

# Sandtoft Scene

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News and Views from  
The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft



**Sandtoft Transport Centre Limited**  
The Trolleybus Museum, Belton Road, Sandtoft,  
Doncaster, North Lincolnshire, DN8 5SX  
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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 The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft, the Company, its Directors or its members.

**FRONT COVER PICTURE:** Trolleybuses await service at the Easter Eggstravaganza. That 1812 is an "8-footer" is accentuated when compared with the Huddersfield vehicles, the whole trolleybus fleet of which were only ever 7"-6" examples *Photo: David Needham*

Our Vision Statement is

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

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

**EDITOR'S VIEW**

Well, here we are again: for me, one of the highlights of the season - the 'Gathering. To my mind, it is the time when all members can not only enjoy their Museum, but also relax and chat in the beer tent and, if persuaded, we may get the BBQ cooks hard at work rustling up some grub (at very reasonable prices). So, if you can, why not come and join in ?



As you will read in Chas Allen's report, visitor figures were down last year and with the current economic situation, it is easy to visualise that this year will also show a reduction in visitors. With this in mind, please do all you can to encourage people to come to the Museum: the admission charges are very competitive and when I was in the reception building recently as visitors were, leaving they all said that they had enjoyed their visit and intended to come again. Having set the scene for his series of articles, "Black Rod" now begins to unfold the story of the start of the trolleybus group in Nottingham and how, slowly, they learnt of other like-minded people who were there at the very beginning of what became the "Route to Sandtoft" - but, there was still a long way to go before our Museum put down its roots.

Further on in this edition, you will see that we now have some more trolleybuses in our collection - from Manchester and Teesside - both looking great but the latter requires some work, especially inside, before we can see it in service.

**DIRECTORS' SPOT**

..... from Chas Allen, Commercial Director:

This is my first piece for *Sandtoft Scene* since taking over the reins from Aiden Proctor at the last AGM as Commercial Director, ready for the British Trolleybus Centenary Year. Unfortunately, I didn't get off to a good start - one of my first acts was to recommend cancelling the Santa Weekend due to the adverse weather conditions at the beginning of last December - especially disappointing as we already had the toys for Santa to distribute ! However, they won't go to waste - they are in store for *this* December, weather permitting. All of which leads me nicely into the main bit of what I want to say ...

Ignoring the figures for the Santa Weekends, visitor numbers for 2010 were slightly down on 2009, continuing a general trend over the last three years or so, but to put this in perspective, recent figures from Welcome to Yorkshire suggest that, generally, visitor attractions in the region fared much worse than us in 2010. That we have done comparatively well is testament to the hard work that Aiden (and others) have put in to promoting the Museum over the last five years. However, there is no room for complacency: we need to maintain and increase this momentum if Sandtoft is to survive and improve and I am expecting this year is going to be much tougher due to the economic

climate. Being an open-air museum means we are at the mercies of the vagaries of the weather and the imminent opening of the indoor children's play area, with the space it gives us for extra exhibitions, should be a big help in this direction - although ironically, we seem to do better when the weather is "middling", rather than too hot or too wet.

Longer term, we need to raise our profile, at the same time reducing costs and developing new attractions. One of the policies we have been following over the last few years is to widen our customer base - that is, to encourage the non-enthusiast end of the market and this needs to continue and develop. Graham Bilbé has devised a Centenary Tour for this year, which will explore the development of the trolleybus in a social context, using the existing facilities of the Museum: if successful, we may continue running this beyond the Centenary.

I am writing this immediately after the Easter Eggstravaganza; already this year we have had visitors from Somerset, Birmingham, Aberdeen and even a family from Switzerland on holiday in the area, in addition to an organised tour party from Switzerland. On the other hand, some intending visitors, finding themselves in Epworth at Easter and wanting to get to us, were unable to find anyone in the town who had heard of the Museum. There is a lesson to be learnt there! A questionnaire is being drawn up to find out where our visitors are coming from and where they heard of us, so we can target resources more effectively. This year's publicity leaflet is very similar to last year's; I make no apology for that - it maximised the benefit from the cost of the artwork last year - and the print run has been reduced (but there are some left at the Museum for general distribution). Please take a few and put them where they will be seen, but don't take hundreds at a time! If you cannot get to Sandtoft and would like some sending out to you, let me know and I will put some in the post.

Finally, next year's programme of events is currently being drawn up. I have already got some ideas, but would be glad to hear yours: I was given one suggestion at the Eggstravaganza, which could become a recurring event. This is, after all, YOUR museum, so please feel free to email me. Needless to say, we have already hit one major 2012 problem - the 'Gathering is always fixed in the Sandtoft calendar on the last weekend in July, but in 2012 this is also the first weekend of the Olympic Games. Nationally, a vast number of buses, and therefore drivers, will be directly or indirectly involved in the contracts for transporting officials, athletes and spectators for the Olympics and the Paralympics which follow on immediately afterwards - in other words, from late July throughout August. The upshot is that if we stick to our customary dates for 'Gathering we will have a reduced number of rally entrants and a depleted Museum staff, because those of us working in the industry (even in non-driving "day jobs") will be press-ganged into providing driver cover.

Although I have written to Olympic Committee asking them to reconsider the timing of their little sideshow so that it does not clash with another major annual event, it doesn't look like they are going to budge, so **we have decided that the 'Gathering in 2012 will be two weeks earlier - over the weekend of 14/ 15 July**, reverting to our traditional last weekend in July in 2013.



## THE ROUTE TO SANDTOFT BLACK ROD KNOCKS ON THE DOORS - OF SANDTOFT I

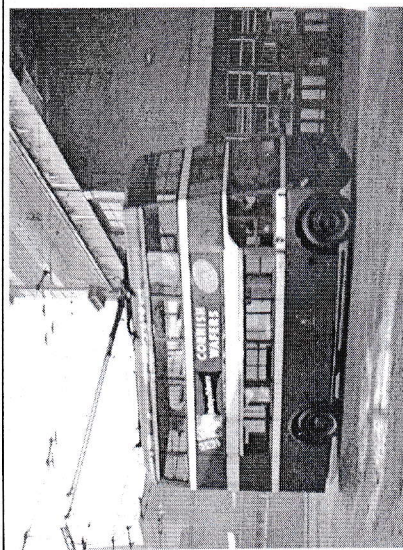
### "Black Rod" PART 2- A Change of Emphasis and "Desertion"

In part 1, I refuted the idea proposed by Steve Collins in his excellent *Route to Sandtoft* episodes that Plumtree and the Nottingham Trolleybus Group was Mike Dare's fault and that he, albeit indirectly, was to blame for the ultimate debacle. I hope that I have laid that injustice to rest! I have shown that the first hint of activities in Reading were in the "Vehicle Developments" column of *Buses Illustrated (BI)* for June 1961, some 3 months following private preservation ideas in Nottingham. At this time, nobody had heard of Mike Dare in that Midlands city. Since the Reading system was still developing in 1961, the Reading Transport Society (RTS) was committed to saving a pre-war trolleybus: in Nottingham, the system itself was condemned, and initially, the Nottingham Trolleybus Group (NTG) was trying to reverse an abandonment decision, with preservation an option should those efforts fail. In an attempt to draw support for its activities, the NTG had organised a tour of the Nottingham trolleybus system in May 1961. Although enjoyed by the participants, the support was disappointing due to the lack of publicity. A second tour was organised for 29 October 1961, with a newspaper article providing details of both the tour and the NTG's aims and activities. I wrote to the address provided and received a friendly letter from a character that (in the same vein of Steve's articles) I shall call the Acting Secretary. His letter, that I still have on file, tells of the weekly meetings held on Wednesdays at a member's house and provided necessary details of the October tour.

