), it was discovered during its "MoT" test that the resistor bank was unserviceable. As the resistors are unique to the vehicle, there were no spares available (and even those on "sister" vehicle no.44 are different!) and there was no time (or money) to get repairs done.

The preparation work had included fitting and cabling the trolley booms, painting the upper deck floor, cleaning the seat cushions, cleaning the windows inside and out (for the first time since nineteen goodness knows when), refitting the bumpers (although the stainless steel strips have yet to be fitted), completing the staircase and platform area, painting the wheels and tyre-blacking the tyres. New moquette has been delivered, so when enough money is available, the seating can be re-upholstered.

All this work had been hurried along so that no.37's launch back into service could coincide with the launch of Corgi's model of no.37, so it was a great disappointment to all concerned that it was not ready in time. As it happened, Corgi were not able, either, to come to Sandtoft that day, although the model is now on sale (why not get yours from the Trolleyshop?).

**South Shields no.20:** after a halt to work whilst further funds were built up (and other vehicles were worked on!) restoration has started again in earnest. The lower deck windows have been stripped down and prepared for refitting; much woodwork and re-framing is taking place, particularly at the front end which is particularly rotten (non-existent is probably a better description!). The traction motor has been removed (a difficult task, as it is, unusually, mounted above the front axle on this vehicle) and has been overhauled and refurbished away from the Museum: at the time of writing (early October) it was awaiting collection. Once the motor has been refitted and the main body framing at the front completed, the cab area can be rebuilt.

**FX4 Taticab:** Owner, Harry Berry, tells us that the cab has been away for the engine and gearbox to be overhauled and some body repairs carried out.

#### **THE HUDDERSFIELD TROLLEYBUS DAY**

**Bruce Lake**

It is not often that a special date from the past falls on a Sunday which we can set as a running day. 13 July has only done this five times since 1968, the date that the best trolleybus system in the UK closed (Huddersfield, if I have to spell it out!). As this year's 13 July happened to be 35 years since 1968 and it fell on a Sunday, plans were concocted last year to commemorate this (sad) event. In addition, as the system opened in December 1933, this also meant that the system has now been closed for just longer than it was open.

Furthermore, Huddersfield no.619 was steadily getting a makeover, the lower saloon having been refurbished two years ago, and doing the same to the upper deck was being considered for winter 2002/2003; and, it looked to be a distinct possibility that no.541 would also be ready for service by July. Thus, with the BTS's no.631 also "in ticket", the stage was set for a Special Event, and preparations were duly made.

We knew that the day would not have the same impact as the successful Bradford Day the previous Easter, as this commemorated total disappearance of our favourite form of electric traction from Britain's streets. However, the experience gained from that day suggested that a "themed" event with only one town's trolleybuses running could be a winner.

All the Huddersfield motorbuses that might be able to turn up to the event were invited to attend. This was a surprisingly low number, as many are "in bits", or in various other stages of restoration. Out of the three possibilities, two were able to come, so that was great. The first, no.243, is an AEC Regent III manufactured at Southall in London, with a lowbridge double deck body by East Lancs Coachbuilders of Blackburn. It was new to Huddersfield Joint Omnibus Committee (JOC) in May 1955, but passed to Huddersfield Corporation Passenger Transport (H.C.P.T.) in 1969. It was the last lowbridge bus to operate for H.C.P.T. in 1973. The second vehicle, no.472, is a Daimler CVG6LX-30 with an East Lancs highbridge forward entrance body. It was purchased by H.C.P.T. in 1966 as part of the trolleybus replacement programme (hissess). Despite passing to the West Yorkshire PTE, it was never painted in PTE livery, always carrying red and cream up to withdrawal in 1980. It was also the last bus to run in service with the traditional "HUDDERSFIELD" fleet names.

So, the day saw a goodly crowd of people descending on Sandtoft – this came somewhat as a surprise as we had no idea how many would turn up; an article I had managed to get into the *Huddersfield Examiner* the previous week had obviously had the desired effect. The number of people at the Museum must have been second only to 'Gatherings ! Many had made the journey from Huddersfield, demonstrating the affinity for trolleybuses that the townspeople have. And as you might imagine, five of Huddersfield's magnificent red-and-cream vehicles in the same place at the same time makes quite some spectacle. Several line-ups were organised which were eagerly snapped by the assembled photographers. There are some examples on the "News" page of our website, [www.sandtoft.org.uk](http://www.sandtoft.org.uk) and more on [www.trolleybus.org.uk](http://www.trolleybus.org.uk).

