

# 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:

Nottingham 506 & 493 at the East Midlands Weekend at the end of August 2007. neither had seen service at Sandtoft for some years *Photo: Doug Barrow*

### 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.



### WEDDING BELLS



Our congratulations go to Infrastructure Director Brian Maguire and his new wife Janette (Jenny) who were married on Saturday 15 September 2007 at St Paul's Church, Ashbey, Scunthorpe. Our best wishes go to them for every happiness in their new life together.



### EDITORIAL

Firstly I would like to add my own congratulations to Brian and Jenny on their marriage. I wish them well in the future.

And now an apology for the delay in completing Sandtoft Scene. It is all my fault as over the last few months I have been very busy on other matters and I just have not had the time available to complete Scene for its early October publication.

It will come as no surprise to the people that know me that I have a photograph of Nottingham trolleybuses on the front page. This was taken during the East Midlands Weekend when Nottingham 506 and 493 were joined in service by Derby 172 and 224 (the latter on loan from East Anglia Transport Museum at Carlton Colville, in exchange for London 1812). Nottingham vehicles on static display were trolleybus no.466, AEC Regent III no.137 and tower wagon no.802. Also poking her rather rusty nose out of the depot was trolleybus no.67. It was an excellent weekend which attracted many East Midland visitors. Well done to all those members and directors who put in so much work to ensure a good weekend was had by all.

### AROUND THE BOARD

..... from Steve Harrison, Chairman:

It has been some while since I put pen to paper, and as a lot has gone on



since my last contribution to Sandtoft Scene, that may seem a little remiss. But as many of you will know, I have had to function from the background since last October due to my wife Trish's illness.

Just as last year closed on a high with an exceptional turnover and higher than ever visitor numbers, I was dealt three blows in a very short period which turned a lot of this year into a low for me. Anyway, I'm not going to dwell on the gloom as I am pleased to say that things are now turning around nicely.

This year's calendar has not been quite as demanding as last, but bad weather has plagued us on our open days (or on the run-up to them), particularly in the first half of the year, and of course, 'Gathering was a victim of this.



The scene looking down the "back straight" from the main gate on 25 June 2007.  
Photos: Dave Shephera



The central grass area (that took weeks to dry out !)  
Photo: Nick Broxholme

Nevertheless, all the various departments and volunteers have worked together very well to make the best of it. As it happened, the actual weather on 'Gathering weekend was relatively good, but the central grass and the field we were proposing to use for car parking and our visiting vehicle display were absolute no-go areas as a result of a serious amount of rainfall during the previous few weeks. We did open and have Trolleydays on both the Saturday and the Sunday, as we thought it was inevitable that folk would turn up anyway: sure enough, they did, and we had two fairly busy days – but financially we are, of course, well, well down on our original expectations. Anyway, many thanks to all who have helped make the 2007 open days so far (there are two more weekends to come), go with a swing !

### Health and Safety

In the last edition of *Sandtoft Scene*, Francis Whitehead set out our aims regarding meeting health and safety requirements and I now want to enlarge on some aspects of these requirements.

There are a lot of changes about to happen at the Museum in relation to our health and safety arrangements. Most of this is demanded by law: it is not something that has been dreamt up to make life awkward, but is there simply to protect people from injury, death and even themselves. It is also necessary for us to take measures to reduce the risk of fire and like dangers. I don't want any of the arrangements we will be introducing to be taken lightly or ignored by any member or visitor.

Stewart David has volunteered to act as a safety advisor and has been joined by Peter Rowell, who offered his services at this year's volunteers' day in early June. Following Stewart's excellent start and enthusiasm in getting our H&S obligations sorted out at the grass-roots level, Peter's practical and professional approach to the various issues and Francis's preparation (in collaboration with Stewart, Peter and myself) of the top-level H&S Policy documentation, forms, etc., I'm sure we can look forward to a very professional and polished implementation of an acceptable and workable health and safety system.

Amongst the many requirements is compliance with the smoke-free law and new fire regulations, both introduced this year: already, Peter has undertaken new fire risk assessments for the main Museum site and revealed a few matters that the Board are now considering.

Amongst the new measures to protect our workers will be a procedure for a simple inspection of any electrical equipment (including extension cables) brought to Company premises for any use (i.e. vehicle restoration, making tea, cutting grass and everything else), as such equipment (whoever owns it), when on our premises, under H&S regulations comes under our remit.

It should also be noted that from now on, written risk assessments (and on occasions, where necessary, consequential method statements) are being introduced for all jobs carried out on our premises: many of these (e.g. for recurring tasks) will be generic and we will build up a "library" of risk assessments for general reference, but job-specific ones will be required for



anything "out of the ordinary". Instruction/ training on how to carry out risk assessments is available, as is specific advice - contact Peter, Stewart or myself. There is bound to be a learning curve and I do hope each and every one of you will help us comply with the various requirements and be ever-vigilant. We (your directors and our H&S advisors) need to be told - in writing please - of any problems or lapses (not by back-stabbing or making derisory comments!) as they may compromise our position. Such reports will be investigated and acted upon as appropriate following set guidelines. As I stated earlier, none of this has been dreamt up to make life awkward: it is a requirement of the law and we want what we are implementing to be workable and not be too onerous.

One final thing on H&S: it was noted during a visit by North Lincolnshire's Environmental and Safety Officer during the summer that all manner of paints and flammable liquids were stored on individual 'buses. This clearly is a fire risk. We will require an amnesty to allow such items to either be removed completely from our premises, correctly disposed of or placed in a proper paint store facility. Please discuss the options with Peter Rowell if it is your paint or your bus.

Sorry to go on about all this, but I'm afraid things have moved on since we first had our museum site in 1969, and we must too !!

..... from **Bruce Lake, Company Secretary**:

Members will be aware that it is important to maintain our Museum's Registration as this indicates the standing of the Museum, and enables us to apply for grants and other assistance which would otherwise be unavailable to us. We have to re-submit our application periodically to maintain the Registration - the next one being in early 2009. While this may sound a long time away, conditions for registration have been tightened, and there are several aspects which were ongoing when we first registered which have not been finished yet! The main areas we have fallen short in are those of documentation of our procedures. The Museum Development Officer for East Riding and North Lincolnshire has provided us with a checklist, and there is rather a lot on it that we haven't done yet! These include various risk assessments - for Fire, Safety and the like - plus staff handbooks, a forward business plan, list of facilities and whether they are disabled-accessible or not, visitor charter, control of environment for susceptible objects, and the accessioning of our exhibits (to name but a few).

