

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:

This Fowler steam roller, dating from 1937, was originally supplied to West Riding County Council. It now lives in Belton and is seen here on the central grass area at Sandtoft during this year's 'Gathering'
Photo: David Needham

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



It is hard to believe as I write this editorial, we are entering the last few weeks of our trolleybus running season, but we are, although as we look back over the season I feel that a tremendous amount has been done both with regards to the Museum operation and also the team spirit of all the people that make the Museum run so efficiently. I have been listening to the comments made by visitors as they talk whilst enjoying a cup of tea or meal from our own café. Many have said how they have enjoyed their visit and how helpful and polite they have found the staff. A big thank you must therefore go to all of the staff who regularly turn out to work on open days and, of course, those who make sure that the Museum is well groomed and that 'buses are available for service use. Back to this edition: Steve Collins continues with the Plumtree experience, and Dave Hall gives a graphic report on the closure of the Reading trolleybus system on 3 November 1968, which leads on to the birth of the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Company's Annual General Meeting takes place at the Museum (in the Lecture Theatre) at 2.00pm on Saturday, 15 November 2008. Your attention is drawn to the Special Resolution to amend the Company's Articles of Association in order to facilitate Life Membership of the Company: the Board of Directors recommends this change to the Articles and urges members to vote in favour of the resolution. Members should find the Notice of the AGM enclosed with this edition of Sandtoft Scene.

As in previous years, after the formal business of the AGM has been completed, there will be an opportunity for informal discussions in a Members' Forum. Please try to come along for both the AGM and the Forum – this is the opportunity to discuss with the Board and other members how the Company is being run and how the Museum should move forward.

AROUND THE BOARD

..... from **Graham Bilbé, Chairman and Engineering Director:**

Since the last issue we've had the 'Gathering, which I'm pleased to say was back "on song" after last year's washout: generally it seemed to go very smoothly, although as always, a few lessons were learned to incorporate in future events! The number of visiting vehicles was down rather, perhaps due to fuel costs or other factors, but overall a good time seemed to be had by all, and the Museum's finances were put back a bit closer to where we'd like them to be after the land purchase in the spring.....

Talking of the land purchase, you're probably wondering what's happening with it! Well, behind the scenes, discussions have continued with White's Farms regarding the access to it and fencing,, the latter being their responsibility under the purchase contract. By the time you read this, most of

the area should have been levelled and grass-seeded in the autumn planting season, so that a reasonable grass "mat" is established for next year. Of course, our plans to use it as public parking depend largely on use of White's access road, so if, for any reason, agreement to use this is not forthcoming, we may have to continue the present arrangement for public parking (on the centre grass) and use the new area as the "events field", at least short-term. A whole raft of factors come into the negotiations with White's, requiring

"...I am reassured that a further land parcel, to the west of "Burntwood" is earmarked for us"

considerable diplomacy in handling, but I am reassured that the fencing will be in place by early next season, and that a further land parcel, to the west of "Burntwood" is earmarked for us (when we have the money !). This won't be cheap - it's a lot bigger than the bit we bought this year - but will enable us to achieve our ultimate plan of extending the running line to a permanent car park area, as outlined previously in *Sandtoft Scene*. **At present rates this could cost between £300,000 and £400,000 - so please keep those donations coming in !** We can't get grants to buy land, but the Board continues to investigate possible development funding opportunities for when we have bought it... so we need to raise funds however we can.

That brings me on to our Charity Shop - otherwise known as the new "Rammel Corner" - generating a small but steady income to supplement that of the Ice Cream Parlour, which itself has been a great success despite the generally poor weather this season. So, please remember to bring any surplus books, videos, jigsaws, bric-a-brac items (not clothes or electrical appliances, thanks) when you're visiting - it all helps our Museum. A big "Thank you" to Becky Harrison, Sarah Shepherd, Jill Ferris and the other helpers who have taken this on board.

At the time of writing we've just had our Models Weekend, with some excellent layouts and displays, particularly featuring trolleybuses and trams working from overhead line. We also had '00' and '0' gauge railways to entertain the public - in all, a fine effort by all our exhibitors ! The weekend also heralded a "first" - as on Saturday evening we welcomed in, by special invitation, local residents from Sandtoft Village and Belton. As a PR exercise I think this was very successful - most of the visitors admitted they had passed by hundreds of times but never come in, and were so pleased to be specially invited. One family with a young lad had been for Blue's and Two's Weekend, and couldn't believe their luck to get a free invite to come back. The little lad was so keen, methinks they'll be back again before long ! As the trolleybuses ran on after dark, to about 8.15pm, I was able to take a ride upstairs on 631, mainly to have a chat with the visitors. The blinking traction lighting, with the prefab and shop windows lit up, all created a splendid feel of going back to the '60s - it was brilliant! Come and see for yourself at the Twilight Weekend in November!

Finally, a few words on "personnel" issues, as the AGM looms into sight... - which I hope you will come to if you possibly can. We sometimes hear derogatory comments around the Museum about particular Board members,

or the Board as a whole, but I can assure you that *all* of the directors work very hard together to further the Museum, much of it "unseen" work, but which still has to be done. With health and safety requirements and further recent legislation on corporate manslaughter in mind, directors also take on a very serious legal responsibility for the welfare of members and visitors on our premises. In short, we take health and safety issues very seriously. I am pleased to report that we have recently set up a working group to tackle H&S issues: this includes two members with considerable professional experience to advise us on priority areas - more on this in due course. Part of the Chairman's role is to "steer" volunteers into the jobs they are best suited to, (not *push* - please note !) and in most cases there is a suitable job for everyone. Some are obvious, some less so, but what is most important is that we all respect what each other is good at, and appreciate the contribution that is made to the Museum as a whole. Although we couldn't have a Museum without the 'buses, without the people that repair them, run them, feed us, keep the money coming in, or just keep up with the paperwork, we wouldn't have much of a museum at all ! I, for one, value *everyone's* input, so come along to the AGM and let's hear *your* views on the future of Sandtoft.

..... from Francis Whitehead, Financial and Development Director:

After a slow start to the season, we have had a pretty good run of open days - including 'Gathering - with all departments reporting brisk business: even Saturday visitor numbers have improved to a very worth-while level. It is a good thing that we put so much effort earlier in the year into maximising car parking space, because at times the central grass area has been just about full of visitors' cars. It is heartening to see more and more visitors coming to see, appreciate and enjoy our efforts. Thank you to all who have helped make the wheels go round (so to speak !).

We are now poised ready to start work on levelling and improving the surface of our new area of ground. We need to get it ready so that grass is well established in time for Easter and the start of the 2009 season so that we can separate visitor car parking from the museum area. We are pressing for the new area to be fenced, and quite possibly (i.e. funds permitting !) we will also re-fence the "back straight" boundary, thereby making the whole Museum much more secure.

As part of the process of planning our "extended" Museum, the Board is seeking ideas and views on how members would like to see the Museum

"If you have ideas as to what should be incorporated into an enhanced museum, and suggestions on how the Museum could be laid out, please send them to me"

develop. It is going to be difficult at first, but it is important to now regard the "existing" Museum area and our "new" land as one integral site ! If you have ideas as to what should be incorporated into an enhanced museum, and suggestions on how the Museum could be laid out, please send them to me. A particular consideration is that we currently have seven 'buses stored in rented accommodation off-site,

as well as five at Westgate and a queue of other possible exhibits: certainly those seven should come back to Sandtoft at the earliest opportunity. We invite imaginative (but realistic!) input, and accept that some of the existing infrastructure could be re-developed as part of an overall, staged, development scheme. After the formalities of the AGM on 15 November, there will be an opportunity to discuss suggestions and possible ways forward, so get your thinking caps on. I can be contacted by email (fwhitehead@sandtoft.org) or by post via the Museum address.