Philip Jenkinson had taken on the task of preparing a photographic record of the Huddersfield system which we were to mount in the display frames in the Sandtoft Ritz and the *Trolleyshop* foyer. It is no mean feat to try and convey the 35 years of a town's trolleybus history in a few photographs and descriptions. Nevertheless, after a couple of false starts and head-scratching, he did it, the last notes appearing in place just a week before the event.

Nos.631 and 619 began the day's trolleybus operations. A dewirement on the

A view of (left to right) nos.631, 619 and 541, taken on the Saturday evening before Huddersfield Day. Earlier in the day, the local press had taken a photograph of the three vehicles with a crowd of workers posed at the front



It was a beautiful, cloudless day - the trio of Huddersfield trolleybuses lined up outside the Axholme Stores after a procession with the two visiting motorbuses around the Museum



One of several impressive line-ups towards the end of the day, with lowbridge AEC no.243, trolleybus replacement (hiss) Daimler no.472 (both brought to Sandtoft for the day by Keighley Bus Museum, and trolleybus nos.541, 631 and 619.



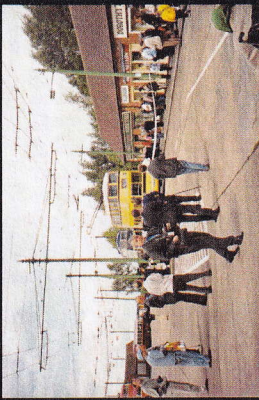
All photos on this page by Graham Bilbé

SANDTOFT

**Bournemouth no.99**  
is launched back  
into service  
- 25 May 2003

Photos: Graham Bilbé

SANDTOFT



99

GETTING READY

SANDTOFT



99

THE SPEECHES

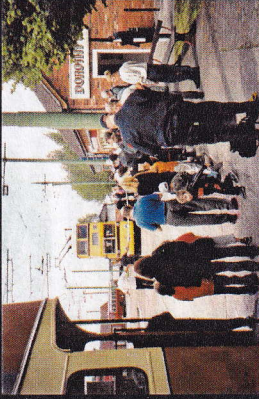
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99

IN CHARGE OF THE RIBBON

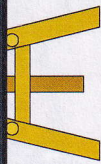
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99 APPROACHES RIBBON & FIRST PASSENGERS

and ....

# Snapshots of Schools Week 2003

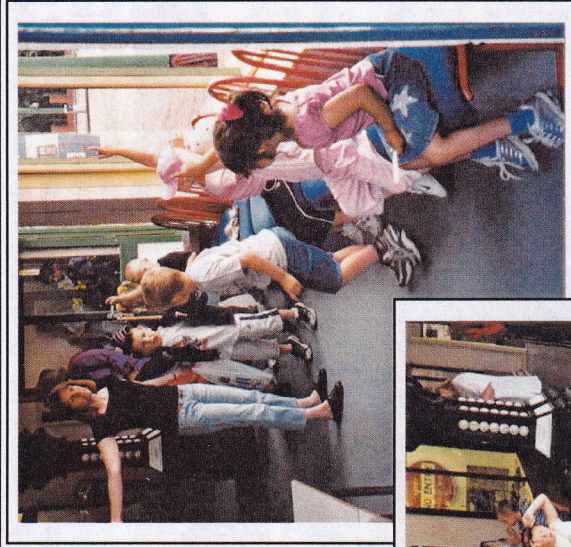
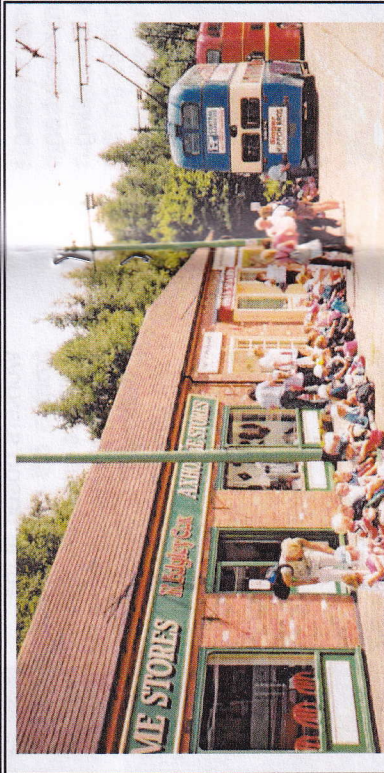


Top left: "Ta very much ! - we've 'ad a grand time 'ere !"