Some of the above are under way, but one of the major and time-consuming ones is the accessioning. This involves compiling a comprehensive index of all the exhibits which we consider form the core displays at the Museum, and which if lost, would mean the Museum would cease to exist in its present form. Apart from the obvious (i.e., the trolleybuses and buses) there are many other items which we have on display which create the feel of the trolleybus era - the shop windows, the 1950s prefab and so on. Accessioning is a laborious job, and entails listing all the items we consider should be included, establishing ownership, condition, location etc. and then marking them with an accession number, adding them to a database. Note that not everything we own needs to be accessioned - spare parts for vehicles, for instance, would not be

accessioned, nor would items which we may want to hold in reserve or dispose of, or duplicate items in a collection, or a common item in poor condition where another one is likely to turn up to replace it. Once accessioned, it is quite difficult to dispose of an item as there are strict procedures which must be followed in order to do so. However, even non-accessioned items need to be recorded, as we need to know what we have and how to find them again. The idea of the database is to enable us to quickly locate any item should anyone want to see it. Reasons for this may be that the original owner who donated it would like to see it again (more common than you might think), or for research purposes (as we will need study facilities for anyone who wants to research the period and/ or the artefacts which the Museum possesses). It is our intention to have two separate databases - one for accessioned items and one for those not. The astute among you will have noted that, once recorded, any item moved from one location to another will have to have its entry changed on the database. Running a modern museum is subject to all this, so it's not a case any more of turning up now and again and driving a trolleybus....

The accessioning process is now under way - several starts have been made in the past, but we now need a concerted effort otherwise we will not finish the task in the 15 months available. The Volunteer's Day in June gathered up a few individuals who were keen to get going on this, and they have made good headway. We have taken up suggestions from our advisors and, in order to more efficiently record our items and find them again in the future, a computer database is being set up. A suitable computer has arrived, and a copy of their Access database template has very kindly been provided for us by Normanby Hall (at Scunthorpe), who passed their Accreditation earlier this year. They will also provide assistance and training in the use of this software. In addition, the back room of the Pelham Building has now been set out as an accessioning and archives room, with a desk to work on and shelves and other storage facilities so that the accessioners can work on the database, and researchers can research.

Clearly, there is still much to do and more volunteers are needed to make this the success it needs to be. In particular, we would like to appoint a Displays and Exhibitions Manager who would be responsible for keeping control of what we display and where. Currently, things get moved around almost on a whim, and that cannot be allowed in future - we will have to know what has arrived that is "new", what has been displayed, what has been moved and what has gone into storage - and record all that on the database. He/ she would also be the focus for ideas or requests for new exhibitions or to rotate our displays, as we have a considerable number of artefacts in storage that never see the light of day. So if you would like to consider that job, or help with the accessioning, please contact David Lovegrove at the Museum, or myself (see page 2 for contact details), and we'll get you started!

..... from **Brian Maguire, Infrastructure Director**:

Following on from the last report, the new 'bus loading area by the workshop has seen further progress: the paving area at the depot end was extended to





The final touches are put to the paved area adjoining the workshop All photos on this page by Nick Broxholme



The completed footpath and temporary bark-chip area of the new bus station. A small traffic office is to be constructed where some of the bark chippings are.



Graham Bilbé is seen hard at work repairing some very rotten shop window frames in the Axholme Stores

include ramps for wheelchair access both to the relocated pedestrian crossing and to continue along the front to the depot, whilst ducts have been laid beneath for cables (for use at a later date) and three redundant traction poles have been removed. A start has been made on painting the crossing, and will be completed later. An area behind the new paving, adjoining the workshop was cleared and, as a temporary measure, has been edged and filled with bark chippings. As soon as funds could be released, the area forming the opposite side of the crossing was prepared and concreted, with a foot-wide strip of concrete also placed alongside the kerb-line to keep it from falling into the excavations for the road widening. Work on the area was then suspended for the "summer" with the area fenced off.

Over by the new entrance building the path has been extended by slabbing it as far as the Memorial Garden, thus tidying this part of the site.

Grass cutting has continued at a pace - such a pace that the strimmer died ! A new one is now in service.

Thanks to a grant from the Prince's Trust, a team from Danum School in Doncaster has taken on the task of restoring a couple of our old petrol pumps and the old bus shelter that was rescued a few years ago from Jeffery Lane, Belton. It looks very good in its new red and cream colours. We hope that a more detailed report on this project will appear next time.

The cycle shop has seen some re-organisation as it continues to expand its vast array of items - it's nearly bursting at the seams ! The same team have also re-vamped the display in the brown tram body.

In the Pelham building the seemingly never-ending job of removing the glue-soaked polystyrene and other debris from the wall boarding, continues. It is intended to get this building finished by Christmas, but there is much to do yet - guttering to fit, doors to complete, the electrical installation to finish, lead flashing to the chimney stack and internal woodwork to prepare and varnish or paint.

Another job that has been tackled - this time by Graham Bilbé - is the repair of the window frames to the Axholme Stores building shop fronts. The job has proved much more extensive than originally thought, with some glass having to be removed whilst the repairs were carried out, but Graham has persevered with Gerry Carroll following up behind with his paint brush. One window sill (Dorothy's) has yet to be done. Trouble is that now they are painted, you'd never know they had to be repaired !!

This year has been slowed by problems of ill health and family stuff, but we still make progress despite it all !

### THE ROUTE TO SANDTOFT



**SYLTE 2472'S ROUTE TO SANDTOFT** Howard Spencer  
It all started back in November 2005 with a chance remark by Steven Baines, a fellow conductor at Sandtoft, while we were on duty during the Twilight Trolleyday. "...I'm a bit fed up," he said, "they're about to get rid of my favourite bus, and it'll probably end up on the scrap heap."

At the time I had a reasonable amount of money saved up to buy a bus - a long-held ambition of mine. After a bit more discussion with Steven I realised his favourite bus happened to be of a type that I also had some fondness for, having lived in the area and remembering the type coming into operation. So it seemed a logical thing to do to join forces and try and secure 2472 for preservation.

Once having decided we wanted to acquire 2472, three things dawned on us. Firstly we would need somewhere to park a 33'7" long, 8'6" wide, 14'7" high double deck bus. I realised fairly quickly that neither my drive, nor Steven's street would be up to the task, so where else could we stick it? Secondly, how do you set about negotiating to buy a bus from a major operator, and thirdly, how much would they want for such a large item of aluminium ?



