

Sandtoft Scene

October 2012
No. 87



**News and Views from
The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft**



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Contributions & comments (for publication or otherwise) are always welcomed by the Editor. 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: Three London trolleybuses form the main attraction of the August Bank Holiday London Weekend, the highlight being the launch of 1348, seen here between 1812 (left) and the LTPS's 260. *Photo: Barry Coward*

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.



FROM THE EDITOR

What an impressive running season we have had this year - and it's not over yet ! Since our July edition we have had both the 'Gathering and the London Weekend and, despite a summer of far too many wet days, these were very successful events blessed with good weather and plenty of visitors. London 1348 has been launched into service after an intensive restoration project with a challenging deadline, and steady progress continues on bringing other trolleybuses back to life. All this activity means that we have lots to report in this magazine and, once again, much has been squeezed-in with still more saved for later. Thanks again to all our contributors and thanks for your patience if something you have submitted has not yet appeared in print.

On a sad note, we have to report the death of Charlie Bullock, who was for so many years the "Voice of Sandtoft" providing the commentaries and announcements on our open days. These were always entertaining and I personally remember his "*Message for Mr Kilometre Cartwright...*" and - encouraging visitors not to delay taking a trolleybus ride - he would add "*... because I'm 83 so I could be dead by tea-time*". Well, Charlie lasted much longer than that by making it to 97, and was still doing the occasional commentary at the Museum well into his nineties. He will long be remembered as a Sandtoft legend and an appreciation by Jim Sambrooks appears on page 30.

If you would like to contribute towards a memorial bench to remember Charlie at Sandtoft, please send your donation to Francis Whitehead at the Museum address. Cheques should be made payable to "Sandtoft Transport Centre Limited" and will be eligible for Gift Aid.

***Sandtoft Scene* - NOW ON-LINE !**

As previously announced, the Sandtoft members' web page is now up-and-running at www.sandtoft.org/members where you can now download and browse a PDF version of this edition of *Sandtoft Scene*. Several members have asked for this and we will continue to add new editions for a trial period. If you like this method and would prefer in future to use the web version rather than the printed one, please e-mail David Needham at: membership@sandtoft.org . Rather than posting you a magazine, we will then send you an e-mail telling you when a new issue is available on the website, which will also help the Museum a little by reducing postage costs.

Please note: News deadline for the next *Sandtoft Scene* is 10 December

AGM REMINDER

This year's AGM will be held at the Museum on Saturday 17 November 2012 at 1:30pm. The agenda for the Company's annual meeting is enclosed with this issue. As usual, following the formal business meeting, there will be an open forum for discussion of topics of interest to members.

VEHICLE REPORTS

London Trolleybus 1348

With acknowledgements to the London 1348 web site managed by Barry Coward

Following successful operation at Carlton Colville in May, considerable work remained to complete the restoration, particularly on the upper saloon. In addition, an air leak on the brakes had been discovered whilst running there and investigations revealed at least one seized-up master cylinder. John Crossley stripped down all the braking equipment, cleaned out accumulated debris and refurbished everything to a high standard.

During the weekend of the 'Gathering, 1348 was on display and a video crew from Carlton Colville came on Preview Saturday to record progress. 'Gathering Sunday saw visitors in large numbers taking an interest in progress on 1348. By that time, Len Smith had completed the wiring along the sides of the upper deck and the upstairs flooring was complete. However a large rectangular hole remained in the front of 1348 above the cab whilst Brian Maguire was busy renovating the badly-deteriorated destination box.



London 1348 alongside resident RT3323 on 'Gathering Preview Saturday

Photo: John Stainforth

The six weeks between 'Gathering and the August Bank Holiday London Weekend saw intensive efforts continuing under Brian's leadership, with everything going back together "just-in-time" and the paintwork nicely finished-off all round.



Len Smith talks to the video crew about the electrics.....



.....and John Crossley explains the brakes

Photos: Barry Coward

And finally..... following two years of concerted effort and more than a few technical challenges, 1348 was formally launched into service on 26 August

and provided trouble-free operation in passenger service during the rest of the Bank Holiday weekend. The full story remains to be told another day, but the photographs illustrate some recent highlights of the project.



A study in concentration as Brian Maguire puts the finishing touches to the paintwork with black lining



Francis Whitehead carefully applies the advertisement to the nearside panel

Photos: Barry Coward

Our Overseas Trolleybuses

from Bruce Lake

Marseille 202: Always a popular trolleybus since we acquired it in 2006, 202 has given us quite a few headaches over the years. The primary difficulties have generally been with the air system - leaks, sticking valves and punctured air bags spring to mind. More recently, the air supply to the driver's seat has been a problem and repairing or replacing the air pipes was particularly difficult, so was solved by blanking the supply off altogether ! This year, during its test, it was discovered that the horn had stopped working - and of course, it is air-operated ! However, in this case, it is activated by a small solenoid which opens an air valve to make the sound. It appeared that the solenoid had gone open-circuit, and dismantling it proved awkward. Even if successful we were probably going to be faced with having it rewound. It was also the day before we planned to run the trolleybus at our end-of-July event, to make sure it was ready for the World Wide Weekend (WWW). A trip round local lorry repairers for something suitable resulted in us being offered a loan horn from a semi-derelict lorry at Wilson's across the road. This was gladly accepted, especially when discovered to be exactly the same design ! The air and electric attachments needed a bit of tweaking to get them to fit, but eventually it was installed perfectly. We have since bought the horn from Wilson's so we don't have the bother of finding another.

Then, on the evening before the WWW, 202 started up fine to get it out of the depot, but was taking a long time to build the air pressure up. After quite some time, it was obvious it wasn't going to. Graham Bilbé eventually found that the main reinforced flexible air pipe leading from the compressor to the frame of the bus had developed a small hole. This was so tiny it could hardly be seen with the naked eye, but was losing a tremendous amount of air. As it was next to the compressor and hence at the highest pressure encountered on the bus,

a rubber replacement ruptured almost straight away: there was nothing for it but to find a proper reinforced replacement. I did another tour round the local area on the Saturday morning to find either that air specialists were closed or unable to prepare a new pipe, especially as it had unusual fine metric fittings at each end. A call to Pirtek in Doncaster revealed that they were actually open, and would manufacture another if they could re-use the ends off the faulty one. A trip to their depot (much cheaper than calling them out) had one made up and it was fitted to 202 just in time to get it out and running for the weekend's event.

Edmonton 189 was tested at the end of June and ran at the Teddy Bears' Picnic weekend, being the first weekend where a foreign trolleybus would not clash with our theme. No problems on the Saturday, but on the Sunday I left it switched on ready for service and came back to find that the air had not built up. Indeed, the compressor wasn't even running, although all the switches were correct. Ian Metcalfe and I worked our way through the electrical system to try and find out why. We suspected the fuses, contactor or governor switch that controls the compressor. All these turned out to be fine, so we decided it must be the compressor itself. This is almost inaccessible from above, so as the workshop was empty, we pushed it in there to have a look from underneath. It is almost as inaccessible from underneath, and certainly a dirty job to get to ! Anyway, the most likely problem was going to be stuck or worn-out brushes in the compressor motor which would cause it to stop working. However, they, too, were fine, but whilst investigating them, I found that a connecting wire from one brush to the field windings had broken. Problem diagnosed, but what about a solution ? There wasn't enough wire - or access - to do a crimp job on it, but neither was there a soldering iron on site. Eventually, Tony Ferris thought he might have an old one at home that he hadn't used for years. We duly went to try and find it. It turned out to be almost pre-war, but remarkably it still worked ! A tricky soldering job ensued, but eventually the wire was repaired and 189 was able to go back into service.