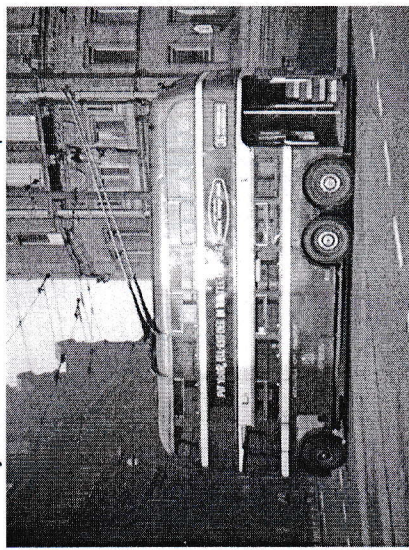
Here, I should explain a little of my own interest: I was, and still am, a tram and trolleybus enthusiast. During the 1950s, I had witnessed the closure of virtually all of the UK's tramway systems with destruction of rolling stock so modern as to be classed as wanton vandalism. My home town is Nottingham, so I also took an interest in trolleybuses, but did not perceive them to be a "threatened species" at that time. I subscribed to *BI* which was the only regular method of gleaned information about trolleybuses. Without being disrespectful to *BI* - it was, and still is, an excellent publication, but it was limited to the accounts sent in by correspondents and the time scales imposed by the period. Without trying to bang on about the "old days", there was no email and few private individuals possessed a telephone. Correspondence was therefore by post, so *BI* reports in their "Vehicle Developments" section could be patchy in content and somewhat delayed. However, it was all that was available at the time. After the sad demise of Sheffield's tramway in October 1960, I had decided to investigate trolleybus operations more thoroughly. In fact, my first "pure trolleybus" excursion was to the Mexborough & Swinton/ Rotherham systems in February 1961. I was aware via *BI* that London Transport was in the midst of closing their trolleybus network and that other operators were cutting down their overhead wires, but it was still a shock when I read the headlines of 1 March 1961 in our local newspapers announcing the abandonment of my "home"

system of Nottingham. The article announcing the NTG tour in October 1961 and that there was a group of people with a like mind as myself regarding trolleybuses was great news! Incidentally, B/ 78 (September 1961) reported on page 320 that "113, which is to be preserved, is still in service" - but no mention of Mike Dare or the RTS !

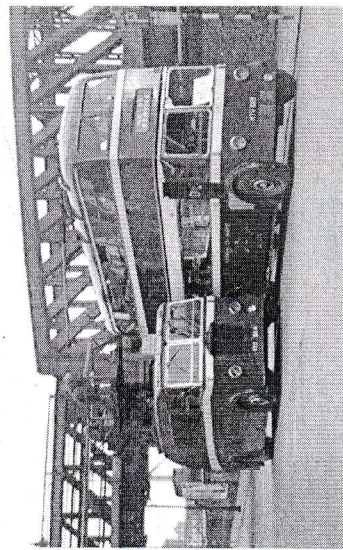
I went along to Nottingham's Parliament Street depot for the NTG tour. It was quite well patronised with apparently some additional faces including my own. I met the Acting Secretary and was immediately invited to the next Wednesday meeting at which future strategy would be reviewed and formulated. It was a Wednesday evening that would change my life ! I was introduced to a number of personages who, of course, will be well known to most readers from Steve's articles. First and foremost was "The Chairman" in whose house the meetings were held: he was a jolly fellow and was (meaning this as a compliment) what used to be termed as an ordinary decent working man. The Acting Secretary was there, together with a bod with connections to the local newspaper, whom I shall call the "Press Secretary". Also present, addressing the gathering with strident and authoritative tones, was the



29 October 1961 - the date of the NTG Nottingham tour and utility 457 enters Parliament Street depot



No.502, an 8'-0" wide BUT 9641T, now owned by Tom Bowden, also seen on 29 October 1961

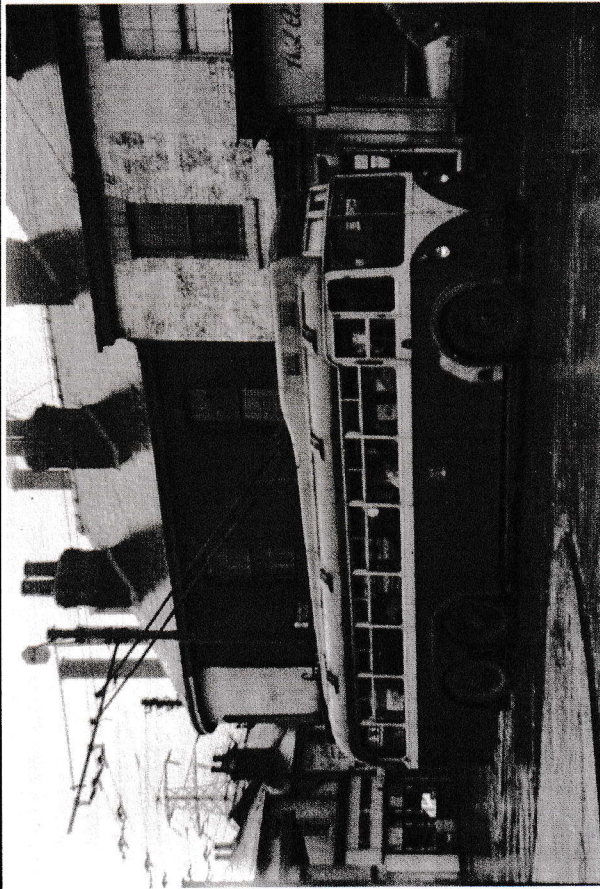


Tower wagon 802 (now part of our collection) with no.585 on 29 October 1961 All photos this page: "Black Rod"

gentlemen that Steve named "The Teacher". The meeting remained informal with no officers being chosen and no minutes taken. However, I believe a change of tack took place: the NTG remained committed to promote the use of trolleybuses in Nottingham; however, it was acknowledged that since their earlier meetings, other influential trolleybus operators had also decided to convert their systems to motorbuses and it was considered highly unlikely that Nottingham would change its mind. Preservation therefore became more of a priority and the list grew from the one vehicle originally envisaged. Only local trolleybuses were considered and no specific vehicles were chosen. The "wish list" included a utility trolleybus, a post-war 2-axle vehicle, a BUT9641T example, plus a Notts. & Derbys. trolleybus retrieved from Bradford. There was little debate as to how these trolleybuses would be paid for ! It was merely (realistically) assumed that these vehicles would be withdrawn gradually, presumably allowing time for sufficient funding to be accumulated. There was also scant reference to where these vehicles could be parked, but a "trolleybus Cricht" was mentioned but, once again, no costs were considered. In fairness, it must be remembered that this was a formative meeting and most of the participants, including myself, were barely out of school.