A rare opportunity has presented itself for us to acquire some very sound second-hand, system-built, single-storey building units. There is a large building to draw units from and the Board has decided to initially obtain such a unit and erect it adjacent to the "new" entrance building with a view to using it partially to house the Ice Cream Parlour and the newly-introduced "charity shop" (both of which are already successful ventures and which will be displaced once the car parking is transferred to the new land) and partially as a children's under cover play area. We may well then obtain a further unit to use for additional storage – a much-needed facility, I'm sure you will all agree.

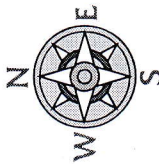
From time to time, we need to move materials to the Museum, or tow vehicles on the road: it would be very helpful if we had our own HGV drivers to assist on these occasions, so, if there is anyone out there with a HGV licence who could help, please get in contact with Chris Proctor (see page 2).

We get mixed messages each day at the moment from politicians, business leaders and the press about the so-called credit crunch, increases in inflation and an anticipated downturn in the country's economy. Whatever the truth is, we, at Sandtoft, need to be able to weather any bad effects on both our operations and our development plans. How? I'm not too sure, but we need to come out the other side of any national economy problems unscathed, or relatively so. We certainly don't want to go that way, but if the worst comes to the worst, we may have to batten down the hatches and postpone development work in favour of keeping our collection together (vital!) and the existing operations going. The reality would be that we would have to rely on you, our members, to support us the best you could with labour and basic funding. This year has shown on the infrastructure side that we can achieve a lot without spending too much, and to a lesser extent, the same can apply to working on (and thus, progressing) vehicles. A major factor in our favour is that we own the ground we occupy and we don't have to repay any debts on it. However, let's be positive and join together to achieve in spite of possible difficult times.....

The success, so far, of the 2008 season has meant that we have more or less restored our reserves so we can get on and begin work on our new land. To build roadways and buildings, though, will require an ongoing fund-raising effort (and as Graham Bibb points out, we should also be saving up to buy that stage two land). Several members continue to generously make monthly donations (thank you to those kind people!) to our development fund, but we could do with many more such monthly donations to be able to make

appreciable progress. A Gift Aided donation of just 55 PENCE a day by one person equates to over £250 per year towards development. Multiply that by 40 members and we would have a very useful £10,000 per year – and we have many times 40 members (not that every one could afford to give us 55p a day).

I use this figure purely as an example, but please, can I urge all members to join in, if you are at all able to, with a regular donation to raise more funds: in just 4 years we accumulated enough to buy that much-needed phase 1 land, so we really can do it!



THE ROUTE TO SANDTOFT

PLUMTREE – PART 9

The Calm Before The Storm

Steve Collins

April 1970, and thanks to The Hairy Men of Huddersfield, I had extracted myself from any obligation to Plumtree for the second time. On Easter Sunday, Nottingham 493, which was now my responsibility, had been transferred to Sandtoft, the new museum site started by Mike Dare. This is just another fact in my case that all this is his fault, and I will sum up to dispel any doubts that may remain at the end of my series.

When I say I no longer had any obligation to Plumtree, that is not quite right: I still owed a few pounds for rent accrued by 493, and so one Sunday I went out there to settle up. There were several people there, and they seemed surprised to see me. I recall Tom Bowden saying that as far as he knew, I was the only person who had ever returned after a vehicle had left the site, to settle up an outstanding debt – a sad state of affairs when you look at it. I chatted to the treasurer for a while, and that's when I discovered something that concerned me greatly: Plumtree was in the financial mire, and a list of vehicles had been drawn up which they were preparing to sell for scrap in order to raise some funds. On that list were two trolleybuses – Nottingham 466 and Derby 175.

I didn't like the sound of this I can tell you. At first I thought he was exaggerating, but when he told me that a chap named Meynell, a scrap dealer from Barnsley, had actually been on site and made firm offers for all the vehicles on the list, I realised that he wasn't. I tried to find out more about what was going on by quizzing other people who were there, and this is what I discovered. Firstly, it would not be necessary to sell all the vehicles that had been offered; just two or three. 466 had been included because of its condition, and 175 because nobody owned it. The motorbuses were all ones in poor condition, or with serious mechanical problems.

The statement that nobody owned Derby 175 puzzled me. The last time I had had any dealings with it had been in 1966, four years previously, and then The Student from Huddersfield had suddenly decided he wanted it, and refunded all the money put into it by other people. He then went ahead with the purchase of Huddersfield 217, a 1945 Daimler CWA6, which was always his main project. This had been taken to Plumtree initially, but had returned to Huddersfield for restoration. This left The Student with a problem – what to do with 175. I had never understood his motives for taking on 175 in the first place,

and Black Rod, the former group secretary, had always held suspicions about him. As I have said before, Black Rod held suspicions about just about everybody, but he was more puzzled by The Student than by most people. "There's something not right there" I remember him saying on more than one occasion. What I discovered had actually happened was that a bill had been due for payment (I think it was for rates, but I could be wrong). Whatever it had been for, the money had come from the usual source at Plumtree - there had been a whip round amongst everybody who could be contacted, and the necessary had been collected up. The Student offered to take charge of the matter and pay the money in. The snag was, he paid the money into his own bank account, not the one he should have done. He then contacted the treasurer, wished him well, and informed him that he could have 175, as it no longer featured in his plans for the future, which from now on lay in Huddersfield. Not a nice thing to do in my opinion, but this was Plumtree.

This or course, left the treasurer with a problem: he couldn't drag 175 down to the rates office and ask them where he could leave it - well I suppose he could, but I don't think that they would have been very keen - so he had to organise another whip round, to collect the money again. To say that the people who had to dig into their pockets for the second time were peeved is an understatement, especially as most of them were from the motorbus faction and their attitude was that the sooner 175 went for scrap, the quicker they would get their money back.

One of this latter group was very sure of the way forward: before it departed for Bamsley, all the seats, windows and anything else that wouldn't affect 175's value as scrap would be removed and fitted into the ex-Grimby Guy Arab utility workhorse. Both had Park Royal bodies, and he had already been around with a tape measure and checked that everything would fit. He was even going to take the hardboard ceiling panels out. You may think that this was just talk, but I assure you it wasn't. This same person had put some funding into Notts. & Derbys. 357, and later asked for it back. When he was told that it was not possible to reimburse him at that time, he had removed the master controller and sold it for scrap - an act for which Tom Bowden has never forgiven him. There were other things in a similar vein which happened over the years so that even now, Tom refuses to speak to him. I know of no other person Tom has treated in a similar manner.

Obviously I could have walked away from all this: after all, it was nothing to do with me, but I liked 175. I had ridden on it from Derby to Plumtree when it had first been collected, and I knew there and then that it was going to be up to me to prevent it from being butchered now. So, for the third time, I launched myself back into the maw of Plumtree, determined to stand up and be counted as the champion of fair play, and especially Derby 175. I quizzed everybody to find out who had lost out over the rates bill, and paid them all back. Most of them knew exactly what they had paid in, so that was no problem, odd ones knew they had paid something, but couldn't remember exactly what. In these cases we agreed a figure, so that within two weeks, it was acknowledged that I

owned at least half the vehicle. There would be no more talk of gutting it to rebuild the Grimby Guy. As a final word on The Student, some years later I heard that he had committed suicide. Black Rod was correct, very sadly there most definitely was something not right there.