Not having ever been in the position of trying to buy a bus, it was with some trepidation that we wrote our first letter to Mr John Clayton, the Engineering Director of First South Yorkshire, expressing our interest in 2472. Wishing to sound a little more professional, we quickly convened a meeting of ourselves and promptly formed The 2472 Preservation Society, which we thought sounded a bit more impressive than Howard and Steven. We needn't have worried: within a week of posting our letter, we received a very warm and positive response, indicating that they would be pleased for the bus to enter preservation. Mr. Clayton said he had given orders that 2472 should be placed on hold for our "society" and for it not to be disposed of on withdrawal. Result! But no mention of any price. Hmmm!

So that left us with two questions: would we be able to afford her? And would we find a suitable place in order to keep such a large vehicle?

During this time we (as the "Society") had been trying to think of answers to the second of these questions. After all, without a place to store 2472, everything else was irrelevant. As we were both active members at Sandtoft, we knew that accommodation at the Museum was very scarce. It did seem to us, however, that both Sandtoft and the Sheffield Bus Museum were the most logical places to try and secure accommodation. Again, with great trepidation, a letter was penned (or typed) (or word-processed) to Bruce Lake, our esteemed Company Secretary, formally requesting accommodation for our project. We had incidentally learnt from another contact that the Sheffield Bus Museum was officially full, and so all our hopes rested in a positive response from Sandtoft. Bruce was quick to respond, and indicated that he would have to bring our request before the Board, and so a few very tense weeks passed awaiting their decision. We are thus eternally grateful to the Board for their positive response and offer of accommodation for 2472. Loud sighs of relief and big smiles! The most difficult problem had been solved.

This still left that other question: how much would First want for their bus. After all, it is about 6 tonnes of aluminium, and scrap aluminium prices are high. £6,000? £8,000? We couldn't guess. To the net. We located a number of bus preservation societies, and Dennis owners and bombarded them with questions regarding the potential cost of the bus, known problems to look out for, etc., etc. In general, we got positive responses and a good deal of useful information, but little definite about price. Our best guide was from Ensign Bus dealers who thought about £1,500 - £2,000 tops. This was good news as it was less than the £3,000 we had budgeted for.

It was now late March and no further contact from First. We had no idea when 2472 was due to be retired. We had read that First's HQ had given orders that all buses should be painted in full corporate livery, or withdrawn. This meant 2472's service days should be numbered as she was still in Mainline Services' livery and had little expectation of receiving a re-paint. We then had a breakthrough: we had managed to track down several contacts within First. Enquiries were very positive, and almost unbelievable. First had sold many "standard" Dominators to staff at prices around the £50 mark (yes, FIFTY

pounds!), with some even going as a BOGOF (Buy One, Get One Free to those uninitiated with retail jargon). A couple had been let go for just a fiver without tyres!!

Late May, and by now we had "recruited" a couple more honorary members to The 2472 Preservation Society. Armed with some advice from DO&LRS and Sandtoft member Jim Sambrooks, we made the call to First. After some protracted wheeling and dealing, we finally agreed to the grand price of £150 for 2472 and they would throw in 2473 for £50 as a "donor" bus. Tyres would be extra by negotiation with Goodyear, as First rent the tyres. We were in business! First, however, couldn't give us any definite timescale when they expected the buses to become available. They were waiting for vehicles to be cascaded from First West Yorkshire and First York following the arrival of York's Wright Streetcars. School contracts also meant the vehicles were still required.

It was eventually early July before we got the news that the buses would be available. 2472 was in tax and MoT, but 2473's tax and MoT had expired - "Do you have trade plates?" As the simple answer was "no", it was decided that we would take 2472, which could "legally" be driven, to Sandtoft and leave 2473 until we could devise a legal way of driving it on public roads. I organized insurance for the vehicles at quite reasonable rates, so we were in business, and the date of 8 July was set for the big day.

The morning of 19 July arrived quickly, and in blazing sunshine I set off to collect Steven from Thorne, and then on to First South Yorkshire Headquarters to hand over the cash and sign the release papers. Things proceeded well and we were duly given our "Release Note" from Mr Harrison entitling us to remove 2472 from Doncaster's Leicester Avenue Depot. Then onto Doncaster to collect our official driver (as neither of us held PCV Class D entitlements, which are required for 2472 as she is under thirty years old and, therefore, not qualifying for Heritage Vehicle Exemption). With our driver (Jim Sambrooks) duly collected, we proceeded to Leicester Avenue, and with a mixture of excitement, slight disbelief and trepidation we located the Duty Foreman and presented our Release Note and waited while 2472 was driven into the yard. Unfortunately the blinds had been removed, and so some frantic hunting by depot staff produced two blind sets (unfortunately not for a Dominator as we were later to discover). Jim duly inspected his new charge and filled her up with water, with a slight feeling of déjà-vu, it having been several years since last performing this task at Leicester Avenue as an employee. Steven joined Jim for the journey to Sandtoft, while I followed in my car. The journey went well and 2472 acquitted herself well, achieving a full 50mph on the A18 without breaking into a sweat (or whatever buses do). We arrived at Sandtoft at 12.15 and posed for photographs. The rest of the afternoon was taken with cleaning and graffiti-removal.

Internally 2472 was in very sound order, with a good set of coach seats to both decks. Many of the batch had had bus seats fitted upstairs by Midland Road depot, but Leicester Avenue's examples all managed to retain their full compliment of coach seats.



Externally, 2472 was showing her age, the main concern being some very dented roof panels on the near-side, which appeared to be more than the result of an argument with a rogue tree. The damage was also apparent inside with some very bulged ceiling panels and window pillars. Mechanically, things seemed quite good.

Meanwhile, back to 2473, which was still residing at Leicester Avenue. It was about this time that we learnt that another vehicle, 2479 (First no.30506) was also available and about to be assigned to the depot in the sky, and so we stepped in and made First an offer they couldn't refuse - and so this bus also joined our growing fleet. This still left the problem of how to move two buses without MoT and road duty on public roads without breaking any laws. After much debate and discussion, trying to have First employees deliver the vehicles with First's trade plates, and many other convoluted schemes, we contacted the DVLA. They confirmed that it would be legal to move the vehicles from the depot to a MoT testing station and then onto storage without MoT/ tax. Thus in late August we booked double MoTs with Unitech of Rotherham. This time we needed two drivers, and so Chris Procter joined Jim Sambrooks to move the vehicles.