Every Wednesday witnessed another meeting, so that by the end of November 1961, a Nottingham tram had been added to the list of potential preserved vehicles. It was known that one or two bodies were in existence around the area and it was believed that a suitable truck could be acquired. There were some tram enthusiasts within the Group and the Chairman believed that preserving a tram would encourage further support for the Group. Another member of the Group requires introduction, and I will call him "The Librarian". He was a usually mild-mannered, well-read and intelligent man. His voice could be the calming influence between the Teacher who wished to purchase half the Nottingham trolleybus fleet and the Chairman who now warmed to the idea of operating a "trolleybus Cricht" in some unspecified UK beauty spot. The Librarian actually had the temerity to suggest that money might be required !

By the end of 1961, an ambitious outline programme of events was drawn up for 1962 in order to generate some revenue. In effect, this was a series of monthly tours that tried to alternate between local and long distance outings, in order to "soften" the costs for participants. The longer distances were generally those featuring trolleybus tours and included outings to Hull, Ashton/Manchester, London and Rotherham amongst others. The itinerary went out in the name of the Press Secretary. As I have previously outlined, the NTG worked in "splendid isolation", being unaware of other groups' existence or activities. This was about to change. The Chairman had a contact with the Doncaster Omnibus & Light Railway Society (DO&LRS) in the wonderful Les Flint. He therefore found out that DO&LRS had organised a tour in Rotherham on a single deck trolleybus on 21 January 1962: however, a letter had already been sent to Rotherham (actually on 1 January - I retain much of this correspondence) requesting a NTG tour at a much later date. The DO&LRS members believed that their tour would be the last outing of an English (note, not



21 January 1962 turned out to be a wet day in Rotherham when DO&LRS toured the system in a single deck Daimler  
Photo: Black Rod

Welsh or Scottish) single decker "trackless" and some, understandably, were none too keen to find out that a subsequent NTG tour was scheduled for August 1962! Clearly some co-operation was required: as a consequence, wherever possible, NTG tours made provision for DO&LRS members to join, arranging pick-up points in either Doncaster or Sheffield. The Chairman also ensured that DO&LRS was sent a copy of the 1962 itinerary.

The Chairman returned from Rotherham determined that a Daimler CT/ East Lancs. trolleybus should be added to the NTG list: after all, Nottingham had operated single deck trolleybuses during the war (ex-Hastings), so it could represent that era. On 24 January 1962, another letter was therefore penned to Rotherham asking if the NTG could purchase "one of your single decker trolleybuses, some of which are presently lying in disuse....". The reply from Mr. I.O. Fisher, General Manager of the undertaking dated 26 January 1962 stated "...I would say that we are hoping that these vehicles will eventually be exported to Spain. Negotiations are still proceeding and I hope that the result will be that as soon as an import licence has been granted by the Spanish Government, these vehicles will be removed from our premises and operate somewhere in Spain". They would, of course, have followed other similar Rotherham trolleybuses to be operated in Spain. Mr. Fisher's letter concluded "if the deal is not finalised, I would certainly consider selling one of these vehicles to your Group". Again, I retain these letters on file. Sometime later, we discovered that the remaining single deckers had been sold for scrap. A further letter was sent to Mr. Fisher and a most apologetic reply was received

explaining that our request had been inadvertently overlooked. He did suggest that if we wished to write to him when the double deck trolleybuses were withdrawn, he would view our application sympathetically. Unfortunately, this latter correspondence was not amongst the files retained by your scribe, but this episode, I believe, would prove to be the cause of some "excitement" a few years later!

So far as the NTG was concerned, another boundary had been crossed in that the Rotherham single deck trolleybus was the first non-local vehicle (i.e. not Nottingham and district) to be nominated for preservation by the NTG. I did not realise it at the time, but the Chairman's somewhat kleptomaniac tendencies were starting to show: but, of course, no actual vehicles had been involved so far and it was easy to get swept along with the tide of enthusiasm that the Chairman could create - he had a certain curious charisma and unflinching optimism.

Several notable developments took place during late 1961/ early 1962: in November 1961, B/ 80 recorded on page 390 that "...113, the one scheduled for preservation, was hired by the Reading Transport Society on 13 September for a tour of the system....". We now know the RTS existed. Also in November, Nottingham City Transport (NCT) announced the commencement of its trolleybus conversion, and that service 45 would be replaced. Obviously, some utility vehicles would be withdrawn. The Press Secretary was able to place another small article in the newspaper on 12 January 1962, headed "Trolley Group Progress": it stated that "no officials have yet been elected". With the probable start of vehicle acquisition, the informal status needed some changes and finance had to be discussed. The Chairman was quite at ease with the situation - the NTG would take out a loan using his own house as security. This was at a time when the only loan one was ever likely to take out would be a mortgage - anybody borrowing money for anything else was, I am afraid, regarded rather like a leper! He explained that "if we all paid £1 per week" any loan could be paid off with no difficulty. This phrase of "£1 per week" is one that I would subsequently hear time and time again....

The Chairman's economics were based on the fact that the membership was now approaching 30 - i.e. £30 per week could be raised. The glaringly obvious flaw in "The Plan" was that the number of active members was about 8. It also has to be mentioned that most of these, including myself, were very young and could not realistically afford £1 per week! If a loan was to be secured, it was sensibly decided that the NTG should become properly structured and officers should be elected. The Chairman was (appropriately) elected as Chairman with the Librarian (thankfully) as Treasurer and "yours truly" became Acting Secretary! I seem to remember that there were other committee members - Peter (P.D.) Green, I believe was a committee member - if not, he was certainly heavily involved. Some of the most important correspondence was issued in the name of the Chairman, since we believed the title might hold more "clout".

The effect of the Chairman's loan proposal had been profound. The previous Acting Secretary (who worked in a bank) promptly resigned - I never saw him

again. The Press Secretary was rarely seen again, but we eventually had the courtesy of an explanation that his father, who was supposedly a high-ranking police officer had warned his son away from becoming involved with such folly and recklessness. Several others "fell by the wayside" at the prospect of being part of an organisation owing money. As for the Teacher - he quietly departed from the scene with no word to anybody! ..... Would any of them ever return ?

### WEDDING DAY FOR TWO OF OUR MEMBERS

On Wednesday, 27 April 2011, two days before the Royal Wedding, we had two of our members, Jenny Mitchell and Paul Shepherd at the altar. No, not in Westminster Abbey, but a beautiful church, St. John's in Pollington.

May we wish the bride and groom many years of happiness together and may they have a few moments to spare to help and keep the trolleybuses at Sandtoft running !



