

SANDTOFT SCENE



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THE TROLLEYBUS MUSEUM
AT SANDTOFT'S MAGAZINE



The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft

SANDTOFT TRANSPORT CENTRE LIMITED

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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.

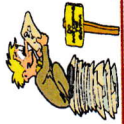
FRONT COVER PICTURE:

Cavalcade of visiting vehicles around the museum's circuit re-creating a road scene from the past during the St Leger Rally on 15 October 2006 Photo: Nick Broxholme

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

May I wish you a very happy and prosperous new year. From the information I am getting it looks as if it is going to be another interesting year at Sandtoft with many "theme" days to come.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Sandtoft Scene and I would like to say a big thank you to all of those who send in information and articles: without them we would just have blank pages!

OBITUARY

DAVID ANTHONY PEART M.A. - 1934-2006

As reported briefly in the last edition of Sandtoft Scene, Tony Peart passed away on 29 September 2006, aged 72, after a long battle with cancer.



Tony will best be remembered at Sandtoft for his two immaculate Roe-bodied AEC Regent IIIs, York Pullman no.64 and Doncaster no.122, which he had lovingly restored and maintained, having owned the former since 1971 and the latter since 1980. Both vehicles moved to our Museum following the closure of the Three Counties Historic Vehicle Society's shed at nearby Haxey in the mid 1980s. Shortly after this, Tony took on the position of Sandtoft's Company Secretary, a post he held for two years but did not relish.

Although born in Scunthorpe, he moved to Doncaster at an early age and attended Doncaster Grammar school where he founded a railway museum in the School's otherwise unused water tower; that collection continued to grow under Tony's guidance, as he would attend railway auctions and return with further treasures. He remained an active co-curator until the time of his death.

Photo: Jim Sambrooks

Tony was also a founder member of the Doncaster Omnibus and Light Railway Society, became it's chairman and later Vice President; he oversaw

and advised on the restoration of the Society's Roe-bodied AEC Regal III, Doncaster 22.

As an English teacher, Tony's command of the language was unsurpassed to the writer - he would often correct other people's mis-pronunciations or spellings. He didn't take fools kindly, inane comments would be suppressed with "What are you talking about, you old fool?" and anybody venturing aboard his buses uninvited would soon be shooed away, especially on a rally field before judging. He lived for his trophies, having amassed nearly six hundred rally awards between both buses, which, on alternating years he would rally every weekend. 122 won prizes at Sheffield and Duxford (Show Bus) after Tony was admitted to hospital for the last time.

He loved the aural effects of buses and trains. He could describe them perfectly and was often to be found with his reel-to-reel tape recorder in obscure places (such as under the staircase of a forward-entrance 'decker or with his microphone placed under the back seat of a rear-engined bus) in order to obtain better sound effects.

A lesser known interest of Tony's was ornithology - on seeing a dead bird he was wont to remove its head and preserve the skull.

A renowned transport writer, he had his own column in *Bus & Coach Preservation* and in *Vintage Road Scene*. When it was suggested he needed a word processor, he retorted, "I've got a word processor, it's called a brain!"

Tony would not argue: he would state his case purposefully and leave the subject, although it would be wrong to say nobody dared to argue with him.

At Tony's request, his funeral service was held at Doncaster Parish Church (now Doncaster Minster), where Cannon Christopher Smith gave a well-researched address. Again at his request, he was buried at Rose Hill Cemetery - this was followed by a reception at the Earl of Doncaster Hotel. It soon became obvious that a bus would be required to convey the mourners, but perhaps they shouldn't be called that. Tony's funeral was more a celebration of his life than a mourning of his passing. His friends in the Sheffield Transport Preservation Group instantly agreed to the use of their Daimler Fleetline double decker, Sheffield 754, chosen for its 70+ seating capacity, which was needed as there were few empty seats. Tony would have approved of this as he once wrote of his pleasure when riding on this vehicle. With an attendance estimated at nearly four hundred, he was given a good send off. Goodbye Tony, and thank you, you will be sadly missed.

It has since been discovered that his grave in Rose Hill Cemetery is in row W, plot 64, what a coincidence. Tony will be very happy at rest in 64!

Jim Sambrooks

A REMEMBRANCE OF A FRIEND

In the early hours of 29 September, Tony passed away, quietly, in Doncaster Infirmary. He had bravely fought a losing battle with an inoperable tumour on his prostate, continuing to rally Doncaster 122 up until a month before his passing.

It is thirty five years since I first met Tony - at the first 'Gathering in September 1971. I also met Mike Hirst and the three of us subsequently became good friends working at the Haxey goods shed. Tony purchased York Pullman 64 from Terry Robinson "in-house", at Haxey, and later Doncaster 122. Many months were spent removing the Showcem covering on 122 before restoration "proper" began. In the last fifteen or more years, I have spent countless long summer evenings with Tony sipping tea or coffee on the box van bench. His knowledge of all things was incredible, being able to tell you what that aeroplane, bird, bug or butterfly was called, along with the Latin name for the same. How I wish I had learned more from him. Although he never had any pets, he gained great pleasure from my dogs, Susie, Tazze and lately Mac. His face was a picture recently when Mac jumped up and picked an apple off the tree!

Tony said he didn't like trolleybuses as they made him travel sick, but whenever we tested a "new" project, he was on the first run! He was there on 1201, 1812, 99, TB78 and others, plus I have a film of him boarding 204 and poking his tongue out as he did so. All were recorded to enhance his large collection of vehicle sounds, stored at home with his 500 plus plaques and trophies from his rally wins. When Harry mentioned to Tony that his relations had run a bus company in the 1920s in Dewsbury, but despite years of research he had found out nothing about it, the following week Tony bought Harry a complete history, plus photos of the fleet! Such was his wealth of knowledge - a wealth that we and bus preservation as a whole have lost. I will miss Tony tremendously. No more chats on the bench, no more impressions of people, no more, "weak coffee with two sweeteners". Tony had no family. We all fulfilled that role for him - I hope to his satisfaction. God Bless, R.I.P.

Brian Maguire

AROUND THE BOARD

..... from Aiden Proctor, Commercial Director:

This is a busy time of year for publicity as publishers put together their 2007 events listings and magazines. We are also hard at work putting the finishing touches to our 2007 leaflet which will be a different design to previous years. I am also planning our advertising for events throughout the year. If anyone has any suggestions about where we should place advertisements or posters, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



Tony's AEC Regents, York Pullman 64 (left) and Doncaster 122.
Photo: Graham Bilbé

Regarding the season just gone, 2006 has been another successful year. The Reading event has been branded as one of the best events this year by the enthusiast press and we have had excellent media coverage including a visit from BBC TV on the St. Leger Rally day. Visitor numbers are up on 2005 and although the final number has not been calculated, it will be at least 20% up! We do, of course, have to aim to better that in 2007 with further big events.

Regrettably, I am unable to provide website visitor statistics as all the data was erased during an unlucky series of problems at our hosting company, which also led to the entire website being deleted and having to be re-uploaded again.

New admission arrangements will be in place for the 2007 season with the new admission building open and the new car park in full-time use. I can also tell you that the 2007 admission fees have been set at £5.00 for adults, £3.00 concessions and £15.00 family. Admission prices to the 'Gathering' will be £7.00 adults and £4.00 concessions. Of course, as members, you will continue to receive free entry to all events making membership even better value for money!!

ARRANGING SANDTOFT'S SPECIAL EVENTS

Graham Bilbé

A feature of the Sandtoft calendar, especially in recent years, has been the various special events that we hold, which seem to get better and better! That's not just our view - we are very proud of the many favourable comments we've received lately, not least the mention of our Reading Weekend last May by *Bus and Coach Preservation* as one of two most notable events in the 2006 season. Praise indeed!