Photo: Stewart David

Mike Dare is in his element as he tells the story of how the Hastings trolleybus was found.

All other photos by  
Graham Bilbé



◀ "OK, you c'n 'ave 15 minutes on the simulators - GO !"

Beryl Dare tells a group about 1960's shopping ▶



◀ Fascination !



second run on a sticky frog entertained the crowd for a time ! No.619 had only been out-shopped the previous day after not only the upper deck refurbishment, but also a complete upgrade to the front dash. This is part of a programme of changes to bring no.619's appearance back to how it was on delivery in 1956. The front panel is now one-piece, and the number plate is higher up and "stencilled" on ready for the application of a bumper, as per original specification. Brian Maguire had also re-painted all the red as the colour was not quite right and in addition we needed to apply proper "Huddersfield" fleet names, the ones in place having "Joint Omnibus Committee" in the stripe instead of the correct "Corporation Passenger Transport", as these were the only ones available at the last repaint. At the same time the opportunity was taken to change the registered owner's name from "E.V. Dyson" to "H. Muscroft", as per 1956. A fine sight she made when she was driven out of the workshop on the Saturday evening into the setting sun for her first test run.



The finishing touches are applied to no.619: (Left) Bruce Lake applies the crest to the new front panel and (Right) Cheryl Crowther blacks the tyres photos by Graham Bilbé

Meanwhile, the restoration team was still busy with no.541. The work involved (which had been estimated the previous year) came to considerably more than anticipated. In particular the brakes had to be fully dismantled and new parts made in order that it would stop ! In addition, the bodywork had deteriorated to a worse condition than an external inspection could ascertain, the interior was in a poor state with many new seats and new upholstery required, and the electrics took an inordinate amount of time to sort out - most having to be replaced. In short, everything was worse than expected. Still, between Brian Maguire and Steve Harrison in particular, it looked like there would be a running vehicle by the day. There wasn't ! Despite tests on previous days, it ultimately transpired that during the morning of the event, Steve was still be working on the electrics, and Graham Bilbé was trying to solve an air leak !

Nevertheless, as recognition, perhaps, for all their efforts, no.541 burst into life at around 4pm and, after checks, was considered safe to run out-of-service on demonstration.

Steve took the first drive round the Museum - much to the delight of the crowd - and a cavalcade was hastily arranged, first with just the three trolleybuses, and then with the two motorbuses as well. As I drove a gleaming no.619 around the Museum, being followed by no.631 and then no.541 in the midst of hundreds of clicking cameras, I thought "this is what its all about - how can it get much better than this?"

### SANDTOFT'S NEW OVERHEAD

Members will be aware that the Board has been trying to negotiate running rights down the adjacent farmer's "runway" for some time (it is not actually a runway, it is a perimeter taxiway). This is still not settled, although it keeps moving closer. However, discussion on the way to operate an extended route, when it is built, led to discussions about the overhead changes needed to achieve it. Peter Price and Andy feather were busy thinking about the new junction required and this led to ideas about where the last stop before the turn off would be.

A suggestion that the frog for the "runway" should be set back from the junction led on to the idea that this could be far enough back to allow a "site" trolleybus to overtake a stopped "runway" trolleybus in the loop so formed. However, after experimenting with positioning vehicles like this it was concluded that space was too tight to achieve it. Furthermore, a trolleybus at the stop in the siding could then only set off down the "runway", and one passing could only go round the Museum circuit. It was therefore decide to create a loop which would rejoin the main line such that either path could follow any route. If this was set back far enough, it would allow the creation of an "interchange" area between the two future routes - "site" and "runway", in a sort of bus station. This idea has been around for a while, but suddenly, there was a point to it all ! In addition it would allow the construction of a traffic island between the loop and the main line, which in turn would allow our European trolleybuses to board from the correct side by going into the loop. The bay could be designed with dead straight sides so that we could pull up to the footpath edge properly, unlike outside the *Ritz*, where the gap due to the curved pavement gives problems to any infirm visitors.