Bride, Jen, and her bridesmaids and page boy in front of Doncaster 22 before the wedding - all beautifully turned out, and matching 22's colour scheme !



Our Assistant Traffic Superintendent, Dave Shepherd, waving the bows over the heads of the happy couple

Both photos: Graham Bilbé

### RECENT RUNNING DAYS

#### Easter Eggstravaganza Weekend - 23 - 25 April 2011

Although Good Friday was not an official running day, because some 38 members of the Swiss Transport Museum in Lucerne had requested a visit that day, we did operate a special open day service for them which included the good ladies in the café providing their normal excellent meals.

Anita (pictured left), is the Membership Secretary and Fundraising Officer of the Swiss Transport Museum. The party seemed very impressed with Sandtoft and our collection - many of which were out and being cleaned for the Eggstravaganza weekend. We explained that we have around 400 members, of whom some 60 are regularly involved in one way or another. Evidently, the Swiss Transport Museum (which, admittedly, covers all forms of



Photo: Graham Bilbé

transport) has 30,000 members - maybe it is time we looked for an attractive young lady to be Sandtoft's Membership Secretary ! (Sorry, Dave - you do a grand job, really - I'm only joking !). One of the nicest comments they made to me was "How much the passion and enthusiasm shows through in everything at Sandtoft" - Praise indeed !

The Swiss Transport Museum party's coach is shown leaving the museum and heading for their return home via Hull Docks - we were the last visit of their tour. By way of contrast, Huddersfield 631 comes down the back straight behind them... Maybe their coach will end up in a museum in 20+ years time ?

The Easter weekend itself was full of fun for all our visitors: not only were there some 11 trolleybuses in service, 4 at a time, but the children were kept very busy finding painted eggs which had been left in various safe places around the Museum. A gift was given to all the children who returned the eggs to the café.



Photo: Graham Bilbé



The queue of trolleybuses waiting to be earth-leakage tested



Easter - 11 trolleybuses ready and waiting to go into service Both photos: Graham Bilbé

### NEWS ROUND-UP

**Financial:** Much work has been done on Gift Aid tax reclaims and two applications have been submitted to HMR&C.

The budget for the Museum's income and spending in 2011 has been reviewed and set. As Chas Allen has commented, we anticipate that this year is going to be tough because of the economic climate and our budget has to reflect this. We have to maintain careful control on spending and a watch on our cash flow: consequently, competitive quotes must be sought for any spending and purchases authorised by Francis Whitehead beforehand.

Our "spending review" has once again highlighted that the Doncaster free bus service is expensive to operate for quite small gains. This is particularly so on the "lesser" open days with very few people using it. We are considering various options, including not running the service on some open days, and if

this option is chosen, the earliest it would happen is during 2012. Constructive comments on how we can make this service less of a drain - or no drain at all - on our hard-earned finances and resources will be warmly welcomed.

**Infrastructure and General Works:** Because of the rotten weather over the winter, outside work has had to be restricted to general maintenance; with none of the planned "large" outdoor work started. However, as reported last time, the café area has undergone a major makeover: thanks are due to all who turned up for working parties, and at other times, to get this work done - it has made a huge difference to our café.

We were successful in obtaining a grant that has met the cost of replacing the remaining timber-framed windows in the toilet block with u-PVC double-glazed units; the archive room window in the Pelham building was also replaced using this grant. The Pelham building is to be used for displays this Centenary Year, so various jobs are being completed to enable that to happen.

The Nature Trail is now completed, with 37 information posts having been set in concrete. The trail information sheets have been printed and can be purchased in the *Trolleyshop* and the café.

The electrical inspection mentioned last time has been more or less completed (the exceptions being a few locked stores) and a certificate obtained. Several improvements identified during the inspection were completed there and then, whilst a small number still remain to be done.

The overhead was similarly inspected before the start of the season. Again, remedial repairs were carried out as necessary during the inspection work, with a number of line-hanger insulators changed to avoid any future flash-overs such as the one which occurred in the bad weather last autumn. When time allows, and the necessary personnel are all present, the new section of overhead line near the café will be erected - the hangers have been in place for a quite a while !

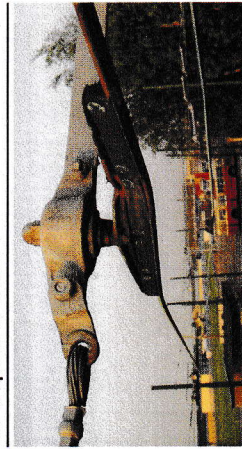


Photo: Graham Bilbé

New road-side signs are being prepared to improve directions both out on the Belton Road and "on site" and present a better image to our visitors in the Centenary Year. Museum signage and bus stops are also to be improved.

**Staff are reminded that, in line with national no-smoking legislation, ALL buildings at the Museum are designated Non-Smoking areas.**

Following our successful Accreditation application, the minor outstanding issues are being addressed. In particular, the accession register has now been properly compiled, and the object labelling programme is being undertaken.

**Events:** Negotiations have resulted in their respective owners agreeing to us borrowing Ipswich 2 and Bradford 844 for the Centenary Events this year. There is also the possibility of one or two Bradford motorbuses attending the Bradford Weekend. Displays are being prepared to compliment the Centenary theme; with new display boards planned for the Pelham building.

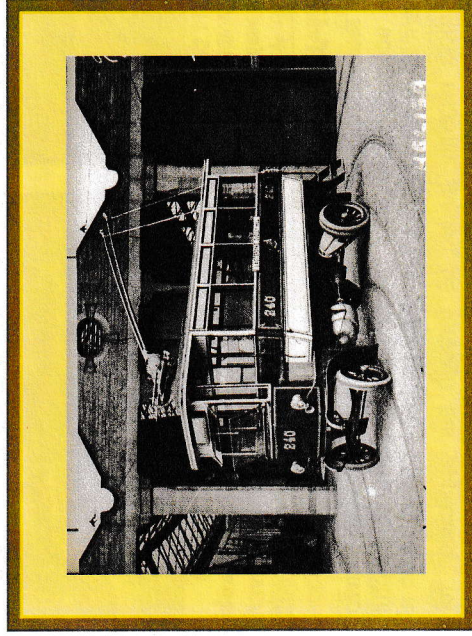
## TROLLEYBUS ANNIVERSARIES

Compiled by Geoff Welburn

April to June

Systems Opened

80 years since London (London United Tramways) opened on 16 May 1931, and ...