Limoges 5 and Liège 425 both passed their intermediate tests to enable them to run at the World Wide Weekend.

Aachen 22 was passed fit for demonstration use and did demonstration runs at the WWW. It was also run briefly for a German visitor who called the week before the WWW and is a member of a group restoring a motorbus version of 22 - one of the few 1½ decker motorbuses manufactured, which they call a "half-decker" for some reason. Their example was discovered having been used as an extension (and latterly as a store) attached to a "Pension"-style hotel near Brussels in 2007. They began restoration of it in 2008 in the Aachen workshops and are still at it in 2012. They had reached the point where they needed to know what the interior should look like, as this had all been stripped out. Our visitor was delighted to be able to take lots of photographs to help their efforts. He had even brought with him some photographs of our 22 when it was brand new and not even registered for the road ! They have a website devoted to the vehicle at: <http://www.anderthalbdecker-aachen.de/index.php>. (A Google translator may be helpful !).

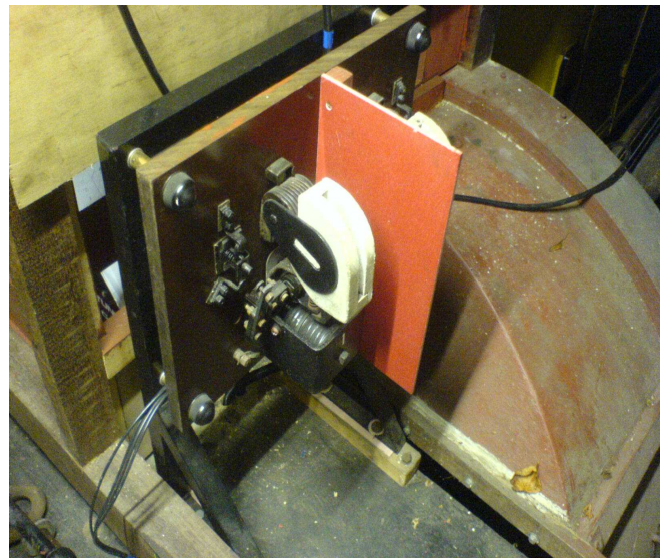
Porto 140: Unfortunately, no further work has been done on 140 since efforts were made last year to try and establish what its electrical fault is. It appears to be somewhere in the drum mechanism which is used instead of the master controller under the driver's seat in a British trolleybus. Access to this in a side panel amidships is difficult and we have no manuals which tell us how it should operate. However, we plan to have another go as this is one of the last double-decker trolleybuses to operate in service in the world and is popular with visitors. If anyone would like to lend a hand with this work it would be much appreciated.

Rotherham 73 Restoration Progress from Mike Johnson & Tim Stubbs

The long-term restoration of Rotherham 73 continues at an off-site location. Weekly working parties are making steady progress on several fronts: electrical, mechanical and interior bodywork.



Offside view of 73, looking from the rear
Photo: Mike Johnson



The contactor panel in-situ in the cab
Photo: Tim Stubbs

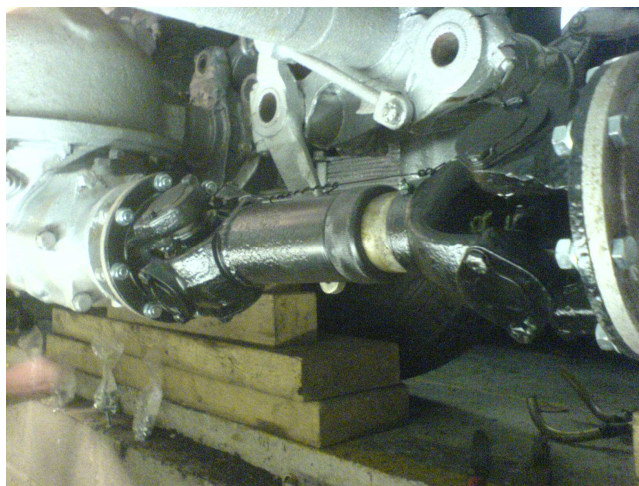
The exterior panelling is partly complete and has been coated with primer for protection. Inside the saloon, the base frame for one of the longitudinal bench seats has been constructed and when complete a start will be made on the second structure for the opposite side. A problem will arise in fitting the pairs of transverse seats in that the seat legs to hand come from a variety of different vehicles and will need to be modified to suit the Rotherham vehicle layout.

Most of the jobs on the roof are now done. The newly-made gantry, trolley bases and trolley gear are in place and a specialist engineer has converted the trolley heads of a former double-decker (angled at 15 degrees) to the correct design for a single-decker (angled at 30 degrees). Many of the components underneath are ready for testing: the traction motor has been in place for some years and is now ready for connecting up, a new motor junction box having been fabricated for the purpose. The rear bogie has been completely re-constructed and replacement brake components have been sourced and fitted, some of these, to a similar design to the originals, having

been purchased from the Sandtoft “spares” stock. A problem remains with the half-shafts, which require modification before they can be fitted.



Re-engineered trolley heads angled at 30 degrees
Photo: Mike Johnson



One of the newly-fitted carden shafts now in place
Photo: Tim Stubbs

Some 600v testing has been carried out with the aid of a test supply which can deliver sufficient current to power the saloon lighting, contactor coils and compressor motor. Progress is being made with wiring-up the main contactor panel. The compressor is functional and is handy for inflating tyres - when required ! A problem remains in sourcing a suitable shunt field resistor, and specialist help is now available.

Looking ahead, work will continue and many varied and challenging tasks remain. In due course, it is hoped that a functional 1942 design of trolleybus will become a working reality.

TROLLEY TOPICS

Leeds Trolleybuses

After many years of delay since the original proposals, the Leeds New Generation Transport Scheme has taken a major step to eventually becoming a reality. The Department of Transport has approved the scheme with confirmation of funding of up to £173.5 million. The remaining £76.5 million required will come from the local authorities. Transport Secretary Justine Greening announced on 5 July that the project had been granted “programme entry status”, enabling West Yorkshire PTE and Leeds City Council to apply for the necessary legal powers to operate a modern trolleybus network. These powers will be sought through a Transport and Works Act Order in Spring 2013, followed by a public enquiry later that year, and construction could then begin in 2016, with the UK’s first new-generation trolleybuses operating by 2018.

For more information about the proposed routes and what the new vehicles may look like, go to: <http://www.ngtmetro.com/> which has a link to a two-minute video animation of futuristic articulated single-deckers gliding round the streets of the city. Visit: <http://www.tbus.org.uk/leeds.htm> for more about the benefits of the scheme and graphic impressions of the vehicles and their operating environment.

Whilst this news will come as a delight to most of our readers and to everyone who, since 1972, has advocated a return of trolleybuses to British streets, they will also recall that very promising proposals in the 1980s and 1990s for Bradford, Leeds, South Yorkshire and Liverpool never actually came to fruition. The latest scheme for Leeds has a very strong “park and ride” element which, combined with the environmental factors, will considerably improve its chances of reaching the construction stage as well as providing a sustainable long-term business model. Once again we can but hope !