Thus the idea was born. It was June. When could we do it ? We had no finance to undertake it, but Peter had a slot in his schedule which meant he could do the work over the next couple of months. After that he could be committed elsewhere. Once again the Dares came to the rescue: the money required to do the job would be very kindly donated.

Fast-tracking the idea around the Board resulted in a few suggested embellishments and agreement to go ahead. Peter promised to have it ready by the 'Gathering - in fact by having it ready for the Huddersfield Day a fortnight before would allow it to be tested and do driver training before the big



event. A tall order, as there was a Trolleyday on 29 June and the Huddersfield Day was only two weeks later! However, Peter was confident, and minutes after the last trolley ran on the 29th and the power was switched (and locked) off, Peter cut down the first of the overhead (shades of some system closures!).

The first to go was the workshop siding, which was to be re-aligned as part of the scheme. Next the original outer circle was moved outwards to form the new loop wiring, and a new frog inserted to join back up to the workshop line. This frog had to be the trailing frog from the "inner circle" in Sandtoft Square in front of the depot, as this was the only left-hand frog on site with sprung blades which would make reversing into the workshop possible. Peter took the opportunity of tidying up this location when this frog was removed for re-use. The next stage was to insert a new facing frog (a 15° one for the loop; this had been fabricated from parts in store. Have a close look at this one; it is a unique arrangement! The strange shape allows faster travel through on the main line. The other feature put into the loop is a curved segment, located outside the Ladies loo, which brings the loop wiring back towards the main line. We think this is the first use of a segment in a British museum. These two main items were completed on 6 July by Peter and yours truly (undergoing instruction in overhead matters!) and enabled it to be tested out that evening, although it was dark before we got that far.

This only left the main line, which Peter prepared over the next few days. Peter and I were joined by Keith Farrow on 9 July and we strung the running wire to the long "y" frog at the end of the loop, situated just short of the projected "runway" turn out. At the same time, this area was undergoing radical change with the laying of kerbs and paving slabs in readiness for the 'Gathering. It was with great satisfaction that I tightened the last bolt on this frog late in the afternoon, which allowed a test run to follow. It all went well. That left much tidying up to do which Peter completed over the next few days. Further testing revealed no problems, so the Huddersfield Day went ahead with no difficulties. Some driver familiarisation had to take place as the section insulators are now in different places, but training went well. Indeed the new layout was used to park three trolleybuses abreast for one of the photoshoots. The 'Gathering also made use of the new loop for the first time - for storing out-of-service trolleybuses with their booms still on the wires in readiness for their turn of duty.

If you haven't seen it yet, get over to Sandtoft and have a look - it is a real tonic to see a new overhead layout and we hope you'll be impressed! The new traffic island has not been started yet - digging up the roadway in the middle of the running season is not a good idea. However, we hope to tackle this over the winter ready for next season, certainly for European Weekend 2004.

Many, many thanks to Mike and Beryl for their very generous and significant contribution to enable this project to go ahead so quickly.

## SANDTOFT OPERATING SEASON 2003

### More Launches than the Lifeboat Service! (...well, almost!)

Graham Bilbé

This season has seen several noteworthy vehicle "launches", which we hope most of our members will have been able to attend one or another at some point through the year!

Easter saw a concerted effort to re-certify a number of our regular performers, to give a basic stud of vehicles, but the first of the impressive "launches" took place at Spring Bank Holiday, with Bourmemouth no.99 making its long-awaited return to passenger service after a very prolonged restoration. The body panelling and exterior painting were done over 20 years ago (time does fly when you're enjoying yourself!), but a return to service then was thwarted by (a) defective brakes and (b) a serious motor/cabling fault which developed in the early stages of brake testing! It took some time to save up the pennies for re-cabling (and the courage!) but in the end, Peter Price was enlisted to carry out this work for the BTS (it was done at Transperience in 1996 or 1997), and Peter subsequently took out the traction motor for refurbishment and re-fitted it afterwards. Having finally got these major tasks sorted, it then remained to tidy up the interior, and finally it was back to the initial task from nearly 20 years ago - sort out those brakes!