**It is 100 years**

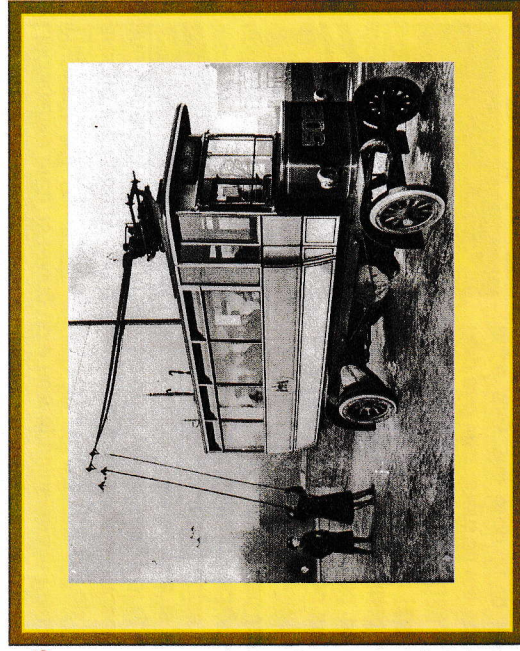
since the civic opening of the Bradford trolleybus system - at midday on Tuesday, 20 June 1911. Delay in getting the Board of Trade certificate meant that public operation on the Laisterdyke - Dudley Hill route did not commence until 24 June 1911.

The photograph (from the BTS Library) shows no.240, the first of a pair of "tracklesses" outside Thornbury depot.

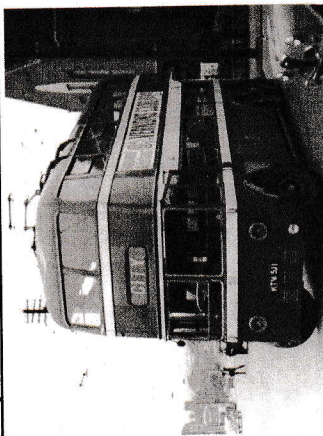
and ...

**100 years ago, Leeds** initiated its trolleybuses with a civic ceremony at the same time and on the same day as Bradford - noon on 20 June 1911. Unlike Bradford, public services (Thirsk Row - Farnley Moor Top) followed immediately.

No.502 was one of the first four "tracklesses". Almost identical to the two in Bradford, their chassis were supplied by R.E.T. and the Hurst Nelson and the Hurst Nelson bodies seated 28; twin 20hp motors were by Siemens (BTS Library)



**Systems Closed**  
 60 years since Birmingham closed on 30 June 1951  
 50 years since Brighton closed on 30 June 1961  
 45 years since Nottingham closed on 30 June 1966  
 40 years since Teesside closed on 4 April 1971



30 June 1966: Nottingham 511 becomes the last trolleybus on route 37. It is seen at Haydon Road as it makes its way back to the City  
 Photo: John Foster



Teesside T286 in Eston High Street on 6 March 1971, one month before the system's closure  
 Photo: John Foster

**DEPARTMENTAL NEWS**

**Farewell to Two of Our Museum Professionals** we sadly say farewell to two people who, behind the scenes, have been giving us good, sound, helpful advice and encouragement as we strive to develop our Museum.

Robin McDermott, who most recently guided us through our application for Museum Accreditation, is leaving Yorkshire Renaissance, where he is Regional Accreditation Officer, as a result of Government cutbacks, whilst Jaane Rowehl, the Museum Development Officer (MDO) for East Riding of Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire area, is taking up a new appointment in Fishbourne, West Sussex.

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council set up a number of MDO posts around the country some years ago to liaise with museums, help them develop and generally assist and advise on a whole range of queries, requirements and information. The service is invaluable to a museum such as ours, run by people who do not come from a professional museum background, and we have been most fortunate to have had Jaane as our MDO.

We could not let her go without a "thank you"; after some thought, we realised that giving her a Trolleybus Driving Experience would be ideal. Jaane duly had her training and drive, albeit a much briefer one than usual, to be awarded her TDE certificate.

We would like to thank Jaane and Robin for all their help and wish them all the very best for the future. We hope they will drop in to see how our Museum is progressing when they are in the area!



Photo: Graham Bilbé

**Museum Documentation** from Adrian Dennison  
 As your Displays Manager, I recently attended a course on museum documentation which included information on the effect the quality of this can have on our accreditation.

Having and maintaining the correct documentation is paramount to accreditation. To comply with the current accreditation rules, we should have a record for every display item on the museum site. This was created for our accreditation application, but, of course, things change over time. The record for each item needs to show:

1. Where the item came from
2. Is it ours or on loan (this should be established at the time of arrival and clearly shown on the Donation or Loan forms we already use)
3. Where the item is stored/ displayed
4. Details of any research done and anyone who has had access to the item for research
5. Any other documents relating to the item (e.g.. photographs of the item)
6. Any disposal is dealt with according to MLA guidelines

However, **and this is the important bit**, I have now been advised that if we have an accreditation check or audit, and we do not have this information, then our accreditation status could be reduced to the lower level of "provisional accreditation". This is obviously an undesirable situation which we must avoid, as it would involve having to correct the problems and then be assessed all over again.

In order to avoid this problem, we need to make sure we know where all items are at all times, so I need to know if anyone is wanting to move items around the Museum or even dispose of them. All that is needed is a note to be made if a shop window or other display or store area is being changed, indicating what has been moved and where it has been moved to - the note can then be left in the office for my attention, so that I can update our records and database accordingly.

We need to have the correct papers for all display items on the museum premises, so a Donation or Loan form has to be held for every item brought onto the museum premises which is intended or destined for display or stored for future display. Also, if any item on display is moved for any reason, even if only for a short period of time, we need to be aware of this and log it.

Any item being loaned off-site needs a formal agreement and any disposal may need to be offered to another museum to comply with MLA accreditation guidelines. Anyone wanting to dispose of any display item must pass this by the Displays Manager or the Board before attempting to remove it so that we can assess what documentation or procedures are required.

The only exceptions to the movement rules are the vehicles that are exhibits and which are on the main museum site, as we have made special provisions to cover these. The vehicles are also subject to specific paperwork requirements which are dealt with separately. However, vehicles at Westgate or other long-term storage need to be recorded when moved elsewhere.

Finally if anyone thinks that at present they have items left at the Museum



which are on loan but without a loan agreement having been completed and signed, can they contact me so that we can prepare the correct documentation. Preparing the Museum for accreditation was a long, arduous task which took many staff members over two years. We do not want to lose accreditation now! Thank you for your co-operation.

## VEHICLES REPORTS

**Bradford 562** Work continues on the interior of 562 and it is beginning to show the quality of a 1929 passenger area. The development of the trolleybus, as a vehicle, from the tram is well-illustrated in 562, as there are many "trammy" aspects to its design and construction. Whilst there is an amount of evidence on the vehicle to indicate layouts and sizes etc. of different components, considerable reference has had to be made to a basic layout drawing (that has proved to *not* be an "as-built" drawing!) and a photograph or two of the interior of one of this small batch of trolleybuses. The memory of Stanley King who, unsurprisingly, has been showing a keen interest in the project, has also been most helpful when it comes to detail. Stanley has also, miraculously, come up with a number of fittings from his own collection of bits and pieces that are "just made for the job"! Thank you, Stanley!

The photograph shows the results of the hard work put in by Brian Maguire and his restoration team. The bulkhead behind the driver's cab has, largely, been newly fabricated; the interior lights (traction supply-fed) have been re-wired and while the vehicle remains a static exhibit, can be illuminated using the 240-volt AC mains supply! Glass is, usefully, being sourced from the many large, spare sheets from long-dismantled exhibition cases that were discovered when the café was re-vamped recently. The matchboard ceiling, roof hoops and other timber trim and mouldings have been painstakingly stripped of old paint, thoroughly prepared, and painted/ varnished. Note the red-painted roof hoop at the top of the photograph: this demarked the rear smoking area of the saloon.