Bradford's Thornbury Depot

Bradford's last trolleybus made its final journey to Thornbury Depot when the system closed in 1972: another chapter in Bradford's transport history ended in July 2012 with the demolition of this once-impressive building. The main part dated back to 1902 when Thornbury became the City's principal tram depot: having initially housed over 100 trams, and later trolleybuses, then motor-buses, it also housed the undertaking's workshops in an adjoining building.



The roof has gone on the depot building (*right*) on 22 July. Still standing are the former sub-station (*left*) and the original workshop building (*centre*), with a wooden signboard above the doors where “CAR DEPOT WORKSHOPS” remained for decades after the last trams. Tram rails are still buried underneath the tarmac surface of the works approach

Photo: Gary Wilkinson

Five years after the demise of the trolleybuses, West Yorkshire PTE centralised its Bradford fleet in a depot at the new Transport Interchange and Thornbury Depot soon became redundant, as, later on, did the workshops. Both buildings were sold, and, amazingly, have survived as business premises until this year.

Rotherham Trolleybuses on the Web

Fans of Rotherham trolleybuses will already be aware of the Rotherham Trolleybus Group's web site at <http://www.rotherhamtrolleybus.org.uk/> : the pages continue to evolve, thanks to the work by Martin Eames, who created the site in March 2011. The site has many visitors and its topics include historic photographs, a Rotherham trolleybus fleet history and preservation news, with more about the restoration of Rotherham 73.

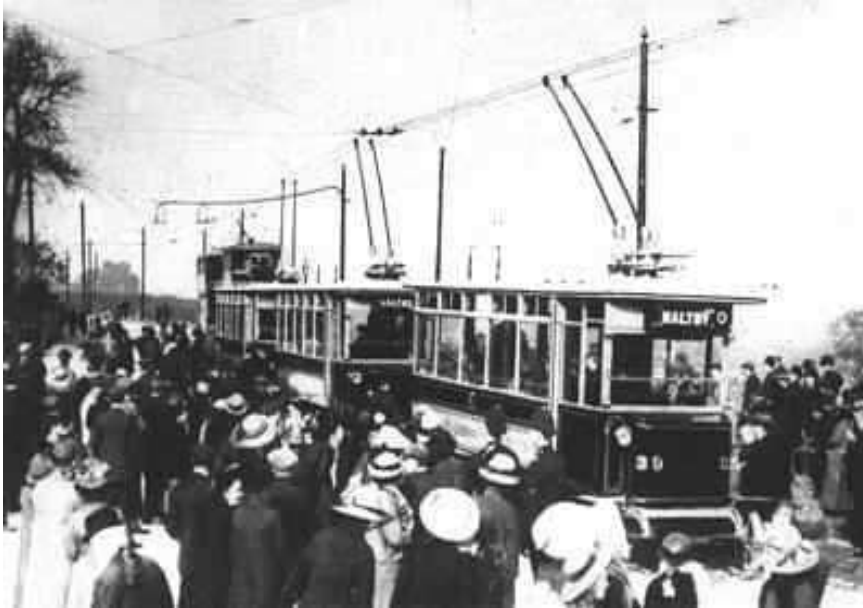
Forthcoming publication

Readers may be interested in a new book: *Once a Busman*, written by Bernard Jefford, a former driver of Nottingham trolleybuses who went on to a varied and successful career in public transport. We hope to include a review in the January 'Scene.

A ROTHERHAM CENTENARY – Part 1

From the Rotherham Trolleybus Group

The trolleybus movement has enjoyed a busy sequence of anniversaries recently and this continues with the milestone in October of a hundred years since the start of trolleybus services in Rotherham. Last year marked the centenary of the inauguration of the first two “railless” systems - in Bradford and Leeds. Following these pioneers, a less memorable short-lived system was launched in Dundee on 5 September 1912, and a few weeks later Rotherham became the UK’s fourth trolleybus installation. Over its 53 years of operation, Rotherham earned an excellent reputation for the smartness and speed of its fleet, which, for many of those years, consisted entirely of centre-entrance single-deckers providing high frequencies of service.



A century ago, Rotherham’s first tracklesses (nos.38, 39 and 40) lined up for the official opening ceremony in front of two trams at the Broom Road Top terminus

*Photo copyright:
Rotherham MBC Archives
& Local Studies*

The first route started about a mile away from the town centre and connected the Broom Road tramway terminus (near Herringthorpe Lane) with the outlying communities of Wickersley and Bramley and the mining town of Maltby. Railless had been chosen in preference to extending the tramway beyond the borough boundary. After a successful Board of Trade inspection on 30 September, Rotherham’s inaugural ceremony took place on 3 October. The Mayor hosted a full civic reception with 180 guests and the public turned up in their best Sunday outfits.

A 1912 view of No.39 at the first Maltby terminus at Hall Estate, with a row of smartly-dressed passengers alongside. Under the tree on the far left is an ancient tower wagon

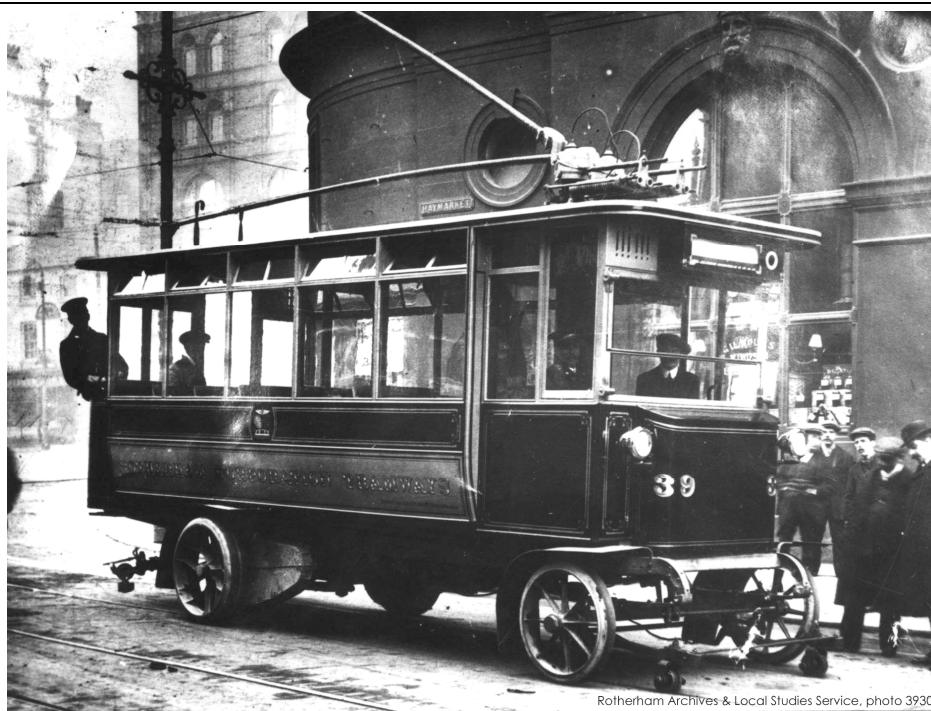
*Photo copyright:
Rotherham MBC Archives
& Local Studies*



Passenger service began using three single-deck RET Roe-bodied vehicles, with solid rubber tyres, on a largely-rural route, about 4¾ miles long. Thus Rotherham Corporation became the first municipality to operate a trackless system outside its boundary and (like Bradford) was a pioneer in developing the trackless in its own concept, rather than as a tramway replacement. Eleven years later, and despite a conflicting post-war plan to extend the tramway along the trolleybus route as far as Wickersley, the trolley wires were extended along Broom Road to College Square and trolleybuses began to operate in 1924 between Maltby and the town centre.