We arrived on the afternoon of 29 August, duly armed with Release Notes for the two vehicles. 2479 started first time and was moved to the yard, but 2473 was less happy about the move from the warm, comfortable depot and required the services of several electricians before coming alive. Chris drew the short straw and took over 2473 while Jim took the controls of 2479. After an uneventful drive through Doncaster rush-hour traffic and the more scenic fringes of Doncaster, we arrived at Unitech where the buses were to be kept overnight ready for test the following day. 2473 showed some worrying symptoms of differential wear and lurched through gear changes (all the buses are fully automatic). The transmission selector is ominously labelled "D N R" on the dashboard, which we hopefully believe stands for "Drive - Neutral - Reverse" and not its medical equivalent!

The following day (30 August), I collected Jim from his duties in Doncaster and we made our way to Unitech for the tests. Chris joined us later from work. Fate was not on our side (we never really expected it to be). Despite 2479 being in Class VI certificate, it was failed on three external lamps, and 2473 was failed on rear brake efficiency. Not having any spare lamps with us, we devised a cunning plan to borrow 2473's lamps and return it back to test (not strictly legal, I suppose, but we were a little desperate and frustrated). Unfortunately, the great VOSA inspector in the sky was not looking favourably on this plan. The buses, although seemingly identical, were fitted with different lamp holders; one having single connectors, the other having double. Powell's depot was also shut for the day, so no chance of blagging any spares from there. The only option left was to resign ourselves to a double fail, and take the buses on to storage. On a more positive note, Dave, the Unitech examiner, said he thought both buses were in generally good condition, so we had some encouragement.

It was a result in a way, as we now had all three vehicles safely delivered in

storage. The next stage, as I am sure many of you will know, is the most disconcerting. This is to assess the vehicles and estimating the work required to get them up to scratch. I think this can be the most worrying and in many cases heart-breaking stage, as what seem quite sound vehicles on the outside can often hide many major problems on the inside; as we were about to discover....

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM RECENT OPEN DAYS

### "Reduced" 'Gathering

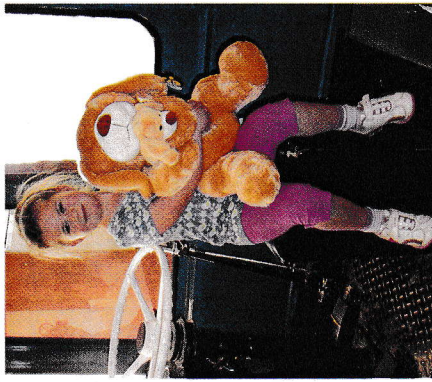
Jason and Brenda Bowers have been holding raffles in support of Sandtoft for some time now, both on and off site. They felt that an area they could help the Museum in was fundraising, so undertook to provide various fluffy rabbits, teddy bears and dogs as raffle prizes. Jason is well known to many members for the series of videos he has produced of Sandtoft since 2000. He has donated these to us and they are available to view on site. The raffles for this year alone, since Easter, have totalled £140 in aid off the Museum. On the Sunday of the "Reduced" 'Gathering", they set up their stall next to the Pelham building with a "Name the Dog" raffle and raised another £15.

The overall winner was Amy Whitmore from Belton, who correctly guessed

that the name was "Harry" and won an enormous dog with its own puppy. A delighted Amy is pictured right clutching her prize in our trolleybus simulator. The second prize was won by Matthew Allison for the name "Christopher".

### 40s-50s Weekend

Colin Peck, from the Austin Counties Car Club, recently visited Sandtoft during the 40s-50s weekend and brought along his wooden-bodied 1950-vintage Austin A70 Countryman to help add a period feel to the event. The car was built during the post-war "export or die" period for the British motor industry and was one of the 90% of the 900 similar cars (bodied for Austin by Papworth Industries of Cambridge-shire) that were exported when new. This particular example was delivered in 1950 to Canada. It was shipped back in 1998 and restored over a six-year period. The car, known as a "woodie", is a regular at classic car shows around the Greater London area, where Colin lives, so the visit to Sandtoft is the furthest north (in the UK) that the car has ever been.





## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

11 November 2007 Trolleyday featuring twilight trolleybus services  
8 - 9 December 2007 Santa Weekend - visit Santa with the kids !  
NOTE: there are no free bus services from Doncaster on these days - the service will resume next year and full details will appear next time (and, of course, will be included on our website). Don't forget, though, that our free Saturday link that connects with the 11.00am 291 Isle Coaches service from Doncaster Interchange (Stand A2), at **Epworth Rectory** will operate on Saturday, 8 December 2007 (returning to Epworth at 4.00pm to connect with service 399 which then arrives at Doncaster at 5.35pm).

**2008 Trolleyday Dates** are: 22, 23, 24 March (Easter weekend), 12, 13 April, 3, 4, 5 & 24, 25, 26 May (Bank Holiday weekends), 7, 8 & 21, 22 June, 12 & 13 July (Huddersfield Weekend), 26 & 27 July ("Gathering Weekend), 9 & 10 August (Blue's & Two's Weekend), 23, 24, 25 August (European Weekend), 13, 14 & 27, 28 September, 12 October (St. Leger Rally), 16 November (Twilight Running), 13, 14 December (Santa weekend). We are in the process of putting themes to some of the "vacant" 2008 Trolleyday slots and the full programme of events will appear next time.

## **TROLLEYBUS ANNIVERSARIES**

Compiled by Geoff Welburn

### **October to December**

#### Systems Opened

95 years since Rotherham opened on 3 December 1912  
80 years since Birmingham opened on 27 November 1927  
75 years since Llanelli opened on 26 December 1932

#### Systems Closed

55 years since Llanelli closed on 8 November 1952

## **VEHICLES REPORTS**

**Nottingham 493.** (report from *Andy Thornton*) The last edition reported that attention had turned to the trolley gantry. Well, 493 has a non-standard, apparently unique at Sandtoft, trolley gantry ! The steelwork visible from the ground is quite typical, but planks of hardwood are attached to this, rather than the normal proprietary mounting block. Standard trolley bases are bolted to the wood, with rubber sheet inserts to provide noise damping. The nearside plank was renewed some years ago, with much external assistance. The offside one did not need changing at that time. It was noted as an advisory item in the 2006 inspection, being extensively cracked, but I had hoped to put it off for a little longer ! Probing the situation, I was able to extract a piece of the cracked timber, revealing some rot. Replacement was now a necessity.