That particular bit fell largely to me to sort, so I can tell you a bit more about it! Following the experience a few years ago with Bourmemouth no.202, it was agreed to leave well alone the hydraulic system, which appeared to be applying and releasing the brakes OK, but to concentrate on the vacuum assistance side. Ian Metcalfe and myself had refurbished the vacuum pump (driven from the front of the traction motor) some months previously, and then found and resolved two vacuum leaks on the piping to the cab gauge. Even so, the vacuum seemed to peak at about 18" (for the uninitiated, vacuum is measured in inches of mercury) and then disappeared rapidly if the brakes were held on - this is rather low compared with contemporary motorbuses, which normally run at about 27". The braking effort achieved at this point was around 34%, a further 11% being needed to pass the brake test! Tim Stubbs kindly came up to Sandtoft to muck in on resolving the problem, and we adjusted up all twelve brake shoe adjusters - each one has its own on this vehicle! Graham Green from Reading advised that it was possible to adjust the pressure relief valve on the pump (designed to prevent the vacuum exceeding the required level), which got us up to about 23": finally, the enormous cast lump which lives under the cab - the vacuum servo - was squeezed out between the various pipes and steering linkages to be checked out and overhauled. The valve on top was found to be very dry - the cause of the disappearing vacuum when the brake was applied - and the cylinder itself substantially occupied by over a pint of oil, preventing the piston from reaching its full travel!

After final re-assembly, no.99 was taken out at 8.30 of the evening before the

"launch", having done all we could possibly think of to solve the problem ..... but had it worked? An initial trial brought this grand old lady shuddering to a halt far more quickly than she had done for a long time! A second time with the Tapley meter showed a real result - 49% - a real achievement for a 1935 vehicle! Consequently, no.99's "launch" could duly take place the following afternoon, performed by local councillor and neighbour, Don Stewart. No.99 performed admirably on both days (and subsequently at the 'Gathering), apart from the resistances getting rather hot - the design doesn't allow much ventilation, unfortunately.

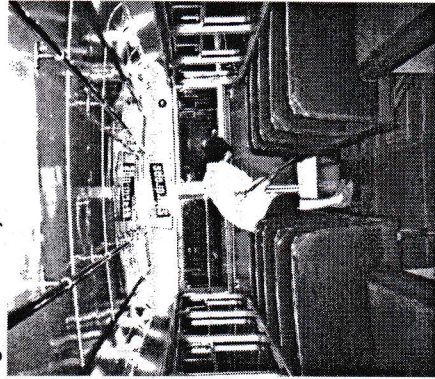
Many thanks to all who helped prepare no.99 for her big day: for me, it was all made worthwhile by the look on Beryl Dare's face after the inaugural trip. With tears in her eyes, she gave me a big hug, and said "I've waited so long to see 99 run again, and began to wonder if I'd ever see it. She's always been one of my favourite vehicles, such a beautiful trolleybus".

Of course, what's really unique about no.99 is the originality of the interior - practically all is authentic pre-war Park Royal, now carefully conserved as there are very few places where you can sample a genuine (nearly 70 year old) interior.

Schools week in June saw a variety of vehicles used, including Glasgow no. TB78, Bradford nos. 746 and 792, and Huddersfield no.631. We think no.631 might have established some sort of record, having been in passenger use every day for the whole week, including both weekends. This was also in connection with the John Wesley tercentenary celebrations at nearby Epworth, and was, we believe, the first time that the Museum has been open for a whole week!

July saw two events - the Huddersfield "do" on the 13th, and another little get-together on 26/27th (known as the 'Gathering) which I trust is being written up elsewhere (Yes, a short write-up appears on page 20- FRW).