Before these wires were erected, the trolley-vehicles could only use a single positive overhead wire when running in and out of service along the tramway between the terminus at Herringthorpe Lane and the depot on the other side of town in Rawmarsh Road. The negative return was by means of a “skate”, attached to the chassis, which slid along the groove in one of the tram tracks. To avoid problems with a trailing skate jumping out of the rail during flexible manoeuvring, the Rotherham manager (Mr. E. Cross) developed a device that incorporated a steering arm, guided by the tracks. Different sources describe the technology differently: perhaps there were experiments with more than one implement, each of which seems to have the skate at the front of the vehicle. One source has “a pair of 10-inch pony wheels mounted in front of the vehicle’s front wheels, and lowered into the rail to guide the car as if it were a tram”. Another source describes “a cast iron block running along the track and doubling as a means of current return and as a steering arm”.

The use of the skate made it possible for an early Rotherham trolley-vehicle to venture along the tramway to Sheffield, perhaps as a demonstration to officials of that city of the capabilities of this novel form of transport. And, many years later, in the 1930s, it is believed that some of the new Craven-bodied vehicles were actually delivered from their bodyworks at Darnall to Rawmarsh Road Depot using some form of boom-and-skate operation.



No.39 parked in Haymarket during an expedition to Sheffield. The date is believed to be about 1913/4. This view clearly shows the front “pony wheels” located in the tramlines

(Question: Can anyone identify the object projecting behind the back wheel ? - ed.)

*Photo copyright:
Rotherham MBC
Archives & Local Studies*

Rotherham Archives & Local Studies Service, photo 3930

(Editor's note: This front-mounted skate was probably unique to Rotherham, although in Bradford a trailing skate was introduced in 1914 to get vehicles from Bankfoot Depot to Odsal and was also used on the parcel van and trolley lorry running on tram tracks between Bradford and Leeds. Apparently there was an interchange of both people and technology between the Bradford and Rotherham systems in those early years and Bradford's engineers often referred to "the Rotherham skate" !)

In 1929, Rotherham Corporation began operating over the adjoining Mexborough & Swinton system, with joint services between Rotherham and the company's termini at Mexborough and Conisborough. In return, M&S had rights to operate within Rotherham and to the Millmoor football ground, where their vehicles turned at the Ferham Road circle.

Under the influential leadership of Mr. T.P. Sykes, the Rotherham system underwent rapid expansion in the 1930s and 1940s, both when tramway routes were replaced and also when new routes were assigned to the much-favoured trolleybus. Simultaneously, there was much tinkering with the overhead wiring as routes changed; trolleybus numbers increased, new routes began and services were extended. Some wiring arrangements were changed as reversers were removed in favour of turning circles. The expansion programme saw the establishment, in 1931, of an intensive through service between Thrybergh and Kimberworth, with the addition of a branch to Silverwood Colliery. A branch off the Maltby route to Worry Goose Lane was created in 1935, which, for a few years, linked back to the Maltby route at Brecks. A new route to Greasborough was opened in 1936, and 1940 saw wiring erected as far as Templeborough along the Rotherham part of the joint tramway to Sheffield. This link provided cross-town working from other termini to the steelworks there, but was discontinued in 1949, coincident with the withdrawal of the single-ended trams.

The fleet expanded considerably during this period to service the new routes, with new batches of Guys, AECs and Sunbeams supplementing the Straker-Clough and Ransomes vehicles from the 1920s. All these were centre-entrance single-deckers and the later deliveries were 6-wheelers.

Now preserved, CET613 was a wartime trolleybus delivered in February 1943. A Sunbeam MS2C with a 39-seat East Lancs. body, it was initially numbered 88, then became 73 and finally 74. The photograph was taken in 1947

*Photographer unknown.
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Charles C Hall &
Rotherham MBC*



Identification of Rotherham's trolleybuses has always been confusing, as a result of the re-numbering practices over four decades. Almost all the trolleybuses in the fleet were spasmodically re-numbered, many of them more than once, and the subject would tax any aspiring Mastermind. This led the enthusiast community to refer to them by their registration numbers, which mercifully could never be changed !

After World War II, the majority of the fleet was renewed, with 44 new Daimler 6-wheel single-deckers replacing all but about six of the pre-war rolling stock. They entered service between 1949 and 1951 and continued the local tradition of high running speeds, particularly evident on the rural route to Maltby. The centre-entrance tradition also continued, as this had always been felt to speed up the loading and unloading of passengers.

FET 611, a post-war Daimler CTE6 with 38-seat East Lancs. body seen in 1953 in the town centre in front of *Wigfalls*. It is about to depart for Silverwood Colliery, on route 49. This trolleybus was re-bodied as a 70-seat double-decker in 1957 and survived until 1965

Photographer unknown



The Daimlers came in two batches, all with stylish East Lancs. bodies of similar appearance. The resistance boxes on the roof were integrated into a smooth, streamlined hood - a great improvement on the unattractive rear-mounted units of the wartime vehicles. One batch of 18 was of the CTC6 type with Crompton-Parkinson electrical equipment and the other batch of 26 were of the CTE6 type with English Electric equipment.

It was in 1951 that signs began to appear indicating that problems lay ahead: roads required widening, housing estates developed, electricity prices increased, limits on working hours were introduced, and shopping patterns, weekend working and the number of cars all began to affect the reign of the trolleybus in Rotherham. In 1951, the route to Greasborough was closed and several other routes were curtailed. The biggest casualty came in 1954 when the pioneer route to Maltby ran for the last time, although trolleybuses continued to run as far as Wickersley for many years to come.

All these changes meant that Rotherham now had a serious surplus of trolleybuses and the management was still looking for ways to improve operational efficiency in the face of rising costs, particularly when compared with motorbuses.

To be continued

RECENT RUNNING DAYS

Friends Reunited: The Maidstone weekend - 16/ 17 June David Croft

This weekend had originally been planned as ordinary "Trolleydays" but was hastily re-arranged to mark the coming together of three former Maidstone Corporation trolleybuses: the loan of no.52 by the London Trolleybus Preservation Society from the East Anglia Transport Museum at Carlton Colville enabled us to re-create a scene from 15 April 1967 - the day the Maidstone system closed and the day nos.52, 56 and 72 last ran together.

Nos.56 and 72 had, of course, "grown up" together. 56 (GKP 511), a Sunbeam W which was originally fitted with a "utility" Park Royal body had entered service in May 1944 and was joined in April 1947 by 72 (HKR 11), also a Sunbeam W but with Northern Coachbuilders bodywork to peacetime standards.



The Maidstone trio, (L to R) 52, 56 and 72, lined up on the Sunday *Photo: Stewart David*

In April 1959, the pair was joined by two former Brighton Corporation BUT 9611Ts with Weymann bodywork. The pair (LCD 51/ 52) retained their Brighton fleet numbers (51 and 52) at Maidstone. The following year, 56, along with four other utility-bodied Maidstone trolleybuses, went away to Leeds to receive posh new bodies by Charles H Roe. 72 remained in virtually original condition and time does not seem to have dated the appearance of this fine vehicle.