Needless to say, all the fasteners were rusted solid, so the wood had to be removed in small sections, largely with a hammer and chisel. The fixing bolts were then sawn out, most of the sawing being sideways. The newly-exposed steelwork was cleaned and painted, the new wood drilled, trimmed to fit with the aid of a router, and then varnished. Eventually the whole lot went back

together, with of course, a newly-made rubber pad.

Another problem to be tackled was a missing headlight rim screw, the associated captive nut having become detached and lost many years ago. The light unit had previously been cleaned and painted, and now a replacement captive nut assembly was made and riveted into place. I must say I am extremely impressed by the precision of construction of the headlamp unit.

Many items removed to make life easier when working were gradually refitted e.g. contactor arc shields and the rear upstairs seat. Test-running on the Friday before the 'Gathering weekend revealed some problems, potentially the most troublesome being an intermittent contactor sequencing fault.

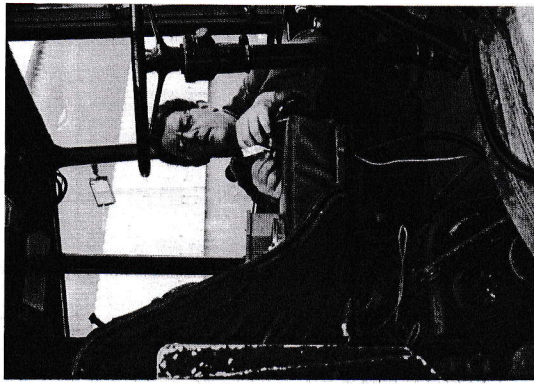
August saw completion of the major vehicle cleaning (a lucky break occurred when Chas Allen volunteered to assist with cleaning. Thank you - it was needed!), fitting a new set of batteries, sorting of the contactor problem (a loose connection), checking and cleaning of the control and interlock contacts and many other inspections and minor adjustments. A new driving-seat cushion was made and the back of the driver's seat re-covered. Brake adjustment was carried out and two new tyres fitted.

Eventually Graham Bilbé was able to pass the vehicle as fit for public service and, most satisfactorily, it ran successfully over the 3 days of the East Midlands (August Bank Holiday) Weekend.

**Bradford 558:** (report from *Geoff Welburn*) Replacements for all the upstairs rotten floor timber have now been fitted. New internal offside side panels are now being sourced and should be in place during September.

**Rotherham 73:** (a report from *Tim Stubbs* on work being carried out on 73 in *Burton-upon-Trent*) Cab frame restoration was already well underway when a decision was made to install the new "joggled" partition in time for visitors to see. This was coupled with a plan to continue the work on the roof, panelling over the former resistor recess and putting in the framework for the revised front dome over the destination gear. Once this work was completed, it seemed legitimate to start to refer to the vehicle by its previous fleet number - 73.

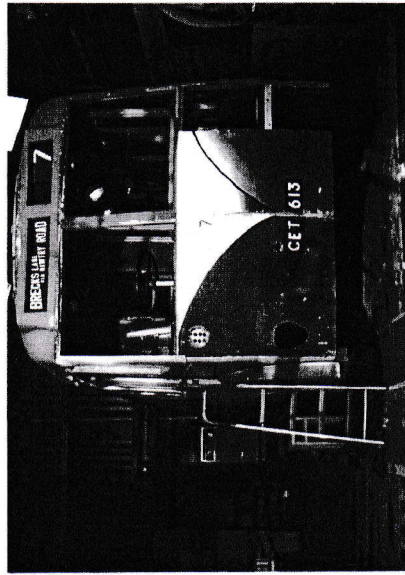
Rotherham seemed to have a penchant for re-numbering the fleet, a practice which seems in retrospect anything but productive. Our Sunbeam started life as number 88, being renumbered twice during her time at Rotherham. The subsequent numbers were 73 and 74 and it is unclear exactly when these re-numberings took place. A photograph exists of the trolleybus when new as



Andy Thornton at work in 493's cab  
Photo: Doug Barrow



number 88, complete with war-time markings, and this is proving helpful to us as the restoration progresses. By 1949, photographic evidence shows the number 73 being carried. Again there is a photo in existence and this post-war view shows the joggled bulkhead and rear-mounted resistor box. The final number carried was 74 and it seems likely that this was applied at the time of the 1950 rebuild. As we know, the changes were quite extensive and as the restoration is to be to pre-1949 condition, the number 73 is now the correct one for this vehicle.



Rotherham 73 in the summer of 2005

To pick up where we left off, the cab bulkhead was removed. The exposed steelwork was painted and work progressed over several weeks, manufacturing the hardwood members for the new bulkhead. The outer members of the earlier structure were retained and form a good basis for the new work. The steel stress panel was remade and a vertical centre section added,

this significantly improving the stiffness of the body at the front. As we have not been able to find any interior photographs of this vehicle, the exact arrangement of the bulkhead windows is unclear. It has been decided to have two equal openings, the one on the driver's side to be fitted with a sliding section – a practical item providing the chance of dialogue with the driver and also an emergency escape opening. The complete cab bulkhead was assembled and secured in place.

Another item tackled was the restoration and refitting of the steel frame which carried the cab-mounted circuit breakers. The frame itself was sound but the mounting studs had been affected by corrosion and had to be renewed. Upon refitting, a slight re-positioning was found to be needed, so as to provide clearance between the circuit breakers and the new bulkhead.

We have been fortunate to obtain a supply of the correct pattern destination winding gear from an enthusiast who has a particular interest in this equipment and an extensive collection from which we could draw. It was also possible to borrow an authentic Rotherham pre-war destination blind, and this has served as a pattern from which replicas have been made. The destination gear is now complete and blinds fitted.

Seat frames and roof-mounted ventilators are other items to receive attention, as was the wiring up of one circuit of the interior lighting, giving an impression of an illuminated interior. The seat trimming process has been steadily

progressing and by October four complete pairs of seats were fitted, as well as squabs for one of the rear longitudinal seats.

Following this, the main effort has been concentrated on stripping the interior and exterior off-side body panels so that the frame can be re-built. As with the near-side, the teak timber members are mainly in good condition but there is extensive corrosion to all the steel parts.

Sandtoft generously offered a compressor: it has been cleaned up and painted, the cylinder head reversed (to suit the installation on 73), tested electrically, and mounted on the vehicle. It has to be said, it looks very nice in its new paint finish.