The Huddersfield event was a splendid affair, a little in the vein of the Bradford 30th anniversary at April 2002 (but Red this time!). No.631 was out again, of course, and no.619 re-entered service following an extensive interior refurbishment over the winter, spearheaded by Bruce Lake and Cheryl Crowther - and a splendid job they have made of it, too. (Cheryl must also be commended for her very hard work cleaning the vehicles for this occasion, scrubbing away with her "Stardrops" until well after the pubs had shut!) The display was further enhanced by two contemporary H.C.P.T motorbuses - an AEC Regent III, and a Daimler CVG6LX-30, both in "cream



"Mrs. Stardrops" Photo: Graham Bilbé

pinafore" livery. Late in the afternoon, Steve Harrison managed to coax Sunbeam MS2 no.541 into life for a few circuits, by this time most of the "casual" visitors had left and the hardcore enthusiasts left on site had the sense to stand well back and take photos or video! Still, she made a splendid sight cruising round the circuit in procession with the other vehicles, making a fitting climax to a fine afternoon. A suitable display of Huddersfield photographs embellished the entrance foyer for the occasion and is hopefully to be retained for future occasions.

...And so to our next "launch"! Another 1930's vehicle, this time Liège no.425, at the European Weekend (August Bank Holiday). Although enthusiasts in Belgium had been advised of the intended operation, no grand launch ceremony had been planned - and in the event, it was perhaps just as well! Not because it didn't happen - quite the opposite, in fact - dear old no.425 had to be pressed into service almost from the start on Sunday morning, and performed faultlessly throughout the weekend!

If you had asked on the Friday night what would be running, the only "European" certainty was Limoges no.5 (Vera), already certified for operation, with no.425 and Porto no.140 still to have tests completed. For some inexplicable reason after all the dry weather for weeks, Vera's earth leakage was very high in certain circumstances, and it was considered safer to investigate. So, service on 24 August was commenced by Reading no.113 (representing England), with no.425's first trip taking place about mid-day. Passengers were made aware of this historic occasion, and group photographs taken: Although he drove the real first trip on Sunday, Mike Dare insisted on a re-enactment on the Monday, with another group photo, this time against the door side of no.425! Still, it helped emphasise to our visitors what a Historic Occasion this was!

Later in the day (Sunday) no.140 was passed for service, though still with a front suspension problem - this was resolved by about 7pm by Ian Metcalfe and yours truly, ready for a full day of service on Monday, and a little driver familiarisation. Late on Sunday, after a bit of tinkering, the problem with Vera had reduced sufficient for it to carry passengers, to their great delight. After the public had departed, one or two drivers were also given the opportunity to take Vera for a spin - the reverse-action power pedal catching out the unwary - as you take your foot off the pedal it goes faster! Peter Crisp was brave enough to have a go, but after about three circuits was heard uttering dark things about French Trolleybuses, and that he would stick to "sensible ones" (His exact quote has been modified to protect our more genteel readers!)

On Monday, the three "foreigners" all performed well, no.113 only being called upon later in the afternoon by special request of some of our visitors, having been parked on the new layby outside the workshop as spare vehicle. Vera proved her worth as a wheelchair-carrier, having no centre poles to the entrances. Unfortunately having loaded one such party aboard, the service was disrupted by no.425 de-wiring near to the road entrance and dislocating

the running wire from an ear. Some quick work with our "new" cherry-picker (illustrated last issue) saw the line back in place in just over 20 minutes, power back on, and service resumed. The regular operation of no.425 has demonstrated that the V-form trolley poles do not allow so much lateral movement as the usual type, so extra care is needed on curves, etc.

All in all, a jolly good weekend, with lots of interested visitors, and a lot of fun had by all: a feature of European weekend is the multilingual quips and jokettes, which invariably go down well with our public! Mike Dare's favourite is to tell them... "Ah, this chap here came over with the Portuguese trolleybus.... He doesn't speak much English, I'm afraid - he comes from Barcelona..." (not in Portugal, but it always gets a laugh!)

So, the next "launch"? At the time of writing (early September), it was hoped it would be Rotherham no.37's turn on Six-Wheel Sunday, 14 September. Unfortunately, during its preparation for service - and too late to do anything about it - it was noticed that its resistance banks were severely corroded and not fit for use. Many pennies now need to be collected together (donations can be sent to Brian Maguire at the Museum address) to get these repaired so that no.37 can grace our operating fleet next year as the first Rotherham trolleybus ever to run at Sandtoft, despite Rotherham being such a local system.

I'll finish with a big **Thank You** to all who have helped make this such a splendid running season (so far!) - most of the above has been achieved by quite a small group of dedicated members. It really is good fun - why not come along and help make Things happen in future?