As for the other vehicles on the list, only three were actually scrapped. The first was a shame, because it was, as far as I know, a rare beast when it was first built: this was JGD 675, a Foden with a Scottish Aviation double-deck body, and it had been a "regular" on the rally scene during the late 'sixties. It had been acquired from Garelochhead Coach Services and so, was quite a long way from home when you think about it. It had developed engine problems during 1969 and by early 1970 it was a non-runner. To quote the treasurer, "everything on that body is aluminium", so it would fetch a very good price. The treasurer went to see a scrap dealer in Derby with whom he had had dealings in the past and showed him the quote he had been given by the Bamsley breaker. The Derby man agreed to match it and took it away the following week.

The second vehicle to go was the former Lincolnshire Vulcan steam bus, FU 5946. In my opinion this wasn't a shame at all, as I had always dismissed the thing as a waste of space. To be honest, there was not very much of it left by the time the same scrap man towed it away, as most of what was left of the body had collapsed some months earlier. I was on site when the steam bus went, and I don't know why, but I felt a pang of sadness as I watched it go. I can give no explanation for this, and said as much to someone else on site. "Come off it", he said, "you've always said how much you hated it". He was right: I had, but that pang of sadness was real enough. It didn't last long though. Some years later, Steve Blood, the well known Derby preservationist, was rooting through some photographs on a sales stand at a bus rally: next to him were two characters who he didn't know, but were likewise engaged. One of them produced a print of the steam bus, which he showed to his companion. "Now, that is an interesting looking vehicle", he said, "I wonder what happened to it?" "It got hammered" said Steve.

Number three was MRC 25, the rancid ex-Ministry Bedford OWB, previously operated by Ford & Weston, the Derby contractor. I remember telling Mike Dare about the OWB's demise and his

comments summed it up "Chopped that up, have they? The last time I saw that thing, somebody was painting it, and filling the rust holes with paint". Chopped up it most certainly was. Big Tommy from Newark did the deed: he was another of my memorable acquaintances, and was summoned by The Chairman whenever his services

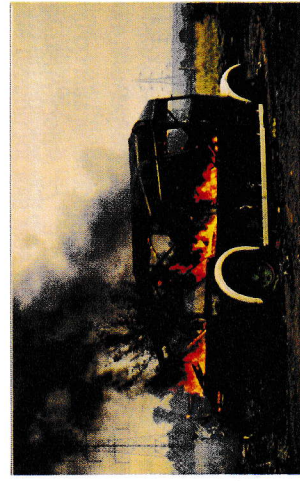


Photo: Graham Rhodes

were required. I was on site that day as well, and as luck would have it, Big Tommy had just lit a fire in the remains of the bodywork when who should turn up but Graham Rhodes and Les Flint from Sandtoft. This was very opportune, as Graham had his camera with him, and took a very fine photograph, just as the fire took hold. I don't recall Les or Graham making any comment about how restoration work was done on that site. Bus on fire - well it was Plumtree...

Shame really that Graham hadn't turned up a bit earlier when Big Tommy was stripping the roof panels off, then jumping on them to fold them up: that would have been a graphic image for future generations to admire, though the one he did get is, perhaps, more direct and to the point. One little detail regarding the OWB's fate is still something of a mystery: the bus had been painted all-over grey, but with white front mudguards. After he had raked over the pyre and removed everything of value, Big Tommy had left both the front mudguards lying in the middle of the drive - where they remained for several months. They always reminded me of a nature programme I had once seen in which a lizard had eaten a flying insect of some kind and left the wings behind. Tom Bowden found the sight highly amusing, and I must admit, so did I, to a certain extent.

So with Derby 175 safe, the financial crisis over (for the time being), and three vehicles having been scrapped, Plumtree could again look to the future - and that future began to look quite good. Over the years, I have told several people about the above events, and have been asked, if I could turn back the clock, would I change anything that happened during that Spring of 1970. Most people have expressed a wish to alter things that have happened, if it were possible, and I feel the same. I can honestly say that if I could travel back to 1970, things would, indeed, be very different. I would make damned sure Big Tommy took those two white wings with him, and didn't leave them in the middle of the drive.

A few weeks later I was invited to go on the Trans-Pennine Rally by the owner of GNU 750, a rather nice Daimler COG5 coach, formerly operated by Tailby & George (Blue Bus) of Willington, Derbyshire. The idea was to take GNU on the rally (where it actually won the prize for the best Daimler), then to go to Huddersfield, to the famous "Arch", which was the domain of the Hairy Men. The reason for this was that the chap who owned GNU also owned ACH 627, formerly Derby 27, a post-war Daimler CVD6 with a Brush high-bridge body which was in temporary storage in "the Arch", and he wanted to swap them over. We arrived at "the Arch", and it was here that 506, Nottingham's official last trolleybus was also in store. 506 was in a sorry state, not, I must say, due to any deficiencies on the part of the Hairy Men, but because it had been visited by vandals while it was at a previous location. It had left Nottingham in May 1967, and during the three years that had elapsed since then, it had never been left outside. The vandals had broken into the shed where it then lived, and had bricked every piece of glass in it. In the previous instalment of this saga, I mentioned a cove named Baz who had turned up at Plumtree during the removal of Nottingham 493 to Sandtoft, and who I had noticed rubbing

himself all over Nottingham 502's windows in a most sensual way. This was the explanation: Baz was working on 506 and he was, in effect, coveting its lost windows, those in 502 being identical. There is often a simple explanation if you look for it....

We returned to Plumtree in Derby 27, which I enjoyed, as Nottingham had had some buses which were virtually identical, and I used to go to school on them. The stage was now set for what I thought could be the regeneration of Plumtree. Nottingham City Council had decided to hold a festival, and this would cause what would turn out to be the final surge of creative activity on the site.

FORTHCOMING RUNNING DAYS...

Gates open 11.00 am - 5.00pm unless stated otherwise

..... IN 2008

Sunday 19 October	Bus St. Leger Rally St. Leger Historic Vehicle Rally starting from Doncaster Aircraft. Transport-related sales stands and parades of historic vehicles at Museum
Sunday 16 November	Twilight Trolleys (open 11.00am to 6.00pm) with trolleybuses operating after dark
Saturday 13 December	Santa Days (open 11.00am to 4.00pm)
Sunday 14 December	children can visit Santa

A FREE bus connects with the 11.00am 291 Isle Coaches service from Doncaster Interchange (Stand A2), at Epworth Rectory each SATURDAY RUNNING DAY, (returning to Epworth at 4.00pm to connect with service 399, scheduled to arrive at Doncaster Interchange at 5.35pm)

Bus FREE buses will operate from Doncaster Interchange, (Bay C5) departing at 11.30 am and 12.30 pm on Sunday, 19 October ONLY. Return trips depart Sandtoft at 4.00 pm and 5.00pm (journey time approximately 40 minutes).

..... AND IN 2009

11, 12 & 13 April,	2, 3 & 4 May,	23, 24 & 25 May,
13, & 14 June,	27 & 28 June,	11 & 12 July,
25 & 26 July,	8 & 9 August,	29, 30 & 31 August,
12 & 13 September,	26 & 27 September,	18 October,
15 November,	12 & 13 December,	

Some events are already fixed, such as our 40th Anniversary Celebrations on 23, 24 & 25 May, 'Gathering '09 on 26 July, Blue's and Two's Weekend on 8 & 9 August, St. Leger Rally on 18 October, Twilight Trolleys on 15 November and Santa Weekend on 12 & 13 December, but we are still firming up what will be happening on the other days, and also when the free bus service will be operating.