Having been involved with a number of events over the years, I thought members might like to know a little more of the background to setting them up. The 'Gathering, of course, is our biggest single special event, but although I've never missed one yet, I've not been much involved in the prior planning, so I'll specifically exclude 'Gatherings - they would warrant an article in their own right! However, several years ago, the Board made a conscious decision to try to raise the profile of our "other events" throughout the season, to persuade the outside world that we do things other than at the end of July each year - and also to spread the workload and income stream more evenly.

Most of these "new" events have adopted particular themes - commemorating specific systems, European operators, or the popular "Wartime Weekends". Perhaps the first ever themed event at Sandtoft was the Reading Weekend way back in 1978 to mark 10 years since the Reading system closure. A famous line-up of five Reading trolleys was staged, which included Teesside T291 (formerly Reading 186). All were operable, albeit with 113 rather on "a wing and a prayer", but, of course, we could run just one trolleybus at a time from the old generator. Still, despite the gloomy late-autumn weather, it went down as a yardstick in the annals of Sandtoft's history as a real achievement, and it was to be many years before this was surpassed as a specific-operator event.

Under the late Mike Dare's influence the Spring Bank Holiday weekends became adopted as 'the BTS's weekend', and has for the last decade been

used for BTS vehicle launches or other related events. Similarly, the St Leger Rally in October has been adopted by DO&LRS for many years, and has become recognised as one of the best end-of-season rallies. I believe this was an offshoot from the 'Gathering, when it was decided that the St Leger Road Run, from Doncaster to Sandtoft on 'Gathering day, was just too much to organise and run along with the 'Gathering itself, so a new event was devised around a re-programmed road run.

European vehicles were a natural focus for a themed weekend, especially after the arrival of Porto 140 in 1996 (yes, it's been with us 10 years already!), and shortly afterwards, Schaffhausen 207 on loan, which enabled a very colourful and interesting line-up to be staged - Limoges 5 (Vera), Aachen 22, Porto 140, Schaffhausen 207, and Liège 425 (pre-restoration). The sight of 425 working, with it's lovely "V-formation" trolleybooms, prompted a generous donation to see it re-cabled and restored for passenger-carrying - a great result! With 207's subsequent departure, and Aachen 22 needing increasing amounts of work to render it fit for service, the European Weekend was not staged in 2006 as there was nothing new to add: but with our two new arrivals from France, it'll be back with a vengeance in 2007! The new alcohol licensing regulations will enable us to have a continental beer tent, and the café staff are already working on an exotic menu.....

Wartime weekends always seem popular with the public, obviously happy to re-live the wartime community atmosphere without the risks attached, and from our point of view, an excellent opportunity to run some really old vehicles together, which tend to prompt those pointless but interesting calculations! Mike Dare especially liked these occasions, and at his last such event in 2005, with 425, 99, 113 and 172 running, he said to me "do you realise that the combined age of these four vehicles is over 270 years?" Funnily enough, a similar sort of thought had crossed my mind a few minutes earlier when 99 and 113 had passed on the back straight!

Another form of event that has proved quite popular is in association with other "heritage" groups - the Morris Minor Owners' Club, MG Owners Club, vintage caravans and even vintage Rolls-Royces! All of these events help to spread the word of what we are doing, and there is no doubt that our café has made the Museum a much more attractive proposition for these groups.

But somehow, it is the system-themed events that really provoke the nostalgia, re-creating a little bit of the towns or cities that some of us recall from many years ago. The Bradford event in 2002, marking the 30th anniversary of the closure, was quite excellent with six trolleybuses operable, three contemporary motorbuses, and the Austin tower wagon. Similarly the Huddersfield event saw a remarkable re-creation of "a bit of old Huddersfield" (an un-typically flat bit, admittedly!) that brought tears to many eyes. This year's Reading event seems to have been declared "the best of the lot", helped by a brilliant turn-out of old buses from Reading, and a substantial effort to obtain advanced publicity. The planning of this event started a full two years in advance, but despite that, it still crept up on us! The hiatus caused by Mike's untimely

demise almost caused the event to be cancelled, until it was truly appreciated what a wonderful tribute to him it would be. Consequently, a huge amount of midnight oil was burned preparing the vehicles at Sandtoft and in Berkshire, and I can only pay a huge tribute to all involved who helped to make it happen. All I did was to co-ordinate the different aspects and take the flak from time to time, but thankfully the weather was with us, and we've had a huge number of compliments since. One I liked best was "It was brilliant - just like stepping out of Reading General Station in 1966!" The looks on the faces of some of the "old boys" made it all worthwhile - many coming from Reading on the coaches just didn't have a clue that so much had survived, especially as Reading itself has changed so much in the interim. Reading Buses were so pleased with the take-up that they have already agreed to offer coach excursions on Sunday and Monday of the 2007 Southern Weekend, and we are looking at other coach possibilities, e.g. Bournemouth and Maidstone.

A new event for 2006 was the Model Weekend (which Bruce Lake reports on page 20. This was a deliberate attempt to bring in a new group of potential visitors, (and an excuse for Bruce and I to have a "play" after a hard year's vehicle testing !). Jointly arranged between us, we were delighted with the support from our exhibitors, and plan to repeat, bigger and better, in 2007. The theme will be similar - model trolleybuses and trams, or vintage toy trains from the trolleybus era - we hope this will mark out our show as different to the average model railway exhibition.

So, for the future, the Board has appointed "Lead Officers", (reporting to Aiden Proctor as Commercial Director), to take charge of planning and running each special event (and the aim is to extend the scheme to cover all open days). We do have a lot of experience we can all share, but we would particularly welcome your ideas for events and assistance to help arrange them. 2007 sees the system rather more formalised than before, with Bruce Lake fronting the European Event (the May Day Bank Holiday weekend), myself (and the BTS) taking on the Southern Event (Spring Bank Holiday weekend), and Aiden Proctor arranging the East Midlands Weekend at the end of August. Bruce and I will be working on the Model Weekend (September) and, of course, DO&LRS will again be arranging the St. Leger Rally in October. However, that's not to say that the lead officer has to do it all - any ideas or offers of help will be greatly appreciated, (for example if you could help with publicity in your area: local knowledge of newspapers who could be approached is a distinct advantage !). Please contact Aiden or the respective Lead Officer first, to ensure that publicity etc. is co-ordinated and presented in a consistent and professional fashion. An up-beat write-up in the local newspapers in advance of the event helps enormously to raise the profile - and nearly all of them have some form of "nostalgia column". Writing-up the event afterwards can also be worthwhile, and will help "The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft" to become a household name, in the same way as many people across the country know of the Tram Museum at Crich (or Crich Tramway Village, as it is called now).

If you feel you could help to run a Trolleyday event, Aiden would be delighted

to hear from you and discuss your plans. Equally, if you have ideas or concepts for open days, tell Aiden - he is already considering our 2008 calendar ! Of course, the special events also need extra staffing, extra vehicle preparation, and extra-everything-else - but they're great fun to be a part of ! If you can help out at any of them, please let the respective lead officer know in advance: it helps enormously to know who we can depend on.

Looking forward to seeing you in 2007 !

THE ROUTE TO SANDTOFT



The many different routes to Sandtoft start off, of course, with the trolleybus systems themselves. A favourite amongst many enthusiasts was the Maidstone system, and the route from Maidstone will be explored in future editions of *Sandtoft Scene*.