**'GATHERING:**

**THE VIEW FROM THE TRAFFIC OFFICE**

**Dave Shepherd**  
Once again we had what would seem to have been a successful 'Gathering. Certainly the trolleybuses were, once again, busy and it was pleasing to receive compliments from the visitors who were enjoying the sight of a trolleybus terminus with lines of vehicles all on the wires awaiting their departure on service. What seemed to most impress the visitors was the sight of trolleybuses always moving around the Museum. The traffic operations seemed to work well, apart from when it was time to change vehicles: this tended to create gaps in the service. So, we are now working to solve this problem.

For the record, the following trolleybuses were in 'Gathering service (i.e. n the Sunday): Bradford nos.746 and 792, Bournemouth no.99, Derby no.172, Glasgow no.TB78, Huddersfield no.619, Maidstone no.56 and Reading no.113. The Saturday was an extended Trolleyday, with the gates open until 10.00 pm and saw some of this selection, together with Limoges no.5, running. The evening trolleybus service was very evocative and well received. We must do it again!

The success of the trolleybus service on the day involved a lot of hard work and self discipline for the crews involved, including those not directly in the public eye. Many thanks to you all for your help in making the weekend (and particularly the Sunday) go so well.

**OBITUARIES**

**Geoffrey Lewis Griffiths 1929 - 2003**

The 'Gathering this year was a rally successful day, and it was a shame to arrive home at 10 O' clock to be informed of Geoff's passing that morning.

My first memories of Geoff were in the early 80's, when he came up to me and asked if he could help at the 'Gathering. He was put to work on the PA, and with his Welsh accent, carried the job well. We would later learn that everything he did was to be of the same extremely high standard

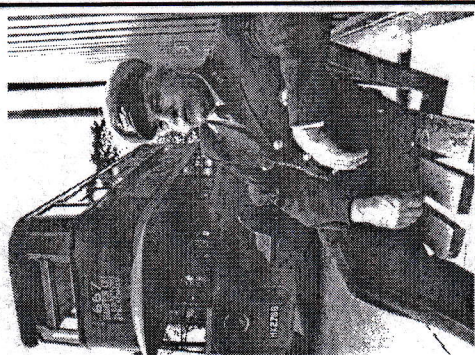
Geoff continued to come to Sandtoft, and ended up on the vehicle testing team with Martin Gibbons and David Brown, and a few others. Later, he ran the driver training school with Brian Wharton.

Geoff was a trolleybus man through and through, and did not only work at Sandtoft. He was a regular at both the Black Country Museum and Carlton Colville, in fact, if there were trolleybuses to be found, you would find Geoff, either in overalls or immaculately turned out, looking as pristine as his overalls as he did his uniform, something he was well known for by his many friends.

A so of the Stationmaster at Llanelli, Geoff went on to join the GWR, rising to being a manager on BR's Western Region. One chap said that if you saw "Old Whiskers" coming, you fled! He was one who expected the same high standards that he adhered to. He was held in high regard for his work.

Whilst on the Western Region management, Geoff helped the Dean Forest Railway purchase its small line, one which was in Geoff's control, and then got involved with the running of it. He also helped with the benevolent fund for BR, the ex-employees' club, he founded the Swansea Historical Society (which now boasts some 180 members and of which he was chairman), he led a project to transform a tin hut building at Mumbles called Vivian Hall into a thriving village hall and, of course, he was instrumental in progressing the Cardiff and South Wales Trolleybus Project. I really wonder how he fitted everything in.

It will be a lasting tribute to him that his history of the Llanelli trolleybuses was published by *Trolleybooks*. He later wrote another book on trolleybus driving that he sold in order to raise funds for the restoration of London trolleybus no.1812.



In his element - Geoff Griffiths, as Carlton Colville with London "Dodder" no.1 in the background. Photo: Eastern Daily Press

Geoff loved London and Bournemouth trolleybuses and were it not for his support and help, no.1201 would not have been completed. Unfortunately, Geoff fell ill to cancer a couple of years ago, and whilst it seemed he was beating it, finally it defeated him.

The last time Geoff was out and about was at the Carlton Colville trolleybus event last September, and since then he stayed in his home town.

Geoff leaves a loving wife, Val, daughter, Jane, and his grandson, Leigh, who was the idol of his life. To them we send our condolences. Donations to cancer are welcome.