RECENT RUNNING DAYS

HUDDERSFIELD WEEKEND

As the exact date of the anniversary of the Huddersfield trolleybus system closure (this time the 40th) once again contrived to fall on a weekend in 2008, the stage was set again for another Huddersfield commemorative event to

Bruce Lake

take place on July 12th and 13th. Once that was decided, it was also realised that not only would it be the 75th anniversary of the system's opening, but also the 125th anniversary of the first municipal operation of public transport, in 1883. Indeed, First Bus got in on the act by marking this occasion with a repainted double-decker (no.5663) in a variant of the Huddersfield livery of red and cream. However, its gold-painted message of "125 Years of Buses in Huddersfield" was rather inaccurate, as trams provided the first 37 years-worth of transport!

These things, therefore, should have provided a springboard for another great Sandtoft event to outshine the one in 2003. Huddersfield 631 had been out of service for a couple of years in order to have some cosmetic improvements made to it, and Huddersfield 541 had made slow but steady progress since 2003, and although not as much as might have been expected in five years, with 12 months to go, there was no doubt that both could be ready for use in July 2008. In particular the NTA was well on with restoring 541's seats to their former glory and many were fitted during 2007. Agreeing to step up the work to complete 541 by the spring of 2008, the NTA arranged to launch 541 for their members at their AGM (which was to be held at the Museum at the end of May).

Unfortunately, various factors contrived to spoil the whole Anniversary idea. First of all, when I started to contact the various Huddersfield motorbus owners about coming to the event (two very nice motorbuses had attended in 2003, and I wanted to improve on this), I discovered that there was only one I could find that was actually on the road! This was Fleetline 473, stabled at Keighley Bus Museum. Several attempts to get this to come failed: they do a number of private hires and that particular weekend was a busy one for them. So I had a go at First Bus about 5663. Initially not being very optimistic, I was pleasantly surprised to hear that they would, indeed, be pleased to come to the event despite the distance involved, although maybe only on one day; confirmation would follow. It never came. The last conversation was that they couldn't rustle up a driver for that weekend (it sounded like they get volunteers to do this sort of thing).

On the trolleybus side, 631 did get tested and passed out mechanically and electrically in May of this year so that at least it could operate. However, its remedial work – mainly tidying up the interior and repainting the roof (which was peeling badly) – didn't get done: a lack of restorers at the right time dictated that, so if it was going to operate, it would have to do so looking decidedly shabby.

To cap it all, while going over 541 to see what outstanding jobs needed doing on it, a broken rear road spring was discovered. This wasn't just a leaf that had split: it was one of the main attachment leaves that had broken. It therefore couldn't run as it was, even if all the other outstanding jobs were completed. After pulling it out of the shed for the NTA's event, but not running it, a specialist was called in to examine the job with a view to removing the spring, taking it away and repairing it, and re-fixing it as soon as possible. I found, to my surprise, that there are no less than eight (yes, 8) leaf springs on the back of a Karrier 6-wheel chassis! The aforementioned work was therefore quite difficult, and the expert team took longer than hoped, so 541 was only 7-sprunged when the Huddersfield weekend came round and

therefore, of course, could not run.... (maybe at the 50th???). We were thus faced with a scaled-down event and only two Huddersfield trolleybuses to operate. The date had been advertised long before, though, and the visitors would be arriving, so we had to do something. I decided that 1812 was a logical third trolleybus to run - it's nearly the right livery, has the right number of axles, and has differentials made (quite recently as it happens) in Huddersfield's David Browns factory.



Above (left) all photos by Bruce Lake Above (right) all photos by Jeremy Meal

Both days were relatively warm and sunny, and the visitors did, indeed, arrive, so we put on as best a show as we could. We had several line-ups of our two operating Huddersfield trolleybuses, and even contrived to park them adjacent to where 541 was peeping - somewhat lopsidedly - out of the shed, so the enthusiasts could get shots of all three together! I think the visitors enjoyed the days - I didn't hear any complaints anyway! The main question was "when will 541 be running then?". At that time this was unanswerable, as the spring was still away for repair. Since then it has been refitted and we are back down to

the much smaller finishing-off jobs to get her back into service.

So, all in all, a fairly successful event, but not on the scale I had expected at the beginning. Probably a good case of (to paraphrase the old proverb) "don't count your trolleybuses until they are passed!"

SANDTOFT GATHERING '08 PHOTO GALLERY

Getting ready...



Above: Chris Proctor moving signs
Left: Nick Broxholme clearing up
Below: The beer tent partially prepared



Above: Putting up the gazebo is labour-intensive
Left: Bernice Needham and Joan Barrow writing the labels for sandwich packets
All photos this page by Doug Barrow

'Gathering Day...



The centre grass (Photo: T Stubbs), Sandtoft Square & the transport "flea market" Photos: D Barrow



The Tony Ricks-Gaslight Trio (Photo: Doug Barrow) & a pipe organ provided the music Photo: David Needham



Some rally vehicles: (left) a 1936 Hillman Minx & (right) a trio of classic coaches Photos: David Needham



1981 Triumph Coupé, a Wolseley (Photos: David Needham) & a PMT 1949 Leyland OPD2 Photo :Tim Stubbs



A cross section of the buses that attended the rally (on the Sandtoft Tiles site) Photos: David Needham

TROLLEYBUS ANNIVERSARIES

Compiled by Geoff Welburn

October to December

Systems Opened

75 years since Wolverhampton opened on 29 October 1933
75 years since Huddersfield opened on 4 December 1933

Systems Closed

45 years since Doncaster closed on 14 December 1963
40 years since Reading closed on 3 November 1968

THE READING TROLLEYBUS CLOSURE

Dave Hall

It seems incredible that come 3 November 2008 it will be 40 years since trolleybuses last operated in Reading. It was the third system to be abandoned in 1968, Belfast having ceased operations in the May and Huddersfield in the July, leaving just five operators remaining at the end of 1968 - Bournemouth, Bradford, Cardiff, Teesside and Walsall.

In the summer of 1968, the Reading Transport Society (RTS) - now the British Trolleybus Society - had been formulating plans with Reading Corporation Transport to give the trolleybuses a good send-off. By this time, only route 17 (Tilehurst to Wokingham Road) was still operating. Agreement had been reached with enthusiasts for three preserved trolleybuses (Belfast 168, Huddersfield 631 & Reading 113) to tour the system on Sunday 27 October 1968.

As a result of the joint RTS/RCT planning, each trolleybus in service during the last three weeks, or so, carried special side advertisements. The 40 spaces had quickly been snapped up by local firms and the adverts read "..... say Goodbye to Reading's Trolleybuses 1936 - 1968", each subscriber's name appearing in the leading space: the Reading Transport Society took both spaces on no.181, whilst RCT employee and enthusiast Michael Russel (who was to buy no.174) took the spaces on that vehicle. A week later, window posters announcing Last Trolleybus Week were placed in all buses and trolleybuses. There were several other projects agreed, including publication of a booklet entitled *Farewell to the Trolleybus*, released a month before closure; whilst two types of souvenir tickets were produced for the last day, one for the last ceremonial journey and one for issue to each fare-paying passenger on the special service runs; and also a floral tribute (to be provided by Michael Dare, future owner of 144), to be carried on the last vehicle.

The operational trolleybus fleet totalled 22 at the beginning of September 1968. However, the remaining B.U.T., no.144, was taken out of service on 27 September to be specially repainted (paid for by Michael Dare) as Reading's last trolleybus, leaving a mix of 3-axle Sunbeam S7s and 2-axle Sunbeam F4As.