After the closure of the Maidstone system, all the trolleybuses, apart from 72 which was set aside by the Corporation for preservation, were sold to various scrap dealers. 72 came to Sandtoft in 1977 on loan from Maidstone Borough Council and has been with us ever since, becoming owned by the Museum in 2006. 56 reached Sandtoft in 1982 by way of the Tunbridge Wells Model Railway Club and then the NTA following a lengthy period outside in Sussex, and 52 was rescued from scrap by the LTPS in 1967 and subsequently moved to Carlton Colville.



Maidstone 72, 52 and 56 waiting in the lay-by....
Photo: Mike Johnson



...and now in a line-up with visiting ex-Brighton 52 in the foreground
Photo: Stewart David

The Saturday was a dull, breezy day but at least we were spared the heavy rain that had been forecast. All three vehicles ran in service from 11:00am until around 1:00pm, when 72 went off for a rest, being replaced in service by Huddersfield 631, the trolleybus decorated for HM the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. At 2:30pm the three Maidstone trolleybuses were lined up in Sandtoft Square for a photo opportunity, and although visitor numbers were low, everyone seemed to enjoy the chance to capture the line-up. Following this, the three vehicles ran in service together, after which 56 took time out for a rest and Huddersfield 631 re-joined 52 and 72 in service. The only problem throughout the day was caused by 72's bell, or should I say the lack of it - an intermittent fault. At the end of the afternoon, all three were leak-tested ready for operation on the Sunday.

The Sunday was a much better day weather-wise, with sunny spells and no rain. Once again the three Maidstone vehicles ran together from 11:00am, but 72 soon developed bell problems again and the "doctor" was summoned. Bruce Lake duly arrived with his black bag and soon restored the patient to health. At 12:30, 56 came out of service to enable visitors to have a chance to ride on Huddersfield 631 and 56 re-entered service at 2:00pm, replacing 72. As on the previous day, a line-up of the trio of Maidstone trolleybuses took place at around 2:30pm, followed by a period when all three ran in service together.

Shortly after this, two of the vehicles had to be taken out of service in quick succession. 52's bell ceased to work, and, more spectacularly, smoke was seen billowing from beneath no.56, just as it completed a journey. Passengers were evacuated, booms taken off and quick action by John Zebedee with a fire extinguisher dealt with the situation and 56 was towed away to the workshop for investigation. So this just left Huddersfield 631 and Maidstone 72 to maintain the service for the remainder of the afternoon.



Remembering 72's final day in Maidstone service, with the special (but fictitious!) 15 April 1967 destination display it carried

Photo: Mike Johnson

So, just as on 15 April 1967, no.72 was the last Maidstone trolleybus to operate on the day, justifying our setting of the rear destination blind to show **JOURNEY'S END** just as it had all those years ago. Although the weekend was relatively quiet, it was good to see the three vehicles from Kent's county town working together again after a period of 45 years.

There is, of course, a fourth Maidstone trolleybus in preservation - no.86 (BDY 809), one of the former Hastings vehicles, but our three wouldn't have recognised it now as it is being restored at Carlton Colville to its original Hastings green and cream livery.

All-in-all an enjoyable weekend, and thanks must go to the LTPS, and to Malcolm Coates, owner of 56, for letting us use their vehicles, even if 56 did nearly catch fire ! This just goes to show that life is never dull at Sandtoft

Teddy Bears' Picnic - 30 June/ 1 July

Bruce Lake

The Teddy Bears' Picnic weekend is designed to encourage families to attend the Museum. This was clearly achieved, with many families turning up and children with a teddy bear getting in free. They all seemed to have a good time, looking for bears hiding or having picnics around the Museum site. On both days, there was a judging of the best visiting teddy bear. The activities were supplemented this year by a number of indoor and garden games acquired by Tony Ferris. This made full use of the "Skegness" building, with large-scale versions of draughts, Connect-4 and noughts and crosses all available. Children could also get their faces painted - always a great attraction ! Out of doors, visitors could play oversize darts or snakes and ladders, so there was plenty for everyone to do !

'Gathering 2012 - 14/ 15 July

Stewart David and Bruce Lake

Despite the change of date to avoid the Olympics, 'Gathering 2012 was very well-attended. The brilliant Sunday weather, in contrast to a very wet preceding week or so which led to many events elsewhere being cancelled, encouraged many visitors (and extra stall-holders). The new children's games proved popular, as did the fairground organ, and this year, we welcomed local artist Katherine Milns, who staged an exhibition of her work in the Skegness Building.

As usual, much of our collection was moved out of the depot onto the vehicle display area, which this year was located on the "figure-of-eight" hard-standing, as all our grass areas had been rendered unusable by the very heavy rainfall experienced during the weeks prior to the event.



Vehicles on display in the area between the car park and the central part of the Museum

Photo: John Stainforth

The motorbuses and trolleybuses selected for service were prepared over the preceding Friday and Saturday by a very small group of volunteers.

Final changes were made to the operating schedule of nine service trolleybuses, including Edmonton 189 which we decided to run in addition to those scheduled on Preview Saturday. Visitor numbers built up during the course of Saturday and we managed to operate all the vehicles scheduled to run.



A small selection of trolleybuses in service on 'Gathering Preview Saturday' *Photo: John Stainforth*

At 6.00pm, all service trolleybuses were earth-leakage tested successfully, with the exception of visitor Maidstone 52, which was returned to the depot following high readings. Fortunately we were able to operate 52 after achieving acceptable measurements early on Sunday morning.

Saturday evening saw an absolute deluge, leaving visitors huddled in the beer tent awaiting their barbecue ! Luckily, this downpour was short-lived. The "twilight" service ran up until 10.00pm and was enjoyed by staff and visitors alike: it was operated by Edmonton 189, Huddersfield 631 and Bradford 792.



Twilight running on a wet evening, with (left) Huddersfield 631 reflected in the rainwater and (right) Bradford 792 making the last evening run

Photos: Graham Bilbé

On 'Gathering Day' itself, the trolleybus and motorbus services began operation at 10.00am and soon became very busy indeed. Vehicles were operated in batches of three, changing over at noon, 2.00pm and 4.00pm. Vehicles providing the continuous trolleybus service were Bradfords 746 and 792, Glasgow TB78, Jubilee-liveried Huddersfield 631, Maidstone 52, Manchester 1344, Reading 113, Rotherham 37 and South Shields 204. Vehicle-wise we encountered no problems with any service failures and no dewirements at all over the entire weekend, which is probably a record !



SANDTOFT GATHERING 2012

Photos: 1 - 10 by Graham Bilbé, 11 by John Stainforth



1 Visitors arriving keep the reception staff busy 2 A line-up of visiting classic cars 3 Stagecoach kindly loaned a bus for the day, seen with a customised "TM" logo on the destination display 4 Artist Katherine Milns puts the finishing touches to her painting of Reading 113 5 Visitors in period dress pushing 2 1950s prams 6 Busy stalls in the depot with 1348 as the backdrop 7 Reading 113's cheerful all-female crew 8 An array of trolleybuses ready for service with Rotherham 37 passing on the inner circuit 9 Peter Crisp takes a turn as "points boy" to save conductors running between the two frogs 10 Visiting Lincolnshire Road Car buses 11 A colourful row of trolleys under bright blue skies

At 5.00pm, all services were restricted to the inner running circle only, to allow stall holders the space to pack their kit away.