Meanwhile, we are pleased to announce the release of Online Video's new DVD *No Trolleys to Loose* which captures on film the Maidstone Corporation trolleybus system which served the county town of Kent from 1928 until 1967.

Proceeds from the DVD will help to fund the ongoing restoration of Maidstone's last trolleybus, no.72, which, of course, is at Sandtoft.

Our reviewer, Richard Lewis, a native Maidstonian, has spent all his life in Maidstone and has held a life-long interest in buses, going back to when he travelled to primary school in Barming by trolleybus. He is currently Marketing Manager for Arriva Southern Counties, whose head office is in Maidstone, and he has recently completed thirty years' service with the company and its predecessor, Maidstone & District Motor Services Limited. An active member of The M&D and East Kent Bus Club, he has served on the committee of that organisation as Photographic Officer since 1975 and continues to have a keen interest in buses past and present.

Fascinating ! That is my verdict of the DVD, which is eighty minutes of pure nostalgia which will appeal to any transport enthusiast who has an interest in Maidstone, or indeed trolleybuses generally. Those, including myself, who remember these vehicles in their fine golden ochre and cream livery will be transported back to a time when life was slower but when, maybe surprisingly, much of the Maidstone area appears little different to how it is today, in spite of major changes to the town centre and riverside areas.

A mix of monochrome and colour ciné film, some of it professional footage, takes us on a nostalgic tour around the area served by the small fleet of trolleybuses. Some of the colour film dates from as early as 1955 and the story is brought up to date with the return of no.72 to Maidstone in 2004 to mark the centenary of the start of the tram services which were to be replaced by trolleybuses from 1928. Most sections of the routes served by the trolleybus fleet are shown, and the subtle use of background sounds help bring the films to life. The motorbus fleet is not neglected, and there is footage of the corporation's Daimler CVG6s (including one on loan to London Transport in 1949/ 50), Leyland PD2s & the Atlanteans which were to replace the trolleys.

The extension of wiring into the new Park Wood estate in 1959 and, later,



Destined to become Maidstone's last trolleybus six months later, 72 turns from Sutton Road into Wallis Avenue, Park Wood, on 15 October 1966.

Photo: Doug Barrow

This high quality commercial footage shows how incredibly busy Maidstone High Street was nearly 80 years ago and the view from the upper deck of a trolleybus as it ascends Maidstone High Street captures a variety of motorbuses from the corporation and Maidstone & District fleets.

As well as the trolleybuses themselves, a potted history of Maidstone Corporation's trams and early motorbus services is described through the use of ciné film and still photographs, whilst an interlude shows steam trains and early electric railway rolling stock filmed in Maidstone and on the Medway Valley line in the 'forties and 'fifties. The commentary gives the enthusiast plenty of detail about individual vehicles depicted, whilst the street scenes, period cars and contemporary costumes in the films evoke the atmosphere of a bygone age.

Overall, this is a fine compilation produced to a high standard. It makes public, and preserves for posterity, those moving images captured so many years ago by locals and visiting enthusiasts which can now be enjoyed by current and future generations of those with an interest in the transport scene in the county town of Kent. *No Trolleys to Loose* is a must, and is available in the *Trolleyshop* at Sandtoft, or by post (costing £18.00, including post and packing, by cheque or postal order) from The Maidstone Corporation Trolleybus No. 72 Restoration Fund, 27 Wrangleden Road, Park Wood, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 9LW.

The official launch of the DVD took place in front of trolleybuses 56 and 72 at Sandtoft on 17 September 2006.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- 7 - 9 April 2007 Easter Trolleydays
- 5 - 7 May 2007 European Weekend
- 26 - 28 May 2007 Southern Weekend
- 10 June 2007 Trolleyday
- 24 June 2007 Trolleyday
- 8 July 2007 Trolleyday featuring vintage bicycle rally

28 July 2007 Gathering Preview

29 July 2007 Sandtoft Gathering 2007

11 - 12 August 2007 Trolleydays with 1940/ 50s theme.

25 - 27 August 2007 East Midlands Weekend

8 - 9 September 2007 Trolleydays

22- 23 September 2007 Six Wheeler Weekend

14 October 2007 St Leger Historic Vehicle Rally

11 November 2007 Trolleyday featuring twilight trolleybus services

8 - 9 December 2007 Santa Weekend - visit Santa with the kids!

NOTE: the free bus service from Doncaster will operate on 9 April, 7 May, 28 May, 28 July, 29 July, 27 August and 14 October only, departing Doncaster Interchange at 12.30pm, returning from Sandtoft at 4.00 pm (journey time is approx. 30 minutes) On 29 July ('Gathering Day) the service will operate every ½-hour, 10.30am to 4.30pm, with the last return journey from Sandtoft at 6.00pm, and on 14 October (St. Leger Rally Day) there will be additional services at 11.30am from Doncaster and 5.00pm from Sandtoft.

TROLLEYBUS ANNIVERSARIES

Compiled by Geoff Welburn

January to March

Systems Opened

75 years since the Notts. and Derbys. system opened on 7 January 1932

75 years since Derby opened on 9 January 1932

65 years since Cardiff opened on 1 March 1942

50 years since the Grimsby and Cleethorpes undertakings merged to form Grimsby-Cleethorpes Transport, on 1 January 1957.

Systems Closed

50 years since Pontypridd closed on 31 January 1957

40 years since Wolverhampton closed on 5 March 1967

35 years since Bradford closed (Last scheduled service on 24 March 1972 and civic closure on 26 March 1972)

VEHICLES REPORTS

from Ian Wilson (unless credited otherwise)

Bournemouth 297: (report from Peter Price) First, a re-cap on work carried out so far: 297 came to Sandtoft for rewiring, the fitting of a new trolley gantry and a general refurbishment (including a full external repaint.) The wiring, in the main, was found to be in excellent condition and does not need replacing but the repairs carried out to the roof following its collision with a bridge while on suspended tow in Luxembourg were found to be poor. It was decided that I should make good these repairs before the new gantry was fitted. Work done so far, therefore, has been the removal, overhaul and refitting of the traction motor, resistances and main contactor control panel, the dismantling, rebuilding and reconstruction of the gantry section of the roof, the fitting of the new gantry and the trolleybases, booms, cables and trolleyheads. The chassis was shot-blasted and gloss spray-painted while the electrical equipment was out being overhauled. The trolleybus was test run under power on 12 August.

Work remaining includes re-fitting the upper deck interior, some upper deck windows, a complete external repaint & some attention to the compressor.

Nottingham 493: (report from *Andy Thornton*) The last report ended with me preparing to use the workshop during August Bank Holiday weekend. Arriving on the Saturday morning, I was pleasantly surprised to find 493 already placed in the workshop. The first job was to clean the remaining rust from under the cab floor, then apply a coat of paint. This was a time sensitive job, with a 4 hour overcoating time and I was keen to get a final coat on later in the afternoon. Work carried on with the trolley cable-end fitting (forcibly removed previously) being cleaned up. The offside boom was then properly aligned, followed by replacement of the boom end fittings and trolley heads. During the day, Graham and Bruce carried out their inspections, the result being a jobs list, but not much larger than already known about. Graham's eagle eye spotted a potentially large problem - a break in one of the resistors. Some debris was blown out of the motor and the layout of cables underneath studied. The day ended with the planned painting under the cab - a good job out of the way!