The first imminent sign of abandonment came on 16 October 1968 when Sunbeam S7 179 was seen in service with the first "Farewell" adverts applied. Sunday 27 October 1968 saw Belfast 168 and Huddersfield 631 operating special tours as planned but unfortunately, Reading 113's restoration was not completed in time for it to take part on the special tour day, much to the

heartbreak of the enthusiasts who had worked so hard throughout the summer to get her ready. Instead the RTS used S7s 172 and 178 to tour the system. Trolleybuses had not operated in service on Sundays for a few weeks but surprisingly, Sunbeam F4A 189 appeared in service later that afternoon as a replacement for a motorbus which had failed.

And so to the last week, which began with special trolleybus-oriented window displays mounted in two Broad Street (Reading's main shopping street) shops. Two other shops also participated, whilst a fifth declined at short notice as it coincided with its annual sale. Much of the material for these was provided by the RTS. The service throughout much of the week was operated by both trolleybuses and motorbuses, as the number of available trolleybus drivers had dwindled following closure of the training school in 1967. On Monday 28 October, F4A 187 failed at City Road, Tilehurst, with a broken rear spring and was withdrawn from service, whilst S7 179 was not used in service after 25 October due to no replacement being available for its defective dewirement buzzer. Friday 1 November was a very wet day and was to be the last day that trolleybuses operated until the scheduled last journeys from Broad Street at 11.00pm. The RTS had just finished its monthly members' meeting and everyone went into Broad Street to catch F4A 184 on its journey from Broad Street to Wokingham Road and then travel as the last through trolleybus to Tilehurst and back to Broad Street.

Saturday 2 November was a very dull and overcast day weather-wise. A mixture of trolleybuses and motorbuses operated on service 17 although it was noticeable that the trolleybuses were more heavily loaded. Trolleybuses that were not required for the weekend services (S7s 170, 176, 177, 179 and F4As 189, 190 and 191) were towed to Bennet Road depot for storage. 192 was also taken by mistake and had to be brought back again!

As expected, trolleybuses started returning to depot during the evening, to be replaced by motorbuses. S7 173 turned out to be the last trolleybus, at 8.40 pm, from Wokingham Road to Duke Street, and departed the terminus fully



Belfast 168 turns at Norcot on 27 October 1968



Huddersfield 631 at Wokingham Road terminus, with Belfast 168 in the distance. Street light-fitted traction poles from this section of the route were removed years later by a Sandtoft working party for use at the Museum. Both photos: Doug Barrow

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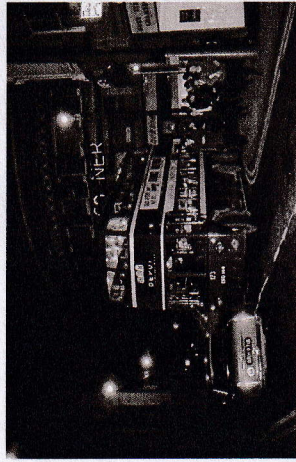
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Sunbeam F4A no. 190 is towed away from Mill Lane depot; it went for scrap the following April. The "goodbye" advertisement can clearly be seen
Photo Mike Dare (BTS library)



Last normal service trolleybus from Wokingham Road, no.173, turns into Duke Street, having disgorged its passengers, at about 9.00pm on 2 November 1968
Photo: Martin Harvey

perfect, with the sun shining all day. Enthusiast tours were operated in the morning; the RTS operated a "Maroon Arrow" service using S7 181 and F4A 188, whilst the National Trolleybus Association used S7 174 and F4A 182. The tours finished with all four vehicles returning to Mill Lane depot at 12.00 noon. On arrival back at Mill Lane, S7 178 and F4As 185 and 183 were parked outside the central section of the depot ready to take up service.

Following the departure of these vehicles, B.U.T. no.144 was brought back from Bennet Road depot (towed by the Corporation's ex-London AEC tower wagon, TXV 909 - using a chain!), looking absolutely magnificent following its repaint and embellishment as Reading's last trolleybus and carrying a floral tribute in the shape of a trolleybus in the cab. F4As 188 and

loaded and "three bells". Off-loading its passengers (under considerable protest!) at Duke Street/ Kings Road junction, 173 proceeded to Mill Lane depot with enthusiasts in hot pursuit to join a crowd that had gathered at the depot entrance. Bewildered, and believing trouble would develop, depot staff slammed the folding doors shut and the crowd slowly dispersed. For the record, the last trolleybus from Tilehurst was 185, whilst 182 ran a last short-working to Norcot and turned there; 183, 184 and 172 ran in from Wokingham Road.

On a lighter side, all the "red spots" on traction poles at dead sections and section insulators turned black overnight (as had mysteriously happened at all previous route conversions), this time with inscriptions added, such as "Better Things were Electric": the Black Hand Gang obviously worked hard to cover the seven miles of route!

The weather on Sunday 3 November 1968 turned out to be

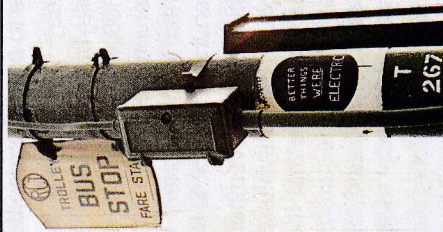


Photo: Alan Jones

182 then joined the other three trolleybuses operating the special services and soon after, 144 was taken for a test run to Norcot Junction and back.



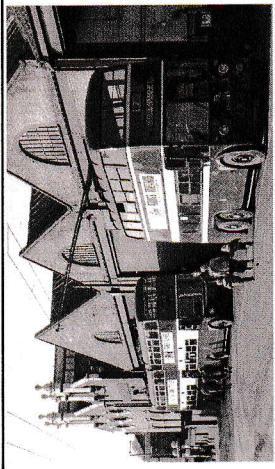
Sunbeam F4A no. 188 overtakes S7 no. 181 on the little-used Norcot (town-bound) siding during the RTS's final Reading trolleybus tour on the morning of Sunday, 3 November 1968
Photo: Martin Harvey



3 November 1968, and 144 emerges from Bennett Road depot (on traction batteries: as the depot and road access weren't wired) after repaint
Photos: Doug Barrow



The Corporation's ex-London tower wagon, TXV 909, takes 144 (left) along Bennett Road, to (centre and right) Mill Lane depot prior to a road test and then the system's final run
Photos: Doug Barrow



Midday on 3 November, and Sunbeam S7 no. 178, with F4As 183 and 185 behind, are waiting in Mill Lane to take up service for the very last time. Already, there are some sight-seers about in what was a quiet road on a Sunday

Photo: John Hawkins

queue ever seen there had assembled, needing two inspectors and the Assistant Traffic Superintendent to supervise the arrival and departure of each trolleybus - and it was made quite clear that all passengers would disembark on arrival and there would be no staying aboard whilst vehicles turned! 182 left Wokingham Road on the last thorough run to Tilehurst at 3.15 pm, with 178 operating to Norcot 15 minutes later. At 3.45 pm 183 left for depot, leaving a huge crowd hopeful of boarding 185, the last trolleybus to depart from Wokingham Road. Unfortunately, many were left behind. As 185 sped along the Kings Road bus lane, a minute's silence was spontaneously observed by everyone aboard and at Factory Bridge a stop was made for photographers. 185 then carried on and, arriving at Duke Street/ King's Road traffic lights, was confronted by 182, the last from Tilehurst! When the lights turned to green, neither moved, each seeking the honour of being the last service trolleybus back to depot! This duel continued for some two minutes until an inspector waved 185 on, a decision not readily appreciated by its passengers!