As with work on the near-side of the vehicle, the opportunity has been taken to clean and paint the exposed parts of the off-side chassis frame. This uncomfortable job is an essential one to protect the steel members in the long term. After much hacking, grinding and welding, the strength started to be restored to the off-side body frame. As already mentioned, most of the teak frame parts are in good order, although some timber parts had to be replaced. This mainly arose where inferior post-war "hardwood" had been inserted into the frame on some previous Rotherham repair, probably tidying up after minor collisions. The "Tuesday" team completed the final bottom rails and install the guard rail brackets, two of which are new to replace missing items. A new opening flap will be needed over the compressor as the original is in poor condition. However, it is probably good enough to serve as a pattern.

Following the installation of the air compressor, there has been more progress on the air system. The air reservoir was missing and it was decided that, as this is a pressure vessel, it would be advisable to obtain a new one. As there are lots of air-braked vehicles on the road these days, it was a routine matter to select a reservoir from the lorry range currently available.

After some deliberations, a decision was made as to the location of the compressor governor. The choice lay between fitting it to the chassis frame, near the compressor, or in the vehicle cab, close to the floor and near the "low air" indicator flag. No strong evidence could be found for the original position used and as the environment in the cab would be cleaner and dryer, this was eventually the chosen location. A mounting bracket for the governor had to be made and a piece of steel was soon selected and folded.

With the governor in-situ, the next task was fitting up the runs of air piping and electrical conduit for the cables. As usual, one thing leads to another and whilst running the electrical feed to the compressor, it was realised that the compressor and governor earth leakage detection cables should also be run. These cables are fitted to every trolleybus and connect each major component (such as the resistor frame, trolley bases etc.) to an earth testing socket, enabling a daily earth leakage test to be performed. Whilst running the compressor earth cable, it was convenient to run the conduit and connections for the other earth test points at the same time and so 73 has suddenly started to sprout new wiring.

Working parties continue on Tuesdays and, little by little, restoration progress



is being made. It is a fact that sometimes many, many tedious hours are spent on some detailed improvements and little can be seen for the effort. And then, a relatively straightforward job is completed and the appearance of the vehicle is transformed. One such recent job has been fitting the external panelling and the beading strips to secure them, and painting the external faces with etch primer. After working on the body frame for such a long time, it is nice to have something easily visible to show for the effort.

One of the jobs needed prior to fitting one particular body panel, was the installation of the traction motor. This was because the motor was "passed in" from alongside the trolleybus and, leaving the panel off improved the access. We carefully measured and found that, by lifting the whole vehicle bodily by ten inches, it would be possible for the motor - on a hydraulic pallet truck - to pass under the offside chassis frame. Complete preparation of the traction motor mounting brackets preceded the fitting process, as did the manufacture of new motor commutator covers and an adaptor plate to suit the bracket positions on the Sunbeam chassis.

Finally all was ready and, with the chassis frame supported on timber baulks, the motor was wheeled under the chassis. The vehicle itself is still over the pit, of course, and this made it easier to locate the parts in the correct relative positions. Having got the motor underneath, the vehicle was lowered down, one end at a time, and the timber supports removed. At this stage it was discovered that all the clearances would be quite tight and as the traction motor was raised into position, the drive flange just cleared one of the chassis cross members. Within an hour or so, the motor was in position exactly over the chassis mounts, was lowered into position and the (new) securing bolts dropped in.

## DEPARTMENTAL NEWS

### TRAFFIC OFFICE

Firstly, many thanks to those of you that attended for the 'Gathering Weekend. Despite the fact we very regrettably had to cancel the main event, we managed to put on an excellent show for the many visitors that did in fact turn up on the day. Well done!

At the Board Meeting held on 15 July, it was decided to revert trolleybus services to their original format of departing from outside the Museum's Lecture Theatre until the new bus station project is fully completed.

As part of our ongoing health and safety improvement activity, I have been putting together job descriptions for both conductors and trolleybus drivers, and pending Board approval they should be available to all traffic staff shortly. In an effort to improve communication within the Traffic Department, and within the wider functions of the Museum, it would be of great benefit if you could let me have some basic contact details (e-mail address, home and/or mobile telephone number, etc.). Your cooperation with this is greatly appreciated. My e-mail address is [stewart.david@ntlworld.co.uk](mailto:stewart.david@ntlworld.co.uk). Finally, congratulations to Tim Stubbs, Chas Allen and David Verity for recently passing-out as trolleybus drivers.



Derby 224, a Willowbrook-bodied Sunbeam F4 came to Sandtoft from Carlton Colville to take part in the East Midlands Weekend as a swap for London 1812 (which took part in Carlton Colville's Trolleybus Weekend on 8/9 September). No.224 is seen passing our own Derby 172. An account of both events will appear ext time.

Photo: Doug Barrow

## AT THE BUS STOP

### They Travel The World To See Us

*We have had several visits this year from individuals or groups from foreign parts. I'm going to detail here just some of the more significant ones so far.*

In May and June, Ian Little and his wife from Foxton, New Zealand, toured the UK during which they spent a very happy couple of days at Sandtoft. Foxton is well-known for being probably the only occurrence of museum trolleybuses running regularly under their own overhead on public roads. Ian's schedule was very complex, as it took in many trolleybus, tram and railway operations from the Isle of Man to the Isle of Wight and everything in between! After initial contact, though Tim Stubbs, the schedule seemed to change on a weekly basis. Eventually, after persuasion that visiting on an open weekend was far better than when we are closed, they turned up on the European Sunday and stayed over until the Tuesday.

Suffice to say that Ian was absolutely amazed at what he saw, and was delighted, if not ecstatic, at the wealth of history we have at the Museum and the fact that he could see at first hand, examples of our collection nipping about at regular intervals. He was touched by the number of people who knew him, or of him (so the grapevine worked well) and found the place very friendly. Having arrived during the Sunday afternoon and being a regular driver at Foxton, we were able to offer Ian a drive of something quite unusual after hours - in this case Porto 140. I somehow think this made his weekend!

It wasn't long before he was asking if there was anything we didn't need, and his eyes fell on Bradford 847, sitting forlorn in Workshop Road. This would do him fine, he said. Well, after ascertaining that he wasn't joking, and discovering that he now houses Wellington 82, which we have been after for a while, we have certainly considered the possibility of an exchange. At the moment we are awaiting costs, to see if it is feasible.

Anyway, if there are those who are touring New Zealand, and intend to visit Foxton, be certain to mention Sandtoft, and I'm sure you'll get a warm reception!