Sunday started with some refitting and a general tidying up of cables on the roof. The shunt field resistance box was refitted into its position under the cab, then attention turned to fitting the associated cables up to the contactor box (most of the high-voltage cables are terminated there). Despite much prior investigation, the exact route of these cables was not known, the improved access from the inspection pit revealing little. After much further probing I have now concluded that the cables run up the back of the contactor box - they are not visible inside the cab. I assume that it was all assembled on a bench, prior to fitting to the chassis, and prior to building the body (closely) around it all. It was very obvious that during this weekend, the new cables would not be going into the same place as the old. The problem now was that the only way to test the resistors and other systems was to run the vehicle under power. This is impossible without the compressor and shunt field resistance. If heavy work on the main resistor is required, it needed to be planned and budgeted for now. A tea break brought forth a flash of inspiration - well an idea for a temporary route for the necessary cables. A quick chat with Graham and Bruce revealed that they were happy to allow a test run and my temporary cable route was acceptable. So back to the 'bus, the cables were fitted with crimps and labels, then fastened to the correct terminals. A further refreshment break found that the museum had closed and our heroes were preparing for the 'Gathering "inquest" or something similar. Refreshed, it was back to 493 to tension up the trolley springs. Eventually Graham arrived with the tractor and towed the 'bus round to the earth leakage tester. The test was satisfactory, but the contactors seemed reluctant. After running through their sequence a couple of times, and with Bruce behind the wheel, IT WORKED!

After a few yards, another system was proven - the de-wirement indicator. Perhaps the set-up is slightly different this time or maybe the overhead is slightly higher, but one of the booms would not reach up to the wire! Further

adjustments followed. By now it was past my planned leaving time, yet there were several willing hands to make the various adjustments and tests, plus the workshop to tidy up. A bunk for the night was hastily arranged and work continued. Monday morning was spent sweeping up the workshop and putting equipment and the trolleybus away. The conclusion about the resistor is that it was an old break which was bridged out in service days. This explains the performance, which has always been impressive (I had previously drawn comparison with 506 which has the same size motor but is several tons heavier). Many people assisted in various ways, most are not mentioned. You know who you are. Thanks for your help!

St. Helens 387: (report from *Geoff Sandford*)



This photograph was taken two days before the closure of the St. Helens trolleybus system and a new bus stop is already in position on the bus shelter. St Helens 387 is seen at Prescot on 28 June 1958 whilst on route 7 to Prescot, via Rainhill: it is halfway round the route - the next stage is via Portico and Eccleston Park and back to St Helens.

Photo: J Copland, G Sandford collection

Restoration has slowly ground to a halt at present, but all is not lost. The funding has increased tremendously thank to the video/ DVD sales and arrangements are being made to get the traction motor overhauled during the new year and have the chassis shot-blasted and painted. Most of my time at Sandtoft has been taken up doing all manner of interesting things, such as guided tours and helping destroy (sorry, I mean build) the Pelham building. Not many witness me with hammer and nails in my hand and even a paintbrush. The latter is usually reserved for 387 but I felt sorry for Brian and the team so I offered to help and like fools they accepted. Maybe I am the fool for offering?

From the summer I have been unable to attend at all due to family events and

commitments with the re-opening of the re-ramped transport museum at St Helens, plus my voluntary work with the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Those who know me well at Sandtoft, know how committed I am to this, in particular Lytham St Annes Lifeboat. Due to this I am unable to attend now until next year. But more work will commence then and hopefully by then the motor will be back and the chassis cleaned and work will continue.

Bradford 558: (*report from Geoff Welburn*) The offside front wing has been de-rusted, primed and fitted back in position, the cab floor cast aluminium plates have been cleaned and bolted back in position, the offside side mirror has been refitted to the new corner pillar, a start has been made in rebuilding the cab door which was very badly corroded and re-assembly has commenced of the windscreen after re-chroming.

South Yorkshire PTE 2473 has arrived at Thorpe-in-Balne. This is a Dennis Dominator with Alexander bodywork.

South Yorkshire PTE 2479, another Dennis Dominator with Alexander bodywork, has also arrived at Thorpe-in-Balne.

Doncaster 22: The front wheels have been shot-blasted and re-painted.

Doncaster 33: The radiator has, at long last, been fully overhauled and now needs re-fitting to the bus.

Doncaster 55: Work has been carried out on the rear brakes.

Felix 41: A fuel leak on the engine has been cured.

York Pullman 64 (*report from Peter Price*) I have just finished Tony Peart's 64. In the summer, he asked me to find time to paint it sometime this year and so I started on 15 August. Unfortunately, family matters prevented me from completing the job before Tony died. At least he saw the work well under way and he saw progress photos while in hospital. Further family matters have meant that there has been a further delay of 6 weeks but now it is done!

A TRIP TO LYON

Aiden Proctor
Speculation of another trip to France to rescue another historic trolleybus had been growing all summer. Having finished university and being jobless (at the time) I put myself forward as being available. Slowly but surely the plan came together with an initial working party of 4 of us due to travel. For reasons I can't now remember only 3 of us travelled to France. They were Francis Whitehead, our Financial Director; John Zebedee and myself.

After the problems encountered in Marseille earlier in the year and because it isn't quite so far, we were to travel by car to Lyon. The trip was to start with a 5am pick up from Francis' house in Kent on Monday 18 September. This, however, meant my journey started the day before, at the Model Weekend at Sandtoft. After closing, Francis (who had travelled up to Sandtoft for the weekend) and I headed south to Reading with Stewart David. Unfortunately traffic on the M1 was not favourable and we were much later than anticipated into Reading. We jumped on the first London-bound train to arrive but were further delayed by a lineside fire, which had occurred earlier that day. We then had to traverse the Tube. It was now very late and our last train had already

departed, meaning we would have to catch a train to Maidstone. Not a bad thing you may think but a £60 cab fare from Maidstone was then required to reach the Whitehead residence. All this and we hadn't even started the journey in earnest! The bad start to the trip did not bode well in my mind and worries about how much worse things could get filled my head as I settled down for 3 hours sleep.

Next morning we were off. As John had volunteered his car for the journey, he was lumbered with the driving. He arrived promptly at 5am and we headed for Dover, where we arrived in plenty of time for our 7.30am ferry. After a smooth crossing we disembarked the ferry, joined the Autoroute and headed south. All that followed for the next 8 hours or so were fields, followed by more fields until we arrived in Lyon early that evening.

The trolleybus had been donated by Lyon City Transport (TCL) following negotiations by Martin Nimmo, a fluent French speaker (unlike us three!) and owner of Limoges trolleybus no.5. The Lyon trolleybus was stored (in the open) at a new tram depot facility in Meyzieu, on the outskirts of Lyon. A hotel room had been booked, also located in Meyzieu. It was lucky John had printed off a route guide and map from the internet as all the road signs were, I discovered, in French! We found the hotel fairly easily and were amazed by the place. Not the kind of amazed as you are when you enter a grand 5-star hotel on Mayfair in London, but amazed that such a construction could actually be called a hotel. Located in the centre of an industrial estate the hotel is only really geared up for contractors and lorry drivers on short stays. Not really for three English blokes rescuing a trolleybus, and certainly not for tourists. Our room was basic and had space for three people to sleep but that was all! Moving around the room required careful logistical planning in case we all ended up stuck in the same corner, it really was that small! But, to be fair, we only needed a cheap, clean place to sleep and that is what we got.

After checking the maps we discovered the tram depot where the trolleybus was stored was not too far to walk from the hotel, so we set out to find it. The depot was exactly where the map said it was and we could see a line of old maroon trolleybuses and an ER100 (like the Marseille trolleybus now at Sandtoft). We wandered in to speak to the security man who, rather frustratingly, only spoke French! After a broken French and sign language conversation with Francis, the security man rang his boss and reported back that we couldn't get a closer look tonight - we'd have to wait until the morning. After that we headed back to the hotel, jumped in the car and went for some food in Meyzieu. I don't think the town has a thriving tourist trade but it was a very nice little place and a local pizzeria made us very welcome.