On arrival at Mill Lane, both 185 and 182 were lost in large crowds gathered round 174, 181 and 144, which were awaiting the VIPs and invited guests for the final run to Tilehurst. 144's driver was George Pottinger, the trolleybus driving instructor before the school closed. He was kept busy, signing souvenir tickets for autograph collectors.

By 4.40 pm, all guests were aboard 144 and 181; those on 144 included the Mayor and Mayoress and the undertaking's former Transport Manager, Mr. W.J. Evans. 174 acted as relief, carrying additional guests. Spare seats were made available to enthusiasts just before moving off. Huge crowds lined the town centre streets and, as the procession made its way to Tilehurst, groups of people stood witness whilst cameras solemnly recorded the scene.

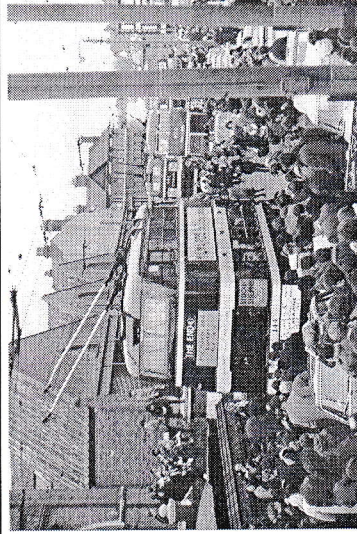
Behind the three trolleybuses was a seemingly unending line of preserved buses and cars stretching away into the fading daylight. At Tilehurst, a crowd, some five deep, completely blocked the road and it was only with great difficulty that the trolleybuses turned. After a short pause, the procession set

off again, passing a solid line of cars for the first half mile. Whilst there were many enthusiasts who had travelled far to be there, it has to be said that the people of Reading turned out in their hundreds, if not thousands, quite clearly with regret that the Reading trolleybus was passing into history.

At Mill Lane, the throng previously in the town centre was now concentrated at the depot entrance and, as 144 approached for the last time, an army of hundreds followed it.

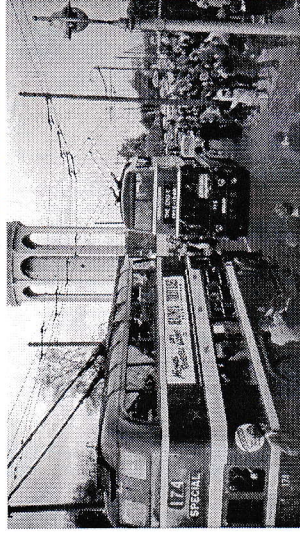
The guests alighted, to make their way to the undertaking's clubroom where the Mayor, Alderman Mrs. Edith Morris, spoke of "32 wonderful years of service which would be missed".

Following refreshments, a small group went to the depot sub-station to witness the Mayor pull the switch cutting the power to the overhead as a final seal to the system's fate. The end had indeed come and even during the reception a start had been made towing all remaining trolleybuses to Bennet Road: 144, 172, 173, 174, 178, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 188 and 192 had been at Mill Lane during the last day. By midnight, 185 had become the last trolleybus at Mill Lane, thus concluding 32 years of trolleybus operation in the town.



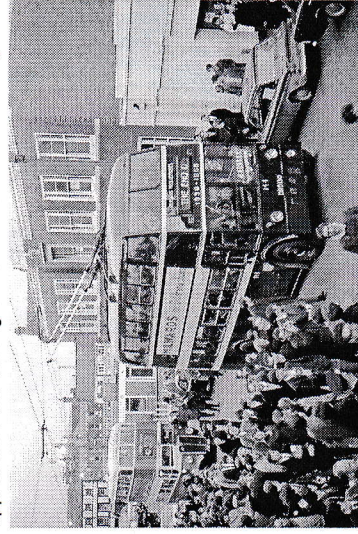
The unprecedented scene in Mill Lane as the last trolleybuses return from their special service runs

Photo: Dave Hall collection



Huge crowds were also at Tilehurst terminus: this photograph was taken from the upper deck of 181. With much difficulty, 174 has already turned and 144 approaches the turning circle

Photo: Martin Harvey



144, in Mill Lane again, picks its way along the last few yards of its historic and emotional last journey on the streets of Reading. The Brighton AEC behind was one of a host of preserved buses in Reading for the occasion

Photo: Robin Hellier-Symons

VEHICLES REPORTS

from Ian Wilson (unless credited otherwise)
General: All Sandtoft-based vehicles have been measured and the depot has been reorganised with the intention of making better use of the available space.

St. Helens 387: (report from Geoff Sandford) 29 June at the North West Museum of Road Transport, St. Helens saw 260 visitors come through the doors for the trolleybus event and commemoration of the closure of the St. Helens system on 30 June 1958. £130 was raised for 387 and a lot of promotional publicity and information was given about Sandtoft, lots of people being unaware the Trolleybus Museum existed.

It had been advertised that two St. Helens buses would be running on the former circular Rainhill/ Prescott trolleybus route, but at one point we had four - quite an achievement - one of which was 1958 AEC Regent V no.153, one of the buses that replaced the trolleybuses, but of course, 387 was the star! It was her day and visitors poured over her to look at a vehicle type many had never seen before.



Photo: Geoff Sandford

Work is still progressing on the platform area of 387. The whole of the bulkhead has been stripped of paint and the rust removed. Kurust has been applied everywhere followed by a coat of primer paint, rubbing down and undercoating. Further rubbing down followed, with a second coat of undercoat then applied. The same process has been followed on the wheel arch panels in the lower saloon.

In addition, work on sanding clean and re-varnishing the timber window frame surrounds on the nearside has re-commenced, the metal framework underneath also being treated with Kurust and Hammerite before the re-varnished timber was re-fixed.

Nottingham 67: (report from Steve Collins) Work continues reframing the lower saloon. The main wood support sandwiched between the upper and lower decks has deteriorated to the extent that, at the front, it needs replacing. To facilitate this, the cab's remaining framework has been carefully measured and removed.

Nottingham 493: (report from Andy Thornton) Since the last report, 493 has done its share of service work. As is to be expected when running old vehicles for the first time in many years, a few problems have been encountered. Solutions have been fiddly, but successful.

I have been lucky enough to acquire some manuals and other documents

relevant to the vehicle: these have already been useful for remedying the problems encountered. As ever, time has been spent thinking about future work, including the re-test now due and also locating and purchase of materials.

Rotherham 73: (report and accompanying photographs from Tim Stubbs)

When embarking on a major restoration project, it is helpful to make some sort of plan. This is what happened when the start of the restoration of number 73 was considered in 2001.

In carrying out the actual restoration, it was envisaged there would be four main phases, these being:

1. Body frame and panelling
2. Mechanical overhaul
3. Fitting electrical equipment and wiring
4. Seats, trimming, finishing and painting

Needless to say, this idealised format did not happen in practice. Various phases overlapped and the sequence of work was changed more than once for a variety of reasons as the restoration progressed.

At the time of writing, we are 7 years into the project. It was originally thought that it would take 10 years to produce a restored working trolleybus, using mainly volunteer effort. Whilst some major progress has been made, there are still some important parts of the work yet to take place - and not all the work has gone smoothly!

The most recent tasks completed have been the assembly of the main contactor panel, the installation of a major part of the 12 volt wiring and re-varnishing some of the hundreds of wooden trim strips for the inside of the body. The accompanying photos indicate recent work. Thanks are due to all



who have assisted with the project, either physically or financially. For future progress, watch this space!

Bradford 746: (report from Stewart David) Recently, and between bouts of service use, 746 as had its chassis cleaned and repainted.