Next were a band of German visitors led by the enthusiast Thomas Fischer. They had written to ask specifically if we could run Aachen 22 for them. Now,



as you may be aware, this trolleybus has been out of commission for some time with a number of mechanical problems and a need to examine the bodywork for some restoration to be undertaken. It has made occasional forays out, and we knew it could be coaxed to run under power, but it has not been fit to run in service. Graham Bilb , fresh from a visit to Germany, where he had been made very welcome, felt that we could do enough to it to make it operational for a special out-of-hours service, and so embarked with Ian Metcalfe on a few days work on it. They got it over the pit and expanded on the previous efforts to get the air system and the doors working. Sorting out the controller and the power steering were a priority, and this was effectively achieved. Other chassis and bodywork jobs were also completed, brake and leakage testing were adequate and 22 was therefore deemed satisfactory to be provided with a short-term "ticket" to operate in service for a closed, controllable party. Hence, after the Blue's and Two's Sunday, we ran 22 for our German visitors. They were delighted that the effort had been made, as they had especially wanted to see this unique vehicle operating. They took many photographs, and went away very satisfied.

The third was an individual sporting an Illinois Railway Museum tee-shirt. I didn't approach him at first - after all, I have a Seaton Tramway cap (amongst other souvenirs), but I don't work there! However, after I'd heard him speaking in an American accent, I did ask him if he was involved with the museum there: he turned out to be Ray Piesciuk, who is the superintendent of their trolleybus department!

The IRM, for those who don't know it, is near Chicago and is the premier museum in the US for trolleybuses - other museums may have a few, but I don't think they operate them. At the IRM they have 15 trolleybuses, (the largest collection in the US), many of them operational, including what I think is currently the world's oldest operating trolleybus, a 1930 Brill T40, and about half-a-mile of overhead. Having said all that, Ray told me the trolleybuses are the poor relation at the IRM, as they have some 375 vehicles, most of which are rail based - trains (steam, diesel and electric) or trams (perhaps I should say streetcars). Most people go to see them, not the trolleybuses, as they have an extensive tram line and a main line railway on their huge site! I suspect a day there would not be long enough to experience it all.

Ray was very impressed with our operation, and was delighted to see several trolleybuses in service at once. He was also interested to see our restoration projects, and of course our future restoration projects awaiting their turn. He marvelled at the quality of what we turn out, and the quantity of trolleybuses at Sandtoft - but, of course, the latter is easy to do, with us being the largest collection in the world!

I have always wanted to visit the IRM, having flown (sort of) over it a few times, and once even changed planes in Chicago. However, it's not easy to reach, being 30-odd miles outside the city, with no public transport links (why does that sound familiar....?), so at the moment it remains on my wish-list. Ray would give any Sandtoft member a big welcome, if he's on site. Anyone planning a visit should remember his name - but don't ask me to pronounce it!

Lastly, on the "Reduced" 'Gathering' Sunday, Rod Blackburn visited us: now living in Canberra (the capital of Australia), Rod is well known for his bus models, and in particular his trolleybus ones. He has produced many models over the years, of the highest quality and detail - mostly of London, but some others as well. He also makes some of the masters for the range of Little Bus kits produced by Tony Asquith in Halifax. He has produced a number of trolleybus masters for this range, including several London examples. However, he has never produced a Q1, mainly because this was turned out in large numbers by Corgi. However, recently he has decided that the Corgi model is inaccurate in a number of ways, and is now considering modelling one of these. Never having seen a Q1 "in the flesh", he was delighted that we had our 1812 out and running, so took the opportunity of getting some detail photographs and measurements. We may see it as an addition to the Little Bus range in due course.

Not reaching the UK very often these days, it was good to see that one of his "essential visits" was to Sandtoft. What he found delighted him, and despite us not having the visiting vehicles and stalls there this year, he said that the visit had been extremely worthwhile.

So in just four examples, we have covered Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Germany. I am quite sure there are visitors from many other parts of the world too, who come to our Museum and marvel at the range and diversity of trolleybuses we have on show.

### DEAR 'SCENE

Dear 'Scene

May I say a big thank you to all who have been so kind to me during my recent difficulties. Your cards, phone calls, hospital and home visits and offers of help are all greatly appreciated.

Hopefully by the time you read this I will be fully recovered and doing my usual thing.

Cheers! *Jim Sambrooks (Doncaster)*

+++++\*\*\*\*\*

Dear 'Scene

Very kindly (and quite unofficially) I have been a "friend of 50!". I need not go into the reason here. She and her sisters, when new, were used to convert "our" routes from trams to trolleybuses.

Until 30 October 1948, we were "served" (if that is the right word!), by trams which were deplorably decrepit - well passed their "use-by" date. So was their track. They should have gone by about 1943, but for the war. Had they done so, the replacing trolleybuses would have borne considerable resemblance to Bourne-mouth's, so when nine of them came on loan during the war, they closely resembled Newcastle's pre-war fleet. When four passed onto South Shield's fleet on loan, they would be found operating alongside 204.

I disliked front exits, whether on trams or trolleybuses. It seemed "messy" and ten seats were surrendered to the front stairs and exit.

When 501 and her 29 sisters replaced our trams (which included 102, the open-top, vestibuled large bogie car at Crich and its sisters which still came



out at rush-hours), the contrast was enormous. To see 50l now, resplendent in her magnificent livery does my tired old heart no end of good.

Following a serious head-on collision between 2 trams on DOUBLE track ! (not a *misprint* - ed.), the deplorable state of the trams and track led to us receiving 20 BUTs of London "Q" type in 1948. The "Qs" were liked so much that 50 more were obtained in 1950, though they differed in detail in accordance with Newcastle's specifications (and no.628 of that batch is, of course, at Carlton Colville).

If someone gets into Sandtoft one night, re-paints 1812 yellow and cream, put in destination blinds to show "31 Gosforth Park", you'll know who the culprit is - me!

That is how I imagine 1812 in my mind's eye ! - How about Sandtoft making a takeover bid for 628 ?...

#### **DVD REVIEW**

R.N. Pollard (*Wolverhampton*)

#### **Birmingham's Trams and Trolleybuses**

*Published by Online Video in co-operation with the Birmingham Historical Transport Group.*  
**Price - £18.00 (Postage £1.00)**

Some readers of *Sandtoft Scene* may recall the excellent book *The Trolleybuses of Birmingham*, superbly researched and written by Fred York and published by the British Trolleybus Society in 1971 as the fifth in that Society's series of authoritative trolleybus fleet histories. The Birmingham trolleybus system was one which had an early start and a relatively early abandonment - and with a "network" comprising just two separated routes.