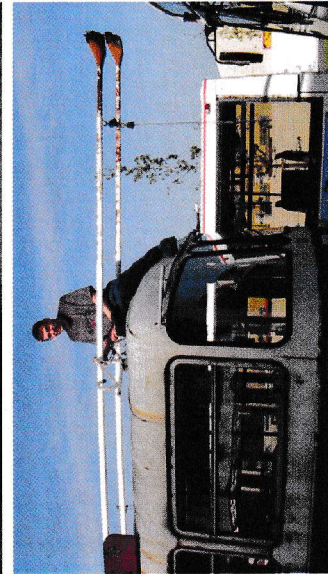
The next day began early and after the struggle of negotiating the bedroom we headed to the depot in the car. Another conversation with the security guard was inevitable but the chap on duty this morning spoke very good English. Martin had already confirmed our arrival and job there with TCL's Monsieur Christian Perrin. Unfortunately, security were not aware of this and it turned out that M. Perrin was ill and not at work. We were to be allowed access to our

trolleybus to prepare it for transport: Martin had arranged that we would be able to pilfer spares off the other vehicles but now, without the express permission of M. Perrin we were told we'd have wait until tomorrow. So, we went in and got our first close look at our "new" trolleybus, no. 1704.



Our first sight of 1704. It had been standing outside since early 2000.

Photo: Aiden Proctor



Me (Aiden) on the roof of 1704 securing the booms in place. We had no ladders and the bus had nothing to climb up on, so getting up there wasn't easy - getting down was even worse!

Photo: John Zebedee

Preparation of 1704 for transportation involved securing the booms in place and removing some wayward beading around the wheel arches and rear. There were already some spares onboard 1704, acquired by Martin during a visit in June, so we packed them up and stowed them safely. This only took a couple of hours and we were keen to start salvaging other spares as we had arranged for the lorry to arrive the next morning. There were 4 of the maroon Vetra VBH85 trolleybuses in the yard. One was obviously ours; another (1702) was reserved for other preservationists and the other two (1701 & 1703) were fair game for spares. We began inspecting each vehicle and making a list of all the spares and bits and pieces we'd need for 1704. That however, didn't kill much more time and after a trip out for lunch we began to get impatient to continue the job. So, we took the decision to start "loosening" bits on the other vehicles ready for quick removal the next day. By the end of the day we had already removed a few smaller items and "loosened" a number of large items. Throughout the day Francis had been

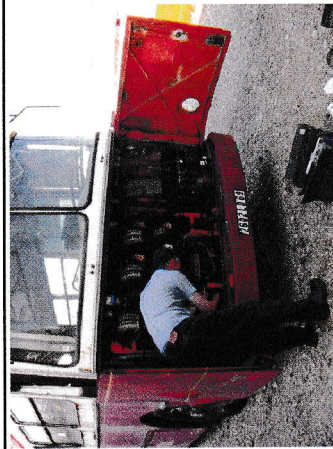
trying to find out where the lorry was and when it would arrive in Lyon. By late afternoon, and after numerous phone calls, we got a call to say that the lorry would arrive at 10am the next day. Francis, after the experience with the same lorry company in Marseille, was rather dubious about that information: we had been keeping Martin, in London, up-to-date throughout the day too and so Francis decided to text him the lorry's anticipated arrival time: the text read: "Lorry due at 10.00 local time. Believe it when we see it." As most of the calls that day had been on my mobile Francis asked for Martin's number and I read out the last number we dialled. Just after Francis had sent the text I remembered that the last number we rang was the lorry company - not Martin! Never mind, we agreed it might ensure the lorry is on time when they read it!

That night we went into the city centre for dinner. This was the part of the trip I'd been most looking forward to. You see, my only experience of trolleybuses is at Sandtoft: I did ride on the experimental trolleybus in Doncaster but I was too young to remember that. So this was my first chance to see and ride on a full-blown trolleybus system. We parked the car on the outskirts and took a trolleybus into the city. I was not disappointed as I sat up-front watching the driver, the other trolleybuses and the scenery. These modern trolleybuses are fitted with all sorts of gadgets and CCTV allows the driver to watch, amongst other things, his booms on the overhead from the cab. After wandering around Lyon for a while we found a little restaurant and started reading the menu. Again, the menu was in French so we weren't entirely sure what we were ordering. From our limited French we tried to work it out and decided what sounded nice. At this point, luckily, the waiter realised we were English and offered us an English version of his menu. The items we had decided sounded reasonable turned out to be donkey trotter and pig snout - local delicacies apparently! We all had the same thing in the end as only one item sounded edible to our English taste buds. We went back to the car on another trolleybus and went to bed early knowing the next day would be the toughest of all.

We were at the depot by 8am local time (7am UK time). When we arrived our lorry was nowhere to be seen, but TCL were on site towing vehicles around to put 1704 into a suitable position for loading. We watched as 1704 was pulled out. We continued watching in despair as the trolleybus driver turned the bus the opposite way to the tow-truck resulting a huge bang as they snapped the towing eye off the back of our vehicle!

A representative from TCL informed us that M. Perrin had had a heart attack, which is why he had not been there to greet us (we have since learnt that M. Perrin has recovered and is now back at work). Luckily though, this TCL chap spoke good English and we were able to start collecting our spares. Of course now the problem was that 1704 had moved across the depot yard, so we had a long walk between the vehicles with all sorts of spare parts that included a front axle we found with other bits stored on one of the other trolleys. When we enquired about *la carte grise* (the official paperwork) the TCL rep looked a bit blank! After a few phone calls he disappeared to collect the documents. Our lorry driver would need the documents to clear UK customs. Our scepticism of

the lorry arrival time was not proven unfounded as time ticked on with no sight of it. The TCL tow truck drivers then disappeared to attend a call to recover a broken-down vehicle in the city centre. We began collecting more spares and Francis set out on an ambitious plan to un-spinner some electrical spares. We raided 1701 and managed to salvage the front section of electrical units.



Francis sets to work dismantling the innards of 1701.
Photo: Aiden Proctor



Nothing left in 1701 after we had finished!
Photo: Aiden Proctor

Our lorry arrived just before lunchtime but until the tow truck returned we had no way of getting 1704 on the low-loader trailer, so we continued our spares hunting. Time ticked on and it became clear that the tow truck was probably not coming back - and the TCL man had not re-appeared either. Now we started panicking slightly. The lorry driver lined up his truck with the trolleybus and eyed up the job. He was eager to get moving too, so after discussions with him, we decided we would have to winch 1704 on. We had specified a trailer with a winch for this eventuality but it was now we discovered the electric winch was broken - we'd have to winch it by hand! Using a tirlor winch (which we had also requested in case the trailer winch was not strong enough), we began to pull 1704 onto the truck. It took two people at a time to pull the winch handle and the weight of the trolleybus (which was more than the recommended load limit of the winch) began inching backwards onto the lorry. We had to keep an eye out to ensure the underside of 1704 did not ground as it went up the trailer ramps and we used timbers under the wheels to prevent this happening. During this



John and the lorry driver winch 1704 backwards onto the lorry. The ground clearance was very close!

Photo: Aiden Proctor

process the TCL chap returned with the paperwork. He apologised for the delay, explaining, in his best English, "the organisation, it is s**t!" I think this shame compelled him to help with the winching, which had gotten too much for the lorry driver. The weather throughout the trip had been scorching hot, with clear blue skies, so this was draining work.