Over the entire weekend, we operated 150 service trips - 43 on Saturday and a record 107 on Sunday. In total, the trolleybuses carried a very impressive 2,400 passengers - 390 on Saturday and 2,010 on Sunday. The Isle Tour was very popular, running eight tours (all duplicated) guided by Steve Gill, Chris O'Hea and Andy Payling. And this year's 'Gathering Programme was a sell-out: amazingly, the last copies had gone by 1:30pm - another record !

Finally, a very big "thank you" to all our staff who delivered an excellent level of service over both days: to our traffic crews for driving and conducting, to our engineering team and those who helped prepare vehicles for service, to the vehicle owners for the use of their 'buses and to those who stayed behind and returned all the vehicles to the depot. Many, many others contributed to this year's success, both visibly and behind-the-scenes, and, as usual, the ladies in the *Tea Trolley Café* coped magnificently with the demands of their busiest day of the year, and deserve the biggest "thank you" of all ! Well done, everyone !

Postscript: Visitors to the 'Gathering seem to come from all over the world. Francis Whitehead was speaking to an American who left his business card – he turned out to be David L Banbury, a Superintendent of San Francisco Municipal Transport Agency's Cable Car Division !

World-wide Weekend – 11/ 12 August

Bruce Lake

This event also went very smoothly, after a disastrous Friday for some of our staff who had two cars break down on them and eventually arrived to find that Marseille 202 had also broken down ! This was its second serious failure in as many weeks (see report on page 5), although the causes were different. Following repairs on the Saturday morning, the rest of the event went without incident, with Limoges 5, Edmonton 189, Marseille 202 and Liège 425 providing the service, supported by Huddersfield 631 as the British representative and a demonstration run without passengers by Aachen 22.

London Bank Holiday Weekend - 25-27 August

The weekend saw the full re-commissioning of London 1348 following completion of extensive restoration work. Fellow Londoner 1812, back from its visit to Carlton Colville, and London 260, kindly loaned to us by the London Trolleybus Preservation Society, formed part of the "welcome" party. Photographs and a full report will appear in the next edition of *Sandtoft Scene*.

A VERY SAD POSTSCRIPT.....

...to our feature "Antiques Road Trip Visits Sandtoft", published in the last 'Scene. It was a great shock to learn that David Barby, the antiques and collectibles expert who fronted the *Road Trip's* visit to our Museum in May, died in July following a short illness. He obviously much enjoyed the whole experience of visiting Sandtoft, meeting the folks on duty and having a taster at the wheel of Reading 144. Those who met him on the day recall his warm personality and sense of humour, and he will be missed by many millions of viewers of his BBC antiques programmes which also included *Flog It* and *Bargain Hunt*.

SANDTOFT'S SECRET - THE HASTINGS GUY

Robin Symons

The only preserved trolleybus in the UK for which the original identity is unconfirmed is the Guy single-decker at Sandtoft. This remarkable survivor was discovered in 2002, when a bungalow at Ingatestone, near Chelmsford, was demolished to expose the vehicle. The bungalow had been built around the vehicle many tens of years previously.

The best way to establish the identity of this vehicle would be to find a former fleet number on it, but Hastings Tramways was not generous with fleet numbers on its vehicles and where to look for evidence of its identity would depend on which Hastings livery the vehicle was in when finally



Still protected by its pitched tiled roof, Sandtoft's ex-Hastings Guy has been at the Museum since 2002. *Photo: Robin Symons*

withdrawn. The two earlier liveries had fleet numbers on both front and rear panels, but not the sides of the vehicles. The final (post-war) livery had "Hastings Tramways" transfers front and rear, in place of the fleet numbers. Post-war, these were added under the driver's cab windows, at the extreme front, on each **side** of the vehicle. Also, on these final survivors, there was a fleet number on the front bulkhead of the entrance vestibule, close to the outside edge and just below the window. None of the available photographs of earlier liveries shows this area, so there might have been one on this front bulkhead, but no fleet number was apparent on the rear entrance bulkhead, in photographs of any livery. As regards the interior, there is only one known photograph, which was taken from the rear looking forwards: a fleet number is apparent, in that position popular with operators - centrally above the driver's bulkhead windows. However, this particular portion of bodywork is missing from the Sandtoft Guy.

However, one piece of useful physical evidence does exist on the Sandtoft Guy - its rear destination display. Hastings bought fifty Guy single-deckers (nos.9 to 58). There had been an initial batch of thirty, nos.9 to 38 (DY 5111-40), followed by two further batches of ten each, 39-48 (DY 5452-61) and 49-58 (DY 5576-85). Available photographic evidence shows a difference in the arrangement of the rear destination displays between the original thirty and the

subsequent two batches.

The Sandtoft Guy clearly has the later display and is, therefore, highly likely to be from amongst nos.39 to 58. Some (maybe all) of the rear destination displays of the earlier vehicles were modified to include a route number display. However, all but one of the photographs showing this modification have a small area of glass on either side of the route/ number display, whereas the later vehicles were full width, as are both 45 and the Sandtoft Guy. The exception was no.11, which at one time had the same rear destination as the two final batches (this might be the result of an accident repair). No.11 subsequently went to Derby, where it entered service as their no.165. The Sandtoft Guy is unlikely to be 11, as it has the remains of a Hastings fare table on the front bulkhead and Derby would almost certainly have removed this before it entered service.

One other variation that has come to light is that the rear destination of 54 was modified at some time (again, possibly following an accident), so that there was a small area of glass either side of the display - thus making it unlikely that the Sandtoft Guy is no.54. No.22, when photographed as the first waiting room at



Hastings 30 in Hastings & District livery with one of the Dodson-bodied double-deckers behind

Photo: M&D and East Kent Bus Club (from Company Collection)

Hastings Coach Station (later replaced by 45), appears to have a full-width rear destination display, although it stands slightly proud of the bodywork, not being a flush fit as with 45 and the Sandtoft example.

There is one other, much more circumstantial, piece of evidence, which suggests that it might have come from the final batch: the Hastings single-deckers had an exterior rear light mounted high on the offside corner of the vehicle. The same bulb was used to provide one of the interior saloon lights from behind a glass cover in the extreme rear corner of the saloon. These glass covers still exist from both the Sandtoft Guy and no 45, preserved by the NTA. These two covers are of slightly different designs, which might indicate that they were from different batches (which in turn might imply that the Sandtoft one was from the 49 to 58 batch). However, either or both of these covers might have been changed during the vehicle's life, due to damage, making any conclusion based on just this very speculative.

Brian Maguire was responsible for organising the recovery of this fascinating

relic and, in one of the preparatory visits before the move, he discovered the outline of what might be the number 57 on the rear panel (recorded in *Sandtoft Scene* no.52 - February 2002, page 7). As a result and without any other evidence, the vehicle has for years been referred to as 57. Recently, an error in the *Museum Guide & Handbook* referred to the vehicle as 45 and this has generated interest in the Sandtoft vehicle's identity again. The one vehicle it could not be is 45, as this has been in preservation by the NTA since withdrawal by Maidstone & District (as a waiting room/ booking office at Hastings Coach Station) and is presently stored at Raunds, near Northampton. Brian has reported that he was told by neighbours of the Ingatestone vehicle that it belonged to a Mr. Readins, who may have been a Polish airman and may have brought it from Boreham airfield, where he may have already been living in it. This is all circumstantial evidence, as Mr. Readins (not a very Polish name, unless Anglicised) could not be traced, despite writing to him at his new address near London (which is understood to have been an old people's home). Brian also says that the faint trace of a possible number could also have been 37 (unlikely as this vehicle is known to have been broken up at Silverhill during the war). It is interesting to note that no.46 was sold by Hastings to a Mr Riddings in May 1949. Could this be the same person, although the name is slightly different and it would not fit in with the story about buying the vehicle from Boreham ?