Bradford 558: (Report from Geoff Welburn) A standard feature on Leyland bodies was that they were all supplied with a side destination box above the platform whether they were used or not. Bradford, at that time, did not use this feature. It has been necessary to replace this metal box entirely, along with all the associated timber.

Similarly, the internal curved section of steel panelling above the platform required replacing as well. As this panel required rolling and had some critical curves at either end, this section was made for me by a specialist company: unfortunately, it seems that whilst they took all the necessary measurements before rolling took place, they overlooked the elongation of the metal during the rolling process and consequently it would not fit until some adjustments had been made!

Doncaster 22: The roof has received attention in an attempt to cure a serious water leak.

Doncaster 33: The radiator has been overhauled and refitted.

Douglas 63 has been sold by Roy Fawcett and will shortly be leaving Sandtoft and returning to the Isle of Man.

Sheffield 1357 failed its MoT during 'Gathering working week, due to brake imbalance and the indicators flashing too slowly! It is intended to re-test it during November.

SYPT 2450: As part of the depot reorganisation, 2450 has now been moved to the front of the depot to enable work to be carried out with a view to returning it to Sandtoft service.

SYPT 2479: Work is continuing on the refurbishment of the air system.

Finally, our "Cherry Picker", so essential for the smooth-running of the Museum has, at long last, been found a space inside the depot.

DEPARTMENTAL NEWS

TRAFFIC OFFICE

This year's Sandtoft Gathering, the premier event at The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft, was held over the weekend of 26/ 27 July. During the week leading up to the main event, our workshop team and others were very busy testing and cleaning/ washing vehicles, and shunting vehicles so as to clear out part of the depot for the use by visiting sales stands.

from Stewart David

Trolleybuses in passenger service over the weekend included Bradford 746, Huddersfield 619, Glasgow TB78, London 1812, Maidstone 72, Newcastle 501, Nottingham 506 and Reading 113. Marseilles 202 also operated at its first 'Gathering and proved a very popular attraction with standing loads of passengers! The Saturday evening twilight service was provided by TB78, 501 and 619.

The Traffic operation over the weekend ran very smoothly, with no major vehicle problems and only one dewirement. Visitor numbers overall were very impressive, with the trolleybuses working 38 service trips and carrying some 335 passengers on Saturday and an amazing 79 service trips with 1,956 passengers on Sunday.

Finally, I would like to thank the vehicle owners for the use of their vehicles, the Traffic staff who worked so hard on both days and those who helped clean and prepare vehicles for service - and put them away afterwards.



John Zebedee, hard at work (left and centre) cleaning the outside, and Joan Barrow (right), the inside of London 1812
Photos: Doug Barrow

AT THE BUS STOP

In this edition we feature an 11 ton Fowler T3B Steam Roller built on a Tiger Tractor chassis that is working near the bus stop. It was built in 1937 and was the last steam roller supplied to West Riding County Council. It generally worked at Ingelton and Skipton.

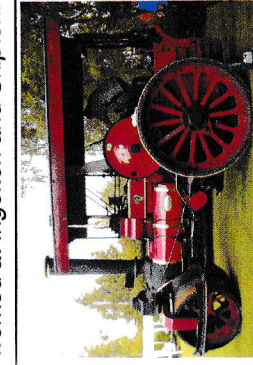


Photo: David Needham

BWY 847 was purchased by the present owner, John Selby of Belton, from the Council in 1960, we understand with the help of a loan from his father. It was not, however, allowed to retire, and was used commercially for some time in order to pay for itself and also earning enough for John to purchase his first car.

In the early 1970s it was semi-retired and although John says it is still available for

commercial work, he now takes it to various rallies and open days, which fortunately for us, included a visit to this year's Sandtoft Gathering.

Ongoing cleaning and maintenance is carried out by John: this also involves boiler re-tubing approximately every 10 years.

DEAR 'SCENE

Dear Scene

Many thanks for another excellent edition of *Sandtoft Scene* - it continues to improve. I particularly enjoyed Steve Collins' article - *Route to Sandtoft - Plumtree Part 8*. It brought back many memories.

I too attended the Cardiff trolleybus closure in January 1970 and remember the rain but not the baby elephants: funny how time plays tricks on the memory! I also remember a spectacular derailment, in Wood Street, I think, on the Saturday afternoon, that brought the city centre to a standstill!

One of my earliest working visits to Sandtoft was at Easter 1970; I lived in the south of England at the time and owned an Austin A60 van in which I ate and slept on such occasions. I was to stay on site but there were no facilities there at the time, except a wall to "go" behind when one felt the need to, so I drove into Doncaster on the Sunday evening. Waiting at the opposite side of the *Gaumont* traffic lights were one blue and one green double decker: Doncaster was well known for its independent operators at the time and I wondered who was running these two. I soon noticed that the blue 'decker had a towing notice on its radiator and Bradford Corporation on its side, the green one was a trolleybus with Nottingham City Transport lettering!

On my return to Sandtoft, Nottingham 493 was parked next to the depot but there was no sign of the blue 'decker (Bradford 558). Next morning as I perused the new arrival, a car pulled in and two men emerged. The driver introduced himself as Paul Tucker, cousin of Mike Dare: he introduced the other as Steve Collins, owner of 493. Steve had spent the night at Paul's house in nearby Westgate and was on his way back to civilisation from where he could return to Nottingham.

493 did, indeed, prove to be the Trojan Horse: some very rough men from Nottingham later brought in such as Nottingham 367 and 466, Cleethorpes 54 and Mexborough 34, all in very derelict condition.

Finally, Steve mentions derelict Walsall 864 standing on piles of bricks. It isn't on bricks, it's on railway sleepers. I know. I put it there!

Jim Sambrooks, Doncaster

NOTICE BOARD

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION DISCOUNT

Staying for the weekend and looking for somewhere to stay?

The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft has teamed up with Express by Holiday Inn Doncaster to offer our staff and visitors a **10% discount** on their stay in the hotel. The hotel is located just off the M18 J3 and is a 15 minute drive from the Museum via the M18 and M180 motorways. The hotel is fully air

conditioned, every room is equipped with all the facilities you need for a relaxing and comfortable stay - an invigorating power shower, satellite TV, in-room movies, broadband access, high speed internet access and tea/ coffee making facilities, plus FREE WIFI in lounge and bar.

To take advantage of a **10% discount** on your stay in the hotel you can reserve your room by calling 0871 423 4876 and quoting The Trolleybus Museum. Please note that this offer cannot be redeemed when booking online.

For further details of the Express by Holiday Inn Doncaster please visit <http://www.ichotelsgroup.com/h/d/ex/925/en/hd/dsauk>.

BRADFORD B.U.T. TROLLEYBUS No.746.

Stewart David is currently seeking a co-owner for this splendid vehicle. In recent years 746 has received a full external repaint, had some electrical work undertaken and more recently the chassis cleaned and repainted. It is currently in serviceable condition and is a regular and popular performer at the Museum on open days.

If you are interested and would like further information please contact stewartdavid@ntlworld.com or see him at Sandtoft.

Photo: Stewart David



NEWS FROM OTHER MUSEUMS

Black Country Living Museum

Tram and trolleybus services had to be suspended from 9-16 August, on account of the main electrical cable into the site failing. After numerous holes had appeared in the road, new connections were completed and services resumed in good time for the Bank Holiday weekend.

London 1201 and Manchester 1344 returned to Carlton Colville on 20 August after their summer vacation at Dudley. During that time 1201 had a new contactor coil fitted to replace a burnt-out unit: Other than that, both ran successfully.