Eventually, 1704 was loaded. Whilst the driver went for a shower in the brand-new tramway works the paperwork was handed over and text messages were sent to England "1704 winched on and about to go. Due at Sandtoft 09.00 Friday. Hooray!" The time was 14.44 local time. We waved 1704 goodbye, wishing it "bon voyage!" and gave our thanks to the TCL man, promising to let him know how the big journey went.

That afternoon we went back into Lyon for more trolleybus riding and photography. When in service, 1704 had spent a lot of its time on service 6, so we took a ride on that route. It is a great little route traversing a steep hill from the *Hôtel de Ville* (Town Hall) to *Croix Rousse*. The views and scenery were fantastic and the trolleybus ride wasn't bad either. We had dinner at the terminus and watched the trolleybuses go past. We stayed one more night in the hotel in Meyzieu before setting off on the journey home. This of course,

was not as straightforward as it could have been....

We had no problems until getting to Calais. Our ferry departed around 45 minutes late and was further delayed getting into Dover. What's the problem, you might think. Well, I still had to get back to Doncaster that night and I was beginning to wish I'd planned how I was going to do it! It was about 8pm when we



1704 leaves the tram depot in Meyzieu - next stop Sandtoft!
Photo: Aiden Proctor



1704 just 2 hours after arriving at Sandtoft. The English weather had also come to greet it!!

Photo: Aiden Proctor

alighted the ferry and we'd discovered the last train to Doncaster departed Kings Cross at 11.30pm. We whizzed through Kent to drop me off at Sevenoaks Railway Station where I jumped (literally) straight onto a train. I traversed the Tube and arrived at Kings Cross at 11pm - I don't really know why I panicked!

I got home about 3am on Friday morning. I had fully intended to rise early on Friday morning to get to Sandtoft to see 1704 arrive. Unfortunately I overslept slightly and arrived at Sandtoft just in time to see the lorry leave. Never mind, I stayed and helped Bruce Lake to inspect 1704. Eventually, after just 2 hours 1704 was on the wires and running around the Museum - impressive after 6½ years stood idle in France. Hopefully 1704 will feature at our European Weekend in 2007.

RUNNING DAYS

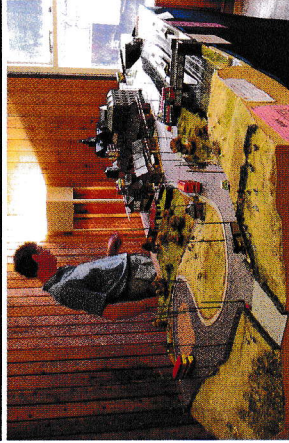
MODEL WEEKEND

As members will be aware, we are constantly trying to introduce new themed events with a transport subject in order to vary the attraction of the Museum to potential visitors. Thus, some time last year, Graham Bilbé came up with the idea of a Model Weekend. Now, Graham's penchant for models of the very leggy form is well known, but in this case, that was not what he meant! His idea was, indeed, to be an event featuring model trolleybuses, trams, buses and trains: the latter items were planned to be a minor section, as model railway exhibitions are already two-a-penny, with one or more, organised for virtually every weekend round the year somewhere in the land. Rather, we wanted to establish a different sort of modelling day, with as many operating trolleybus and tram layouts as possible, mixed in with other things - if railways were to be shown, they should be of the vintage or at least unusual variety.

Now, my operating 4mm scale trolleybus, bus and railway layout, "Ridings" was nearing exhibitable state, and Graham has an operating 2mm (approximately) "vibrating" tramway which he had not shown for some time. Therefore we had the nucleus of an exhibition which we could build on. In addition, what had made this at all possible was the construction of our Pelham building, which was to have a large room some 24ft. by 18ft. in size, along with two side rooms, all suitable for mounting exhibitions and this was expected to be completed during 2006. The date was therefore set for 16 and 17 September in order to start approaching other modellers with a view to them attending. We soon discovered that Steve Harrison had quite a bit of Hornby Dublo 3-rail, which had not seen the light of day for some time, so this rapidly became our third exhibit.

Using our various contacts, Graham and I targeted and invited a few other exhibitors, and I attended the Festival of Model Trams event at Manchester Museum of Transport in July - fortunately it didn't clash with the 'Gathering this year! There, two very good and quite small layouts were identified for invitation. Disappointingly it transpired that neither could attend on the September dates, but hopefully they will be included next year.

In addition to those mentioned above, we had two other Hornby Dublo layouts - but they were all entirely different; a small fraction of the track and stock of a local electric "0" gauge tinplate layout, a tramway layout based on modern South Yorkshire practice; a set of model bus dioramas from various Model Bus Federation members, and also the Little Bus Company's range of model bus and trolleybus kits. So in the end, we had an extremely good mix of layouts and exhibits; and had to use the *Regal* Lecture Theatre and the tram shelter as well for them all! It all made for a very entertaining exhibition for our visitors, and a good time was had by all.



Bruce Lake and his "Ridings" "00"-gauge trolleybus & train layout

Photo: Nick Broxholme



"0"-gauge replica Marklin "Cock of the North" on display in the tram shelter

Photo: Graham Bilbé

Following the success of this event, we have decided to do it all again next year. The weekend has been set for 8 and 9 September, and if anyone knows of different operating trolleybus or tramway layouts that might be able to come, please contact either Graham or myself to see if they can be included. And don't forget to come along and see it all for yourself!

ST. LEGER RALLY 2006

Organised by the Doncaster Omnibus & Light Railway Society (DO&LRS), this year's event was tinged with sadness following the recent death of the Society's Vice President, Tony Peart. (see elsewhere in this issue).

With over ninety vehicles entered and many more turning up on the day, the rally was a great success. Aeroventure, the Doncaster aircraft museum, has proved to be an excellent assembly and starting point for the last few years, but releasing so many vehicles onto the public highway might not be so popular with passing motorists.

Once at Sandtoft and parked up, the owners and their vehicles were invited to partake in "cavalcades" round the museum's circuit, re-creating road scenes from the past. This year's themes were age-related, with vehicles from different decades mingling with trolleybuses in service dating from those periods.

Some of the more interesting visitors included a 1928 Austin car, a 1944 Ford water bowser that was once used by the Desert Flats in North Africa, and a 1966 Triumph Motorcycle that had been round the world twice when new (entered and ridden by its original owner who is now an octogenarian). An

unusual sight was an Austin A40 Somerset with a roof-rack and suitcases strapped to it, that seemed to be going round the circuit at every opportunity, whilst a regular attendee at our rally was a 1951 Guy Otter pantechnicon van in the livery of Silent Night Beds of Barnoldswick.

The Isle of Axholme motorbus tours proved as popular as ever, with duplicates being needed on some journeys; the 1947 Dennis Lancet single decker filled up instantly and was "duped" by an open-top Daimler Fleetline in the latest Stagecoach livery - many hardy souls were seen on the top deck!

Tony Peart's two AEC Regent Ills, Doncaster 122 and York Pullman 64 were parked side by side in Sandtoft Square and a minute's silence was observed by many as a mark of respect for this well known and respected preservationist.

At other times we were kept informed and entertained by Charlie Bullock on the tannoy; Charlie, now 91 years of age, told us that this might be his last visit to Sandtoft, but then he's been saying that for at least the last twenty years!

Trolleybuses in service were Bradford 706 & 746, Rotherham 37, Huddersfield 619 and Reading 181 - all running with good loads, whilst the *Trolleyshop* and sales stands in the depot did a roaring trade. Mountains of food were sold in the *Tea Trolley Café* with only half a dozen sandwiches and a few cakes left at the end of the day. Another excellent event, thanks to all concerned.