So far, no other fleet number, or chassis number, has been found on Sandtoft's vehicle, despite attempts to cut through the paint, layer by layer, with fine wet-and-dry paper. Also, the front bulkhead of the entrance vestibule is missing completely and cannot, therefore, provide any useful evidence.

In *Sandtoft Scene* no.53 - Autumn 2002, page 17, the late Tony Peart penned an article entitled "Hastings No.57 - or is it ?". He had taken the matter a step further by applying more paint stripper to the rear panel and instead of the "dark brown" early Hastings livery (also described elsewhere as chocolate, or like claret wine) under "the number", he found a "greyish primer". However, after M&D took Hastings Tramways over in 1935, they repainted the fleet green and cream and it could be that the repaint involved stripping the panel bare and starting again, or the panels might have been replaced following a collision. He then went on to report his continued investigation: "In the central entrance area the right hand bulkhead was still wearing a coat of mid green, professionally applied and obviously a bus company colour. After removal of some domestic timber work, the left hand entrance pillar was seen to be painted in the same mid green as were the front wheel centres. Some beading had been lost from around the front offside wheel arch, revealing a curved strip of the same green, while risers of the entrance steps were in a dark green. All this indicated to Tony that the 'bus was certainly not 57 and had never been to Derby". None of this evidence remains today, as ten years of outside storage for the Sandtoft Guy has taken its toll.

Tony did not explain why he thought this evidence indicated that the vehicle could not be 57 and, sadly, he is no longer with us to elucidate. He may have

assumed that 57 had entered service in Derby, which it did not. 57 would have been repainted into the green Hastings livery before the Second World War. Derby's trolleybus mileage records indicate that nos.21 and 57 did not enter service in Derby and thus may never have been prepared for service there - indeed, they may have been deliberately kept for spares. Does anyone know what colour Derby painted its wartime acquisitions, if at all ? Many operators used grey or khaki, as their normal paint supply was not available. All six Derby vehicles were sold to a J.B. Huxley, whose address was near Wrexham. However, some were noted in a scrapyard at King Street, Derby within a year, so it is possible that none of them moved west to Wrexham, and some may have been resold from Derby. So, it is not out of the question that the Sandtoft Guy might be 57.

Tony goes on to consider which vehicles had been repainted medium or bright green with their second owner. He says: "One of these became a rest room (really a booking office/ waiting room) with Southdown and was painted in the company livery. Southdown normally painted wheel centres dark green and the green on our Sandtoft BTX is perhaps a little darker than Southdown's light apple green, so we are probably justified in dismissing this one. Six went to Nottingham, where they were painted in the city's medium green livery, but some modifications were carried out to the bodies. More importantly, however, Nottingham's buses had red wheels and on the Hastings acquisitions the step-risers were painted a staring white. True, there is some white on the steps of the Sandtoft 'bus, but it is only a patch. Not a Nottingham Hastings BTX then and probably not the Southdown rest room, so what is left ? Six Hastings BTXs went to Mexborough and Swinton, along with a batch of Notts. and Derbys. AEC English Electrics. Since the latter were painted in the full Mexborough and Swinton livery - with green wheels - we may assume that the Hastings buses were too. Later on, Mexborough's trolleybuses had black wheels, but most fortunately, a colour photograph exists showing the green wheels on a Notts. and Derbys. vehicle".

Does anyone have any evidence that these vehicles were painted into M&S green, or did they, perhaps, put the livery change in the management's mind ? The earlier M&S livery was red and some earlier vehicles were certainly in these colours after the war. In view of the fact they entered service at Mexborough in wartime (1942/ 43) and were withdrawn soon after (1946/ 47), it seems unlikely that they were repainted at all. However, whether the M&S BTXs were in Hastings green, or new M&S green, does not matter very much in the overall context of this discussion.

Also, Tony was, indeed, justified in dismissing no.41, the Southdown vehicle, as it was seen on a building site in Emsworth in 1962, well after Mr Readins had bought the Sandtoft Guy (somewhere between 1952 and 1954). He is also justified in excluding the Nottingham vehicles. At least three photographs of these exist, one of them a rear view. All three show that the route number blind box has been enlarged. The rear box on the Sandtoft Guy has not been altered. As all six Nottingham vehicles were modified (presumably in a

standard way, with both front and rear number boxes enlarged) and used for several years during the war, these can be firmly ruled out as candidates.



Hastings 49 at Silverhill in Hastings Tramways "belt and buckle" green and cream

Photo: M&D and East Kent Bus Club (from Company Collection)

The six vehicles, which went to Mexborough & Swinton were nos.29, 32, 47, 48, 52 and 53. Nos.29 & 32 were from the earlier batch, with different rear destination display; 47 is reported as being in Bird's scrapyards (at Stratford-upon-Avon) in 1964 and 53 is recorded as being broken up in 1945. Thus 48 and 52 are possible candidates. However, Roger Cole of Hastings suggests,

in *Sandtoft Scene* no.53 (page 18), that "Disposals are recorded for all the Hastings Guys that went to Mexborough and they indicate that the vehicle now at Sandtoft cannot be one of them." Is Roger still around to amplify his point ?

As mentioned earlier, the Sandtoft Guy still has the remains of a fare chart on the front bulkhead behind the driver, which might indicate that it was either sold directly to a private owner by Hastings, or that it was one of the wartime purchases, but which never entered service. The later operators are likely to have eliminated this notice before using the vehicle in service. Both 48 and 52 entered service with M&S, making them less likely candidates for the Sandtoft Guy. Only one of the vehicles which went to Derby was from the last two Hastings batches (57) and this did not enter service at Derby. Thus, 57 remains a candidate.

There is one final piece of evidence, which might be significant, and that is from the definitive work on Hastings disposals (the M&D and East Kent Bus Club's *Illustrated Fleet History 1911 – 1995*, publication F.2, pages 188 and 189). Amongst the notes to the disposal of the trolleybuses, it is recorded that a vehicle "believed to be from those sold to Mrs. (sic) Mitchell, was known to be extant in **Essex** in 1969" Chelmsford remains firmly in Essex, so could this be the Sandtoft Guy ? Nos.32 and 42 were reportedly sold to a Miss Mitchell in October 1947. However, if the vehicle which went to Chelmsford was one of these, it would have to have been 42, because of the rear destination layout. One of the legends of Silverhill depot (reported by the late Derrick Waters, who worked at Silverhill from 1944 to 1983) was that in most years a lady from Essex called at the depot and told the staff that she was living in the single-deck trolley that she had bought from there. These visits went on into the

'sixties, possibly as late as 1969. If her vehicle is the Sandtoft Guy and if she is Miss/ Mrs Mitchell, then it could not have come via Derby, or M&S.