Bournemouth 297 also had contactor problems, burning out contactor R2 within 10 seconds of being energised for the first time at BCM. A temporary swap of contactors at least allowed movement under power, but after having been re-wound, the original is now refitted and has enabled 297 to enter service rather belatedly, and operate over the Bank Holiday period. However further contactor problems have appeared yet again - so back to the drawing board

The rest of the fleet remains available for service, and trolleybuses will maintain the service till at least after the New Year celebrations are over.

The new shelter at the village terminus, complete with lighting, will enhance

the service as the evenings draw in now on the run up to Bonfire Night and Christmas late night operating times.

Building the new storage shed next to the existing stores shed will commence on 1 September, so there will have to be movement of at least one traction pole and its bracket arm to make way for building contractors to operate. A plain pole with span wire will replace it.

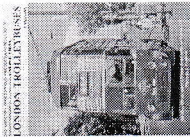
REVIEWS

DVD – London Trolleybuses – Part One

Published by Online Video

£18.00

(Postage £1.00)



A nostalgic look at part of the London trolleybus system, commencing with the trolleybus in everyday service then an introduction to some of the system's vehicle types and the various X-class trolleybuses (X for Experimental, each of the 7 vehicles in the X-classes, X1 to X7, was a one-off and their respective unique aspects are explained).

What was to become the London system - once the largest trolleybus system in the world, both in terms of vehicle numbers and, with 256 route miles - started with the small system established by the London United Tramways Company in part of the south-west suburbs in May 1931. Excellent black-and-white footage of the first trolleybus as it inaugurated the system, and others at work, leads to a look at the growth of the system following the establishment of London Transport with a full-system diagram. The programme then covers the routes affected by the various trolleybus to motorbus conversion stages (when the system was abandoned on a phased basis in just three years) featuring the routes replaced in 1959 and 1960. Route 654 is used to show the many aspects of trolleybus operation and the B1 Class short-length vehicles which operated this hilly route. Conversion stages 1 to 7 are then featured, one by one (the remaining conversion stages are covered in London Trolleybuses - Part Two, which will be reviewed in a future issue of *Sandtoft Scene*).

An evocative selection of films - mainly in colour - plus some black-and-white material, show how things used to be in the days when so many people used public transport as a matter of course, and it's interesting to see how some of the locations featured have changed but little since the films were taken, yet other locations are so different now. Sheer nostalgia - especially for people like myself who grew up in those now-far-off times when the trolleybus was an everyday sight, and who travelled regularly by trolleybus and motorbus - and an introduction, for those who didn't experience those times, of how things were. With a running time of 1 hour 40 minutes this programme is recommended for anyone interested in the trolleybus, and not just the London system, and can be purchased from our *Trolleyshop* at Sandtoft.

Doug Barrow



BOOK – Reading Trolleybuses

Written by David Hall

Published by Trolleybooks in 1991 (OUT OF PRINT)

Original cover price £19.95

This book may only be available from second-hand sources

The 40th Anniversary of the closure of the Reading trolleybus system is a fitting time to review this volume in our regular Sandtoft Scene Book Review slot (and also include some photographs of Reading trolleybuses!). An account of the last days of trolleybuses in Reading by the same author appears earlier on in this issue of Sandtoft Scene.

Published by Trolleybooks in 1991, and now out of print (it may still be possible to obtain copies second-hand - and certainly through the Inter-Library Lending Scheme), this excellent book traces the history of local public transport in Reading, commencing with some horse-bus services which the town's innkeepers ran from their respective premises to outlying areas. In 1879 the Reading Tramways Company opened the first section of a horse tramway (which competed successfully with the services of the various horse-bus operators), and in October 1901 the Council purchased the tramways and subsequently obtained Parliamentary powers to extend and electrify the system.

Following the introduction of the first "trackless trolleycar" systems in Bradford and Leeds, the Reading Corporation, in 1912, started to consider the possibility of a service of railless trolleycars (among other options) in connection with the tramway, and although the Reading Corporation Act 1914 included provision for establishing some trackless trolley routes, the subsequent outbreak of war prevented these proposals proceeding. Some post-war motorbus routes were introduced, and it was many years before the Council considered again the possibility of trolleybus operation.

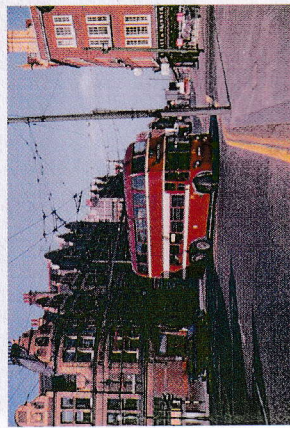
In 1934 the Council decided to seek, by including in a Bill it was promoting in Parliament, powers to operate trolleybuses under the authority given by the 1914 Act and in the meantime considered how a trolleybus service could be implemented. The Bill received the Royal Assent in 1935 and David Hall details the arrangements which were put in hand for the creation and operation of a trolleybus system. A training section of wiring was erected in Erleigh Road and in the meantime quotations had been obtained from various manufacturers for a pilot fleet of trolleybuses. The Caversham to Whitley tram route was converted for trolleybus operation, and the last trams ran on that route on 15 July 1936 - motorbuses taking over services for 2 days so that any interfering tramway fittings could be removed. It was interesting to read that, so that members of the public could become familiar with the new means of transport, free rides on a trolleybus in Erleigh Road were available at certain times of the day, with special tickets being issued.

The trolleybus system was inaugurated, using 5 of the 6 trolleybuses which had been acquired, on Saturday 18 July: the scene was thus set for the

development of the system, and the book includes comprehensive details of the system's development and operation. The various vehicle types - including a few purchased from Huddersfield - are featured (as are incidents which occurred over the years), and likewise there are details of the road schemes which affected trolleybus operation. The factors which led to the decision to abandon trolleybus operation are explained, as are the ways in which the abandonment programme was planned and implemented; visits by preserved trolleybuses which had operated previously on other systems are mentioned, too - and the comprehensive appendices complement the very informative text.

A very well-researched and excellently-written book, with a wealth of photographs and information in 136 pages, this book is the definitive history of the Reading trolleybus system. If you haven't got a copy you may be lucky enough to obtain one, but if not, borrow the book through your local library service.

Doug Barrow



Opposite page: (All photos by Doug Barrow)
Top - Sunbeam F4A no.186 and BUT 9611T no.155 inside Mill Lane depot, probably on a Sunday

Lower left - 185 about to turn at Tilehurst terminus

Lower right - Sunbeam S7 no.180 heading for town on route 15 at Buckland Road junction: it was very unusual to see trolleybuses so dirty in Reading

This page: (All photos by Doug Barrow)

Above left - 174 turns from St. Mary's Butts into Broad Street to take up service to Wokingham Road, judging from the lack of traffic, probably on a Sunday

Above right - Visiting preserved Bournemouth open topper no.202 on an enthusiast tour of the Reading system on 28 July 1968 about to turn into Duke Street (depot working wiring) from King Street

Right - 181 lays over at Armour Hill terminus

Below left - 182 at Kentwood Circle, heads for Armour Hill

Below right - 181 at Reading West Station in Oxford Road, heading for he town and Wokingham Road



SANDTOFT GATHERING '08 PHOTO GALLERY



Former London Transport RTW178 was sold to Stevensons of Spath in 1966 and is seen here next to Doncaster 33 on our "new" land, just outside the old back gate. It worked a free bus journey back to Doncaster after the Gathering

Photo: Tim Stubbs



It was the first Gathering that Marseille 202 operated at, and it proved very popular, carrying several standing loads

Photo: Bruce Lake