DEPARTMENTAL NEWS

TRAFFIC OFFICE from Stewart David

Objectives for 2007

To make the Traffic Department more effective, I have set the following objectives:

- To implement new trolleybus running arrangements, in line with the establishment of bus station: target date - Easter Weekend.
- To train all current substantive trolleybus drivers who are not already so "passed-out", as conductors. This will increase the conductor resource by 7
- To implement a process for the audit of driving licences: target date for introduction - Easter Weekend
- To establish the post of Deputy Traffic Manager, with a clearly defined job description: to be introduced during the Spring
- To increase by 2 the number of fully-trained trolleybus driving instructors
- To increase by 4 the number of trolleybus drivers who are trained to drive the expanding number of foreign trolleybuses
- To hold special training days, (Saturdays) for drivers/ conductors, when the Museum is closed to visitors
- To encourage increased participation in vehicle washing/ cleaning activities
- To update and computerise Traffic Office paperwork

Foreign Trolleybus Driver Training

I am seeking volunteers from among the current substantive trolleybus drivers

to undergo training to drive our fast-expanding fleet of foreign trolleybuses.

Each vehicle requires specific type training and "passing- out": these include Porto 140, Limoges 5 (Vera), Liège 425, Lyon 1704 and Marseille 202.

If you are interested in taking up the challenge, please contact myself on e-mail stewart.david@ntfworld.co.uk or telephone: 0118 950 4738, Mobile: 07720 396372, to arrange training.

INFORMATION BOARD

North West Museum of Road Transport, Hall Street, St Helens (the old bus depot). Open Saturdays and Sundays 12.00noon to 4.00pm.

Why not join the steady flow of visitors who come to the museum ? Admission is £3.50 (adults), £2.00 (concessions and children), £10.00 family ticket (2 adults 2 children). Special rates and times for groups can be organised outside normal open hours. Website is www.sthelens-transport-museum.co.uk.

New members are welcome. Membership is £12.00 per year (adults). £6.00 (children & concessions) and £18.00 (family). On production of membership card entry is free to members. The museum plans to open more frequently in the future but like everything it depends on volunteers and volunteers are welcome.

AT THE BUS STOP

FIRST SOUTH YORKSHIRE 30500 (former SYPTE 2472)

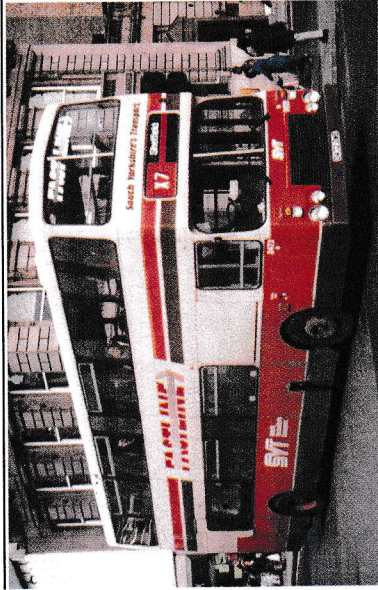
Howard Spencer, B.Sc.(Hons.), B.Ed.(Hons.) and Steven Baines

Registration number D 472 OWE, this is a 1986 Dennis Dominator A1011-6LXCT with Alexander "RH" DPH78F bodywork.

Background

Few visitors recently to Sandtoft would have failed to notice the "new" motorbus arrival in its bold red and yellow livery. The bus is D472 OWE, one of the last vehicles delivered to the erstwhile South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive's operating company South Yorkshire's Transport before privatisation. The bus was new in 1986 and delivered in the PTE's red, cream and brown livery, with red and cream interior and brown trimmed moquette seats, this livery succeeding the PTE's original beige and brown (or "coffee and cream", to use one of the more repeatable unofficial descriptions!).

D472 OWE (originally 2472 with the PTE) was the second in a batch of fifteen vehicles (2471-2485; D471-485 OWE) which were a stunning departure from the PTE's standard double-deck design of the time. The main PTE standard was the normal length Dennis Dominator fitted with bus-seated Alexander "RH" design bodywork, with a traditional internal feel. The other contemporary double-deck "standards" of the period after the withdrawal of Leyland's Atlantean from the home market in the early 1980's were batches of MCW-bodied Metrobuses. The majority of the PTE standard buses of the period (Dominator and Metrobus alike), were fitted with Rolls Royce Eagle engines. 2472's batch of fifteen were different beasts. Fitted with outwardly similar Alexander RH bodywork, they featured the lengthened (34') Dominator chassis



2472 (D472 OWE) seen at Castle Square, Sheffield on 4 January 1988 when approximately 18 months old
Photo: Dave Verity

- nearly three feet longer than the "standards". To our knowledge these were the first such length Dominators delivered to a UK operator. This extra length resulted in a small "half-bay" window in the middle of the body and a slightly longer rear overhang. Gardner engines and Voith fully automatic transmission powered the vehicles. The Gardner engines were again an innovation for the time, being turbo-charged versions of the fairly new LXC engine, having the designation 6LXCT (6 cylinder LXC Turbocharged). The internal specification was a further departure from the PTE's usual reserve, although retaining a traditional, quality feel, using cream and dark red panelling. Coach type seating was provided, finished in an attractive chocolate brown moquette, with a central red and cream pinstripe effect. Upstairs an unusual railway-style arrangement of back to back facing seating was used, this being changed to a standard forward facing arrangement when the type was later refurbished by Mainline Services. We believe the unusual arrangement may have been to allow the addition of tables at some stage, but we have been unable to find any evidence for this idea in our research to date.

The dual purpose specification, and more powerful engine were specifically chosen for the batch's envisaged role to operate the PTE's growing network of commuter-targeted express services within the South Yorkshire area, and extending into neighbouring West Yorkshire and East Yorkshire (at that stage, North Humberside). These services were branded as the "Fastline" network, and the vehicles featured this branding on their upper front windows. Due to this allocation on such services this batch of Dominators soon became referred to as the Fastlines, to distinguish them from their "standard" bus brethren.

Following on from this batch, the PTE ordered a further batch of five long-length Dominators, again with Alexander "RH" bodywork. These were numbered 2486-2490 (D486-490 OWE). The same Gardner 6LXCT engines and high-speed automatic transmission were used to power the vehicles, but the bodywork featured a revised frontal appearance with rectangular headlights and a revised grille styling. The rear featured windowless lower panels. Internally the vehicles were fitted to a more luxurious standard

featuring similar coach seats, but with ceiling luggage racks. The lower rear saloon was further fitted with full-size luggage racks to increase luggage carrying capacity with the internal colour scheme being similar to the "Fastlines". These vehicles were designed to operate the longer-distance inter-county, inter-city express services branded the Coachline network (such as the X32 Sheffield to Leeds motorway express and X33 Sheffield - Bradford express). These vehicles became referred to in turn as the Coachlines.

2472 was initially allocated to Rotherham depot, operating on such routes as the X78. The vehicle was soon transferred to Doncaster with several of its sisters and they remained there for the rest of their long service lives, operating mainly on the X88 Doncaster - Goole via Thorne and X89 Doncaster - Camblesforth routes. In their last couple of years in service, however, the vehicles were demoted to more mundane duties, often being seen operating short Doncaster local services.