**Bradford 746** has not been used for service since 2010's May Day bank holiday weekend, due mainly to the discovery of a broken front road spring. With a specialist contractor commissioned, 746 was pulled out of the depot and both of the front road springs have been removed and sent away for repair. When they are back and refitted, 746 will, once again, sit squarely on the ground!



Photo: David Needham



Photo: David Needham

**London 1348:** With winter out of the way, work is steadily progressing. The entire lower saloon ceiling has been replaced and work is progressing to strip the paint from the upper saloon ceiling. The driver's cab, too, has seen some work, with various parts cleaned, prepared and painted.

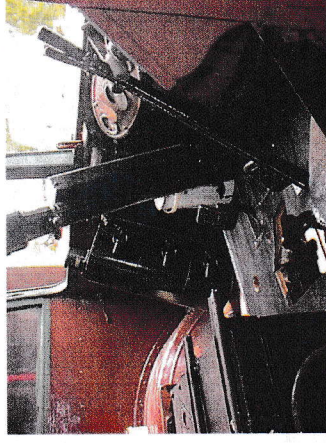
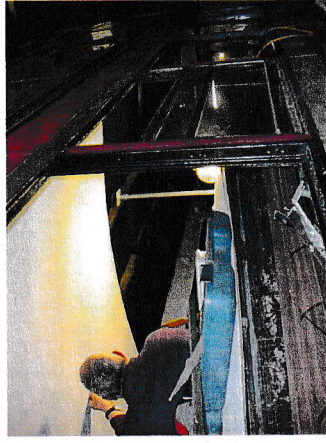
The labour element of the restoration work being carried out on 1348 at the Museum is all being given on a voluntary basis. Donations to fund the materials and any necessary replacement parts, to overhaul any components that require specialist attention - and to get the seats re-upholstered - are steadily coming in to fundraiser, Barry Coward.

Nonetheless, Barry is appealing for further cash to see the project through to completion: the target is still to have the trolleybus ready in time for the 50th anniversary of the final closure of the London trolleybus system in May next year. Cheques, for 1348, made payable to "The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft" should be sent to Barry at 8 Woods Terrace, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, DN21 2RP, or handed in to the *Trolleyshop* on running days. Donations for 1348 are all being ring-fenced for sole use on 1348, whilst the gift aid tax claims on that money will also be directed to 1348.

**Manchester 1344** duly arrived at Sandtoft on 12 March 2011, towed from Swindon by Jonathan Pye, assisted by Richard Bilbé. The half shafts have been re-fitted, but an electrical problem has prevented the vehicle from being test run. It certainly looks good, with the interior very nicely turned out and the seats re-trimmed with moquette and leather; the exterior has also been repainted and it now awaits the application of transfers. 1344 is due to be re-commissioned for service at the Spring bank holiday weekend.

**Newcastle 501:** Beamish Living Museum has asked us, and we have agreed, to extend the loan of 501 by a further year, i.e. until Autumn 2012.

**Teesside T291** arrived at Sandtoft from Dudley on Wednesday, 20 April 2011.



Photos: John Crossley

## AT THE BUS STOP

### MANCHESTER 1344

**Martin S. Ford**  
Manchester 1344 is at last fully restored and back at Sandtoft for many to be able to enjoy the thrill of a ride on a Manchester trolleybus once again.

1344 was delivered brand new, and unwanted, on 24 November 1955. It was licensed for service from 1 December. Manchester Corporation Transport did not want trolleybuses. It had never wanted trolleybuses, but the General Manager of the day, Stuart Pilcher, had been directed by the Transport Committee to introduce trolleybuses to the City and that had been done with some style in 1938 when a new, purpose-built trolleybus depot opened at Rochdale Road, Manchester.

As the original pre-war trolleybus fleet came to the end of its working life, a considerable contraction of the system became possible, and by 1953 the General Manager of the day, Albert F. Neal, was reviewing the future of the system. Many of the services operated by the Corporation were cross-city routes, with joint operators, and most of the joint operators showed little interest in trolleybus operation, the exception being Ashton-under-Lyne. Albert Neal recommended that there be no further expansion, and that the pre-war trolleybuses be replaced by 62 new trolleybuses. These were ordered, but the following year saw another report from Mr. Neal, recommending that the Moston routes be abandoned in view of the need to renew the overhead and numerous traction poles. Thus when 1344, one of the 62-strong batch of BUT 9612T trolleybuses with Burlingham bodies, was delivered, it was already in the knowledge that there was no long-term future for this mode of transport in



1344 seen in 1962 in Bow Street, next to Ashton open-air market

Photo: Fred Ivey

Manchester. During the same year as the delivery of 1344, the first major part of the system - the war-time extensions to Moston, were abandoned.

1344 had a brief life. Tragically so in relation to its life expectancy and cost new. By July 1964 it was all over. 1344 was one of 22 taken out of service following service cuts, reduced trolleybus operation on the remaining routes and the forthcoming October abandonment of the 219 service from Manchester to Ashton-under-Lyne via Guide Bridge. 1344 was moved to Birchfields Road bus garage, in Fallowfield, from its operating Hyde Road depot, for (inside) storage. The initial hope was that a buyer might be found: there was some possibility that Bradford might be interested, but in the end there were no takers. So little service did 1344 see that, sadly, there seem to be few photographs of it in action in Manchester. The remainder of the fleet carried on providing a service until closure of the trolleybus system, and were then sold for scrap.

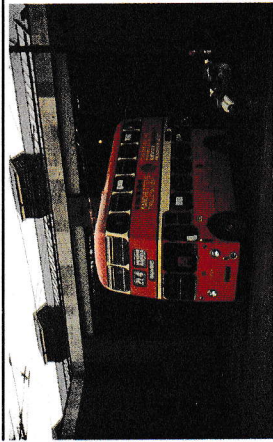
It was in 1965 that myself and Dennis Vickers decided that a Manchester BUT should be saved. We were just teenagers. We had no money and nowhere to keep a trolleybus, but we saved, gained support of friends, and I was able to seek in-house information about a likely "good choice", as I was by now just starting my career within the offices of Manchester Corporation Transport. I was told by an engineering official that 1344 would be a good choice as it was mechanically sound and had done a very low operational mileage. It needed no major work and was simply in store. A tender of £25 to purchase it was rejected, but an increased offer of £40 was accepted. We were now the proud owners of a trolleybus, identical to a few remaining examples that were still operating in the city. We called ourselves the Manchester Trolleybus Preservation Society, but later, in 1966, changed this to Northern Trolleybus Society, to cover the acquisition of Rotherham 37 and the planned purchase of Ashton 87.