It was a privilege to have known Geoff for twenty years, and an honour to have been such a close and personal friend.

*Brian Maguire*

### **Paul Tucker 1937 - 2003**

It was with regret, but not unexpected, that I heard on 30 May that Paul had died. He had been suffering with Parkinsons disease.

Many who came to Sandtoft in the early days will remember that it was Paul who, back in the mid sixties, told his cousin, Mike Dare, who was looking for somewhere to keep a trolleybus undercover that a old Methodist chapel just across the road from his house was for sale. That chapel duly became Mike's Westgate Trolleybus Museum, and a few years later it was Paul who told Mike that a small bit of the old Sandtoft Airfield, just down the road from the chapel, was to be sold. Without Paul, there would be no Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft.

I moved to Belton in November 1969, and was taken under Paul's wing. He introduced me to many local people, including the girl I later married, he found me a better job and got me involved with the local church. The friends I made then are still friends today, and many were present at Paul's funeral in Belton churchyard on 9 June.

Paul Tucker was a leading light in many local events, especially church work and singing. He will be sorely missed by all his friends, but mostly by his wife, Carolyn, son, Richard, and daughter, Alison. We pass on our condolences to his family, and our thanks to Paul for what he gave to us.

*Brian Maguire*

We are also very sorry to report the recent deaths of **Mervyn Ashton**, Chairman of the North west Transport Museum Society and part of the group who transformed St. Helens no.387 from its Bradford condition (where it had been their no.799) to St Helens condition back in the 1970's and also **Noel H Hanson**, who, in 1974, co-wrote with Tom Canneaux the *Trolleybooks* history, *The Trolleybuses of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*.

### **RT 3323**

Towards the end of May this year we had an email enquiry asking if we could give an AEC bus, then stored in Doncaster and which had not run for two or three years, a home. Investigations revealed that it was ex-London RT 3323 (LYR 542), fitted with a Park Royal body, owned by the Sheffield Diocese and which had been used as a mobile church until about four years ago. Discussions by a group of members resulted in a proposal that it be acquired to be used as a mobile exhibition and publicity vehicle for the Museum. Given that it would be cared for by that group, the Board agreed to the proposal and RT 3323 was kindly given to the Museum and, equally kindly, towed to Sandtoft by John Bannister (thank you, John) on 'Gathering Saturday'.

It was immediately put in the line up of Sandtoft vehicles for the 'Gathering, where it drew quite a bit of interest from visiting enthusiasts. On the following day, Mike Hirst, and Ian Metcalfe, assisted by Graham Bilbé and accompanied by a small group of onlookers, coaxed the engine into life - it sounded quite OK! The body is in need of a lot of work, whilst the interior is without seats, but at least it goes - and, even more importantly, it also stops!

Spare parts to renovate the vehicle should be relatively easy to get, so over the next year or two we look forward to that the bus being worked on so that it can publicise the Museum. It is now a Museum-owned vehicle, so if anyone would care to chip in a few pounds, regularly if you are able, to allow restoration to happen, please contact Francis Whitehead (donations can be Gift Aided), and if you can physically help, contact Brian Maguire. Meanwhile, the previous owners are keeping a watchful eye on its welfare.

### **SANDTOFT SCENE**

There has been so much happening in recent months to tell you about that various items we promised last time, one or two other reports and some photographs have been held over until the next edition. (and some of this hasn't been written yet .....)



A look at the new overhead layout next to the workshop: the left photograph clearly shows the new passing "loop" with the curved segment and, beyond, the line joining from the workshop road before the "loop" re-joins the "through" wiring. Compare the right view with the photographs on the front and back covers of the old layout.

*Photos: Graham Bilbé*



▲ An investigation into RT 3323's body condition started in late July

*Photo: Brian Maguire*



▲ A professional model poses in Rotherham no.44 (see page 8)

*Photo: Tony Ferris*



▲ Bournemouth no.99 in service for the first time since 1963

*Photo: Graham Bilbé*

▼ Huddersfield no.619 and Mike Dare's Reading no.98 under the old overhead layout in June

*Photo: Graham Bilbé*



▼ Tony Peart's Doncaster no.122, rubbed down and ready for a repaint

*Photo: Brian Maguire*