As with all the Fastlines and Coachlines, 2472 passed into the ownership of Mainline Services, the privatised operating company of the PTE, receiving versions of its current, bold "Post Office red and canary yellow" livery. Its original fleet number was retained during Mainline's ownership. Mainline refurbished most of the batch and the Coachlines in the early 1990s to prolong their service life and update their image. This involved re-trimming the internal panels in a modern grey speckle design, painting the staircase, stairwell and cab area in a slate grey colour and adding DIPTAC "hi-vis" grab rails in yellow. The lower rear window was panelled over and the front appearance tidied up with the removal of fog lamps and secondary headlights. The seats were re-trimmed in Mainline's standard yellow/red "sausage" design. Some structural work was also undertaken to strengthen the rear sub-frame, which was prone to warping and sag due to the increased overhang length and heavy engine.

When First Group plc acquired Mainline Services during the early 21st century, 2472 was retained by First South Yorkshire, but received what is its current fleet number, 30500, when the Group introduced its national fleet numbering scheme in 2004. 2472 was finally withdrawn on 8 July, 2006 and has the distinction of being the last Dennis Dominator to operate in passenger service for First South Yorkshire. On the same day, sister 30507 (2480) which had also operated, retired to the depot early after rush hour duties, leaving 2472 (30500) as the last operating Dominator to perform into the early evening, its last duty being on route 66 (the one to Intake, not California!).

In the next *Sandtoft Scene* we will look at why we choose 2472.....

NEWS FROM OTHER MUSEUMS

BLACK COUNTRY MUSEUM

from Keith Hopkinson

The expected modern trolleybus event was called off at the last moment by Trolley motion, yet again depriving Britain of a taste of what the up-to-date trolleybus can be capable of: instead, a lecture was given at the National Exhibition Centre by John Fuller, to an audience gathered at the European Bus Show. Perhaps the interest shown then might enable the anticipated demonstrations to take place some time in the future!

Recent work on vehicles includes:

Wolverhampton 433: Work on the vehicle recently included fitting a new pressure relief valve on the hydraulic system.

Belfast 246: The differential housing cover locating fixings have been re-secured in the saloon.

Bradford 735: Work to the low voltage charging circuits has been undertaken to bring it back to working on 24 volts!

Teesside T291(ex-Reading 186): Work on the upper deck slowly continues to progress, more fittings which have been worked upon off site being re-fitted.

DEAR 'SCENE

Dear 'Scene

Firstly congratulations on the improved format and content of *Sandtoft Scene* in 2006.

Secondly, the view of Sandtoft from space reminds me of such a view, albeit from a mere 2,000ft height, I gained about 20 years ago, during a short circuit in a light aircraft at Sturgate airfield near Gainsborough. The pilot (Chief Instructor Scott) was amazed as I identified Bradford, Huddersfield and Reading trolleybuses down on the Square: I explained that it was the roof colours!

Thirdly, I was highly delighted about the mammoth task of restoring Nottingham (3)67. I remember discovering this rusty vehicle surrounded by corrugated iron sheeting and used as a store 45 years ago at Leverton, whilst living in Spalding. Alas I shall not live to see the end results!

David Kay (Louth)

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Dear 'Scene

Like John in *Sandtoft Scene* (October 2006), I do have trouble getting to the Museum. I use public transport and can only get to the Museum on Bank Holiday Mondays or for Sandtoft Gathering.

I travel by train from Preston via Manchester. On a Sunday the first train from Manchester is 11:10am, arriving in Doncaster 12:35 pm - that's 5 minutes after the bus has left. On Bank Holiday Mondays there is a train at 10:10am from Manchester arriving Doncaster at 11:35, which is a 55 minute wait for the bus. The bus would be better at 12:45 not 12:30, and on the return there is no problem - the train to Manchester is at 42 minutes past the hour.

I would love to get to Sandtoft more often. I have not been there since 30 July and it will be Easter Monday, if the weather is good, before I get there again.

E Billington (Preston)

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Dear 'Scene

THE ROUTE TO SANDTOFT - A FEW QUERIES ANSWERED

I have been fascinated reading Steve Collins' notes on Plumtree, which have rekindled memories of events of long ago.

Shortly, when I have discovered all the relevant papers, currently well buried

after 40 years, I plan to write the early history of Rotherham 37's preservation. In 1964 a colleague and myself founded the Sheffield Omnibus Enthusiasts Society, and we organised a number of tours on the remaining trolleybus systems. Steve reports that, on some tours he attended, there were more enthusiasts from Sheffield than from Nottingham, and these would undoubtedly be SOES-organised events. As I recall, the last Rotherham trolleybus tour was a joint event, and the "Last Rotherham Trolleybus" sign attached to the front of no.30 was made by myself. On this tour "The Teacher" made a speech (similar to that in Nottingham) at Pumping Station terminus saying how we should attempt to preserve a Rotherham trolleybus.



Rotherham trolleybus no.30 on the joint SOES - NTG tour on 3 October 1965. Can anyone identify the people in this photograph?

Photo: Dennis Vickers' collection

This prompted me to write to Rotherham Corporation, and, to our amazement and delight, we received a reply offering us no. 37 free of charge. However, the NTG had sent a similar request, and the Corporation, mistakenly believing that we were working together, sent them a carbon copy of their offer to us.. When the NTG voiced their protests, a meeting was arranged with Mr. I.O. Fisher, the General Manager. We had the offer of outside accommodation at one of Sheffield Transport's garages, but "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.

As a young lad in junior school, I had met Susan, and encouraged her to have an interest in buses. As we grew older, it became obvious that Susan was "a few coppers short of a shilling" and thus rarely invited her on enthusiast outings. However, on the Bradford trolleybus tour referred to in Steve's notes, we saw an opportunity for "revenge" and invited Susan along. We painted to her a very black picture of "Black Rod" and "The Teacher", telling her that they had stolen 37 from us. Once on the tour, we pointed out "Black Rod" and Susan did us proud - as Steve has graphically described!

We regularly visited 37 at Plumtree and were saddened to watch her deteriorate, for no work was ever done. Also we became aware of the rift developing between "The Teacher" and "Black Rod", eventually resulting in "The Teacher" joining our trolleybus preservation activities (we also owned Manchester 1344 at this time). Thus I decided to return 37 to Sheffield, and

worry later about any consequences. A towing vehicle was hired from Kennings, and was attached to 37 at a deserted Plumtree, for the journey to Sheffield. Afterwards, "The Teacher" said we had done the right thing, and there was no comeback from any NTG member, for they seemed too involved in internal arguments.

The remainder of the story of 37, until she was brought to Sandtoft in April 1973, will follow shortly, but I hope the above has solved some 40 year old mysteries for Steve.

Dennis E. Vickers (Chesterfield)

SANDTOFT'S MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT APPEAL

The big news is that we are now in a position to make a first payment for the additional land !

We are currently waiting for the legal side (searches to be carried out, contracts to be drawn up and agreed, etc.) before we can part with our money.

We have been able to progress to this stage because of how well the fund-raising is going and the healthy result of our trading in 2006.

In October's *Sandtoft Scene*, I mentioned the initiative of vehicle owners putting several years worth of vehicle accommodation payments "up front". At the turn of the year, owners had paid for some eight vehicles for five years each, and we have several more firm promises from other owners. We have also had three offers of substantial loans from members.

We are by no means there yet in terms of raising the necessary cash, as the accompanying "thermometer" shows (the blue indicates the vehicle "up-front" payments), and, of course, loans will have to be paid back in due course. We believe we can make budgeted loan repayments through our trading activities – admissions, shop and café.

The purchase of additional land for the Museum signifies a new era in Sandtoft's fortunes. It is the moment we have all been wanting for a long time now and it is gratifying to have been able to achieve this entirely through our own efforts.

Donations, big and small, are still requested to meet the shortfall in our initial £90,000 target, so please give generously – if you haven't already done so – so that we can rapidly proceed to the development stage !

Francis Whitehead, FINANCIAL DIRECTOR