In 1965, the Transport Department offered little in the way of interest in preservation. 1344 had to be moved off their land. In February, it was towed to the yard of a haulage contractor in nearby Hyde (on the former 210 trolleybus route) where the owner of the land offered sanctuary, albeit in the open, for a small fee. The Corporation Transport kindly agreed to tow 1344 on several occasions when it was moved.

Vandalism at Hyde meant the search for a home had to continue and the trolleybus was soon found another home, at a dairy in Hazel Grove, Stockport. Suffice it to say the local residents did not like the view of a trolleybus, and soon it had to move on again.

This time, Harry Taylor, then General Manager at Oldham Corporation Transport, came to the rescue and 1344 was offered a space inside the Oldham bus garage. Harry subsequently became president of the Northern Trolleybus Society, which we were then calling ourselves. He went on to become Chief Engineer at SELNEC Passenger Transport Executive when that organisation was formed and, some time later, became a vice president of the British Trolleybus Society.

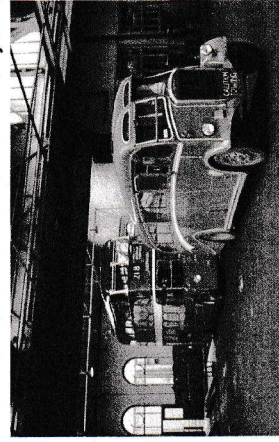
During its stay at Oldham's bus garage, myself and Dennis Vickers repainted 1344. We had some helpers too. By the end of 1966 it was looking quite smart



1344 leaves the depot at the start of its final tour of the Manchester trolleybus system on 31 December 1966  
Photo: Tony Belton



1344, with Rotherham 44 during the 31 December 1966 farewell tours Photo: Harry Luf



1344 leaves Oldham's depot behind Tony Belton's ex-Smiths of Reading Dennis Lancet towing coach KJH 900 in 1967 Photo: Don Jones



KJH 900, with 1344 on the Pennines en-route for Westgate  
Photo: John Bishop

and an approach was made to Manchester Corporation Transport to request a tour of the remains of the Manchester trolleybus system using 1344. This was agreed to: 1344 thus ran in Manchester again on 31 December 1966, the day after trolleybus services finished. Also running on a tour that day was Rotherham 44, by then owned by the National Trolleybus Association. Sadly, Ashton-under-Lyne, the joint operator, declined to allow a tour in their area, and the power in Ashton was turned off on 30 December after the last service trolleybus. On 31 December, 1344 ran beyond the Audenshaw gyratory traffic roundabout, to the old reversing terminus at Gainsborough Road, (no longer wired), which was right on the Ashton boundary. There it reversed on battery power to return back to Manchester.

1344 was driven by my father, Samuel Ford, who was a Driving Instructor at Manchester's Hyde Road Depot and a former trolleybus driver. 1344 performed magnificently and carried a full load of passengers, needing no advance mechanical work. Booms up and away she went! 1344 was the last trolleybus to operate under the wires of Manchester.

Since that sad end on 31 December 1966, 1344 has had a variety of homes, as its space at the Oldham depot had to be vacated when SELNEC took over. It was offered sanctuary by the BTS through the good offices of Michael Dare, going to the converted Methodist chapel at Westgate which he had recently purchased. Later, it moved on to nearby Sandtoft. 1344 was then later moved to Burtonwood Airfield near

Warrington and then to St. Helens. Various work was carried out in this period, including a repaint. It was exhibited, newly painted, at Heaton Park, Manchester in September 1991, to celebrate 90 years of public transport in Manchester, and much more recently, variously ran at the Black Country Living Museum at Dudley and then at the East Anglia Transport Museum, Carlton Colville.

After some legal title disputes, 1344 has returned home to Sandtoft now, and BTS ownership, hopefully for a long and happy (working) retirement. My personal congratulations to the team at Thamesdown Transport in Swindon for the truly remarkable restoration, and to the BTS for funding this expensive work. I hope many will enjoy the Manchester trolleybus for years to come.

## DEAR 'SCENE

*Dear 'Scene*

I would like to supply some additional information about a couple of items in January's *Sandtoft Scene*: by a strange quirk, there is a personal connection between them.

Although I am grateful to Brian Maguire for highlighting the length of my preservation "CV" in *Dear 'Scene*, I am afraid I cannot claim credit for saving Manchester 2150 from the scrapman: I may look pretty ancient, but actually I wasn't long at grammar school when it came out of service, the bus being withdrawn in December 1967! As an aside, it's perhaps significant that the Crossley make, once synonymous with the Manchester fleet, was eradicated almost a year to the day after the trolleybuses. Anyway, 2150 was "rescued" by some students from Hull, but I wasn't part of its story at that stage.

Soon after I became a junior member of the Manchester Motorbus Preservation Society; we were restoring the 1928 Manchester Leyland TS1, no.138 (VM 4439), re-bodied by Metro-Cammell/ Crossley in 1935, which survived as the MCTD clothing stores vehicle - complete with petrol engine - until 1967! Then, in 1970, 2150 came up for sale: the MMPS raised the cash for it by selling shares. There were three junior members at that point (soon to reduce to two), and we were "persuaded" into buying a share between us. The money raised, we collected 2150 from Hull. Having been stood in the open and not much having been done to it since it came out of service, its paintwork was badly faded, but it was mechanically sound and we commenced work on the exterior. We entered it for the next Trans-Pennine Run, at which Brian's photograph was taken - hence its inclusion in the last issue, but I am on that bus somewhere!

Of the other two junior members who bought the share with me, one soon disappeared when the monthly contributions for rent became due and I have never heard of him since. The other stayed the course, later becoming assistant editor, then editor of *Buses* magazine and is currently the General Manager of Bus Users UK - Stephen Morris. Stephen and I went off to university (separately) in 1973 and came home one vacation to find that 2150 had been given to the Greater Manchester Transport Society. No-one had even had the courtesy to write and tell us.

I have met a lot of interesting characters whilst messing about with old buses but unfortunately the sort of experiences Steve Collins has described of his early days in preservation are not unique, and one day I may put mine down in writing as well! Further to Doug Barrow's excellent review of the *Bradford's Favourite Transport* video, the old cine film referred to is one of the famous Mitchell and Kenyon collection. Mitchell and Kenyon were Blackburn-based film makers who travelled the country in the early days of cinematography, making films of ordinary activities and street scenes, which were quickly developed and exhibited very soon after: the idea was that the people caught on camera would be willing to pay to see themselves on the silver screen. The M&K collection miraculously survived, and is now in the care of the BFI. This particular sequence was shot in 1902 (when the Bradford tramways were in the process of being converted to electric traction) by simply placing a camera on the front platform of a tram, and is part of the snappily-titled "M&K 167: Electric tram rides from Forster Square to Park Gates, Bankfoot to Market Street".

Later on in the video is a shot of 706 descending Godwin Street on one of the special tours on the Saturday of the final weekend. Yours truly is on the front nearside seat of the top deck (hence the connection referred to above); I still have the ticket to prove it! Never in my wildest dreams did I think that one day I would be driving that same trolleybus around a disused airfield in North Lincolnshire.