This comprehensive DVD covers the history of Britain's second city's tramway system from the first horse tram in 1873 to the last trams running into Miller Street Depot in July 1953, and includes, chronologically, both of the trolleybus routes. Originating on 8mm, 9.5mm and 16mm ciné films with photographs to cover gaps where ciné footage wasn't available, the programme includes wartime footage and some rare colour scenes.

Birmingham's first trolleybus route opened in 1922 when the Council decided, on economic grounds after 15 years of operation, to replace the trams on the 2½ mile-long Nechells route with trolleybuses. The 12 Railless trolley-vehicles which took over from the trams in November of that year were driven by the driver operating a tramcar-type controller with his left hand and a steering wheel with his right hand, and these 12 vehicles were later joined by others in 1923 and 1926. Guy demonstrator trolleybus no.18, from the manufacturer's Wolverhampton works, is seen on ciné film in action on the Nechells route and there is also some very interesting manufacturer's film of this vehicle leaving Birmingham's Washwood Heath depot "under the wires" then driving along tramway track - with the offside boom using the tramway overhead and a skate being used, running along the track for the negative return current - to reach the Nechells trolleybus route. Photographs of the two types of trolleybus (nos.1 to 11 were Leyland Titan motorbuses with electrical equipment in place of an internal combustion engine, and retaining half-cab bodywork with a dummy radiator; nos.12 to 16 were full-fronted AEC 6-wheelers) which replaced the earlier trolleybuses are included. The Nechells trolleybus services

were suspended from 30 September 1943 as a wartime measure because of arcing from the overhead and were not reinstated subsequently.

The second trolleybus route was the Coventry Road one to Small Heath and Yardley (extended from 5 July 1936 to Sheldon), trolleybuses replacing the trams with effect from 7 January 1934. Fifty new Leyland 6-wheel trolleybuses (fleet numbers 17 to 66) operated these services, and further (2-axle) trolleybuses were subsequently added to the fleet; one of these latter vehicles is seen, in a still photograph, working on the Nechells route. The ciné footage of the Coventry Road routes includes views of trams and trolleybuses sharing the same overhead wiring at Bordesley Station.

Ciné film of Birmingham trolleybuses in action is rare, and this DVD programme includes all of the material which had been found (in addition to very comprehensive ciné film coverage of the tramway system). The trolleybus material includes an end-of-system enthusiasts' tour, using Birmingham's newest trolleybus (no. 90, which was delivered in 1940) diverging from the Coventry Road route at Wheatstheaf Junction, and using the wartime-installed overhead wiring serving the Rover Factory. Birmingham's last trolleybus ran on 30 June 1951, and the last trams ran in 1953. Although some of the trolleybuses lingered on in Bird's scrapyard at Stratford-on-Avon for a number of years, none of them survived into preservation, but tram 395 survives - in the distinctive Birmingham Corporation livery of cobalt blue and primrose, carried by the Corporation's trams, trolleybuses and motorbuses - in the city's Museum of Science and Industry.

This well-researched and comprehensive DVD programme, with a running time of nearly 2 hours, is heartily recommended for everyone interested in the history of Birmingham's trams and trolleybuses (various motorbuses, over the years, are also included in the films), and complements Fred York's 1971 book about the trolleybus system. The DVD is available, over the counter or by post, from Sandtoft's Museum Shop and is priced at £18 (plus £1 Postage & Packing if ordered for sending by post).

*Birmingham's Trams and Trolleybuses can be purchased from the Trolleyshop at Sandtoft or ordered by post (add £1.00 for p&p). Orders sent by post should be addressed to Chris Proctor at the Museum address (see page 2). Please make cheques payable to Sandtoft Transport Centre Limited and allow 14 days for delivery.*

#### **NOTICE BOARD**

#### **PRESTON TOW TRUCK:**

The Board has decided, with regret, to dispose of the ex-Preston tow truck registration number BCK 939, and invites offers for it. It is a Leyland Titan PD1 (originally built as a bus in 1949); the Leyland E181 engine is in need of overhaul and repair. There is already an offer (for breaking for spares), so if anyone is interested or knows anyone who is interested, they should contact Bruce Lake, Company Secretary, (see page 2 for address/ email details) by 31 December 2007.



### **A COMPETITION FOR A NEW LOGO**

We have been marketing ourselves as *The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft* now for several years and whilst the Company name remains Sandtoft Transport Centre Limited, the STC logo we have used since soon after the Museum was founded in 1969 has, for marketing purposes, become rather meaningless.

**We are therefore seeking a new logo and what better way to do this than inviting members and friends to enter a competition to design one !**

We are interested in a concept that can possibly be developed further, so you need not be a graphic artist or even be able to draw particularly well to enter the competition !

We want a logo that reflects/ conveys the Museum's primary subject matter (i.e. the trolleybus), and which is clean and clear, capable of being used for a variety of applications (obviously on stationery and publicity material, but also on proposed new staff ties and sweatshirts and, maybe, on merchandise).

A £75 *Trolleyshop* voucher will be awarded to the person whose design or concept is taken forward for adoption. There is no limit on the number of designs/ concepts that may be submitted by any one person. Designs/ concepts may be submitted either in electronic format by email to [trolleybusmuseum@sandtoft.org](mailto:trolleybusmuseum@sandtoft.org) or by post to the Museum address (see page 2), clearly marking the envelope "Logo Competition". The closing date for submission of designs/ concepts is 31 December 2007.

*Please note that all entries will become the property of the Company, that the Company reserves the right to adapt or amend any design in order to take it forward for adoption, .or to not adopt any of the designs/ concepts that are submitted. In the event of similar designs/ concepts being submitted by more than one person and those designs/ concepts are subsequently taken forward for adoption, at the discretion of the Board of Directors, the prize may be equally split between the persons involved. The decision of the Board of Directors shall be final in any matter concerning this competition.*

### **CAN YOU DRAW ?**

Is there anyone out there who can draw, or is any good with computer graphics or who can use CAD ??

There are a number of projects that the Museum could progress if only we had people with these talents who are able and willing to help us. Francis Whitehead would be pleased to hear from you via email or at the Museum address (see page 2) if you could be of assistance.

### **SANDTOFT'S MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT APPEAL**

Discussions continue with our neighbouring farmer and we are cautiously optimistic that we will be able to agree a deal. **Meanwhile our appeal is still running** with the amount raised steadily growing – so many thanks to all who have made donations recently. We still haven't reached our target though, so if you can make a donation, please send it to Francis Whitehead .