Chas Allen (*Huddersfield*)

## REVIEWS

### DVD – Classic Buses, Trams & Trolleybuses

£10.99

(UK Postage £1.00)

*Note: The Trolleyshop has a limited supply available with an accompanying booklet for a special price of just £5.99 + £1.50 P&P*



By way of a change from system histories, this DVD programme is about classic buses, trams and trolleybuses. I came across this programme by chance when I was making an occasional visit to a shop a few miles from where I live, and thought that the programme (published in 2010, and one which I haven't seen in catalogues) might be of possible interest.

Most of the 60-minute programme - which is based mainly on the Midlands, Yorkshire and Central Scotland - is, I found out when viewing the product, dedicated to motor buses but trams are featured towards the end and the final 10 minutes (or thereabouts) is the trolleybus part. The commentary is factual and brief, and the sound effects aren't dubbed; picture quality is good with undistorted freeze-frames.

The opening sequences feature preserved Doncaster Corporation motorbus No. 33 setting-off and passing a more modern yellow and blue double-decker, and the other part of the opening sequences gives the viewer a brief look at preserved Glasgow BUT single-deck trolleybus TBS13 in the Glasgow Museum of Transport. The buses section includes bus rallies in Lincolnshire, West Yorkshire and then at Lothallmond in Scotland (the excellent workshop at this fine Scottish preservation centre is also featured), and an excellent selection of bus types old, and not-so-old - and liveries - makes an interesting

contrast to today's more-limited range of operators and liveries; some of the buses seen in these sequences have visited Sandtoft, and as readers know, Doncaster 33 is one of several preserved motorbuses based at Sandtoft.

Crich and Blackpool were obvious choices for the "Classic Trams" section, and it was good to see a preserved former London "Feltham" tram in action at Crich. The annual illuminations time was a logical choice for featuring well-laden tram-loads of people enjoying tours and service trips to see the popular annual illuminations. The many trams seen included the veteran preserved Bolton double-decker (which has been operated in Blackpool for many years now) and one of its veteran Blackpool counterparts.

The trolleybuses section begins with more views of, and some information about, Glasgow TBS13, with this sequence leading into a feature on preserved Glasgow TB78 in action at Sandtoft; TB78's contribution is followed by a short sequence of London 1812 in service at Sandtoft. After the Sandtoft sequences the viewer is taken to the Black Country Living Museum at Dudley where the opening view includes Derby trolleybus 237. Other trolleybuses seen in action are Walsall 862, Bradford 735 and Wolverhampton 433 (the last-mentioned had quite a "knocking" noise when in motion).

Copies of this interesting DVD can be obtained from the *Trolleyshop*, or order it online at [www.sandtoft.org](http://www.sandtoft.org).

Doug Barrow

### BOOK – London Trolleybuses - A Black and White Album

Written by Mick Webber

Published by Capital Transport Publishing

Price £19.95

(UK Postage & Packing £3.25)



Many books have been published over the years about the former London trolleybus system and it is very fitting that so much material (photographic and written) is available about that impressive system which closed in May 1962: *London Trolleybuses - A Black & White Album* is one of the more-recent publications and was published in 2009.

On reading the introduction, the author, Mick Webber, comments that over the last 40 years he "constantly pestered, pleaded and generally made a nuisance of myself to libraries, manufacturers, photo agencies and private individuals to uncover photographic gems that might otherwise have remained in dark cupboards." His efforts were successful, as there are many photographs, all of them with informative captions, in this 96-page hardback book. Some of the views were originally from glass plates and are of exceptional quality, others are manufacturers' views, and many more have come via agencies and individuals' collections.

The oldest trolleybus featured is London United's no.2 and the newest Q1 no.1832. There is an excellent selection of views of trolleybuses, locations, views and happenings over the period 1931 to 1950 (the latter year was when the system reached its peak). No.1812, which came back from Spain and following restoration is actively preserved at Sandtoft (and this is mentioned in the text), is featured with sister vehicles 1807 and 1775 at the MCCW Birmingham factory prior to delivery in September 1948. "One-off" trolleybuses 61, 63, and 1671 are

featured too, and the photograph of 1671 brought back memories of the times that unique vehicle was my transport (on route 607) to and from school in the 1950s. Another personal memory was the photograph of no.735 at Brentford Half Acre as some people my family knew ran a public house (albeit some years later than the date when this photograph was taken !) close to that location.

Particular photographs which had me thinking included "Diddler" no.58 edging gingerly through the flooded roadway beneath the Kingston railway bridge; no.95 passing the main entrance to Woolwich Arsenal (yes, that tram track - as far as I am aware - is still in place below today's road surface and I photographed that track before the resurfacing); a C2 class trolleybus departing from the former Acton Tram Depot (my "school end" stop for so many of my route 607 journeys, though I never saw a trolleybus on that cobbled depot forecourt); a route 696 trolleybus on its side in several front gardens (!); and no.1690 in someone's garden in Edmonton.

An excellent selection of photographs and information. Thanks Mick for the memories (although mine are post-war ones !), and congratulations on an excellent publication.

Copies of this book can be purchased from the *Trolleyshop*, or ordered online at [www.sandtoft.org](http://www.sandtoft.org).

Doug Barrow

<b>Buy YOUR DVDs from the <i>Trolleyshop</i></b>		<b>or our <i>On-line Trolleyshop</i> at <a href="http://www.sandtoft.org">www.sandtoft.org</a></b>	
<b>SS # refers to review in <i>Sandtoft Scene</i> Issue no.</b>			
<b>Title</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>SS #</b>	<b>Title</b>
100 Years of Buses & Trolleybuses	£12.99		No Trolleys Round the Square (Bournemouth)
Birmingham's Trams & Trolleybuses	£19.00	67	No Trolleys to Tiger Bay (Cardiff)
Bournemouth Trolleybuses	£18.00	78	Omnibus Archive
Bradford's Favourite Transport	£18.00	80	Q1s in Spain
Building Our Dream	£12.00	75	Remembering London Trams & Trolleybuses
Buses & Trams	£10.20		Rewinding Readings Transport History
Classic Buses, Trams and Trolleybuses	£10.99	81	Remember the Trackless (Rotherham & Mexborough)
Classic Trolleybuses	£9.99		RTW 50 years of 8 Footers
Cliff Lifts of Great Britain	£18.00		The History of the Trolleybus
Hastings Trolleybuses	£16.00	74	The Passing of Pyewipe (Grimsby - Immingham)
Huddersfield Trolleybuses	£19.00	70	The Sandtoft Experience
London Trolleybuses Part 1	£19.00	71	Transport in and Around Portsmouth
London Trolleybuses Part 2	£19.00		Trolleybus Archive
Newcastle Trolleybuses	£19.00		Trolleybuses of South Lancs & St Helens
No Trolleys to Aquarium (Brighton)	£16.00	66	Sandtoft Gathering 2010
No Trolleys to Loose (Maldstone)	£15.00		South Shields Trolleybuses
No Trolleys To Piccadilly (Aston & Manchester)	£18.00	65	