Until any positive identification can be made, the next best source of evidence of identity is from the records of the disposals of numbers 39 to 58 by Hastings and subsequent operators:

From the second batch:

- 39 was withdrawn and sold in October 1947 to Mr. Watts.
- 40 was sold to Nottingham (as no.308) in 1941 and was operated for three years (February 1942 to May 1945) before being sold in January 1946 to Mr. Whitehouse of Keyworth, Nottinghamshire.
- 41 was withdrawn in 1947 and passed to Southdown. It was noted in Emsworth in 1962.
- 42 was withdrawn and sold in October 1947 to Miss/ Mrs. Mitchell from Essex.
- 43 was withdrawn and sold in September 1947 to Mr. Browning.
- 44 was withdrawn and sold in October 1947 to Mr. Taylor.
- 45 was used as a waiting room at Hastings Coach Station and is now owned by the NTA and stored, partly-restored, at Raunds in Northamptonshire.
- 46 was withdrawn and sold in May 1949 to Mr Ridding.
- 47 went to Mexborough & Swinton in October 1942. It was not used, but is recorded as being in Bird's scrapyards, Stratford-upon-Avon, in August 1964.
- 48 went to Mexborough and Swinton in October 1942. It ran in service as no.73 and was sold to a Mr. Hunt, Retford in June 1947.

From the final batch:

- 49 was withdrawn in 1947 and sold to Sharman & White in August 1947.
- 50 is known to have been scrapped at Silverhill in January 1956.
- 51 went to Nottingham (as 307), in November 1941, and operated from January 1942 to January 1946 before being sold to Mr. Devey of Lichfield.
- 52 went to Mexborough & Swinton during the War to be withdrawn and sold in June 1946 to Mr. Snickersgill, Wath.
- 53 went to Mexborough & Swinton during the War and is recorded as having been broken up by December 1945.
- 54 was withdrawn by September 1949 and sold to Mr. Gurr.
- 55 was withdrawn in 1946, but no disposal has been recorded by the Company. However, David Padgham has seen a list, made by the then Chief Inspector, which recorded that the vehicle was scrapped at Silverhill.
- 56 was withdrawn between 1946 and 1948 and was sold to Mr. Stearns in August 1949.
- 57 went to Derby in July 1942, as their no.170, but was not used and was sold to a Mr. Huxley near Wrexham in 1946.

- 58 was withdrawn in February 1952 and was broken up at Silverhill in February 1956.

To summarise, nos.41, 45, 47, 50, 53, 55 and 58 have well-documented subsequent histories. If it is accepted that the fare chart in the Sandtoft Guy would not have been left in place on a vehicle which entered service with another operator, this would also eliminate nos.40, 48, 51 and 52; and a late photograph of 54 would seem to eliminate that vehicle. This leaves us with nos.39, 42, 43, 44 and 46 from the second batch and 49, 56, and 57 from the last batch.



Hastings 58 in Silverhill depot illustrating the final post-war Hastings Tramways livery application. Despite the appearance of this photograph, the roof was in a darker green than the panels below the waistline

Photo: D Padgham Collection

The only one known to have gone to Essex is 42, but then there is the slight similarity in name for the disposal of 46 and the name given to Brian Maguire on site in Essex. There is also the conflict between what Brian was told (that the vehicle was purchased at Boreham) and what the lady visitor to Silverhill said - that she lived in a vehicle that she had purchased directly from the depot. Finally, there is also Brian's observation of what he thought might be a number "57" to consider.

There is a great deal of circumstantial evidence and that gleaned from conjecture and logical analysis in the above article, none of which is proof. However, from the evidence currently available, it appears very likely that the Sandtoft Guy is one of nos.39, 42, 43, 44, 46, 49, 56 and 57 and that the three vehicles with the most promising claim are 42, 46 and 57. If any weight is given to the very speculative evidence about the internal rear light cover, then we are back to 57 ! I am not a betting man, but my money would be on 42, with 46 as a second choice and 57 in third place.

It is hoped that this article will provoke any knowledgeable enthusiast to come forward with additional information, or evidence, to try to substantiate the identity of this fascinating relic. Does anyone have any additional disposal data from that quoted above, or in the M&D and East Kent Bus Club tome? Does anyone know where the chassis number is to be found on a 1929 Guy trolleybus ?

At the moment, the only hope in finding any fleet number may rest with forensic science. There is just a faint possibility that, if any area where the fleet

number might once have been is treated with dilute nitric acid (5% concentration), then a “shadow” of the number may appear. Does anyone have access to nitric acid, or any knowledge of other forensic techniques ?

At all times in this article, the original fleet numbers have been used to avoid confusion with the many re-numberings which occurred following the arrival of the wartime and post-war double-deckers. Particular thanks are due to Brian Maguire, David Padgham and Bob Cook (the latter two being experts on the transport history of Hastings) for their valuable input to this article.

Regardless of whether or not the identity of the Sandtoft Guy can be established, and bearing in mind that a very similar vehicle already exists in a more advanced state of restoration, might it not be a suitable use for Sandtoft’s Guy to be retained as an example of the many trolleybuses that ended up as living accommodation at the end of their lives ? If the vehicle’s structure could be made sound and watertight and suitable period furniture and fittings - like a stove, cooker and sink - provided, would this not make a fascinating and different exhibit at the Museum ? Indeed, this idea has been suggested to the Museum’s directors, but resources are not available to consider such a project, nor has any decision been made about the vehicle’s possible future use. Wouldn’t it be wonderful to keep it as the only trolleybus with a pitched roof ?

Please write to the *Sandtoft Scene* editor or to Robin Symons at RDHSymons@gmail.com with any evidence, or information, about the identity of the Sandtoft Guy, or further thoughts that might have been provoked by this article.

DEAR 'SCENE

Dear 'Scene

I am writing to express my thanks to all at Sandtoft whose presence, work and conversations helped make my visit on Monday 4 June so enjoyable and successful. That enjoyment started with the arrival at Doncaster Interchange of Sheffield 1357 as the timetabled midday bus. It continued throughout until the return bus journey when Doncaster 55 reached the same spot.

The almost-continuous trolleybus traffic of the various “municipal” vehicles was so attractive and it was good to speak with numerous staff who always had time for visitors such as me. The café made for a convenient and congenial break, with more conversation, and the final enjoyment was the spirited (though of course entirely legal) run by the 4.00pm back to Doncaster Interchange, which enabled three ageing men to catch the 16:42 to Manchester, with two of us wondering how our respective NHS Consultants would have viewed our ultimately successful dash through the bus station !

I am able to get to Sandtoft only occasionally, it now being almost four years since my last attendance which was at the 2008 'Gathering. There have inevitably been some changes: the arrival of the Edmonton vehicle being one of them, and for me personally, it was good to see London Transport 1348. Virtually a Londoner myself, I had photographed various similar vehicles at Wood Green in 1961.

I was delighted to learn of, and witness the work that is now going on on Nottingham 367, and to talk with its devoted restorers about my photographing Nottingham's last route in 1966. I was fascinated by the livery of Huddersfield 631 and remembered that, when working there in the mid-1960s, being told what steps a republican mother took to forbid a boy's appearance in the town's streets when the Queen made a Coronation visit in 1953 !

I hope I may get to Sandtoft again before another four years have passed, not least because, by then I shall be nearer eighty than seventy and my memory will perhaps not be as good as it currently remains!

Best regards to all.

Nigel Lemon (Penwortham, Preston)

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Dear 'Scene

Many thanks for the copy of the latest *Sandtoft Scene* for July 2012 - a fascinating and entertaining "read", especially for those of us who can't manage to get to the Trolleybus Museum as often as we would like.

I was particularly interested in Jim Sambrooks' letter and accompanying photograph of ex-Glasgow Corporation Transport trolleybus TBS21 at the Beith Museum. Sadly, judging by Jim's picture, its condition has not improved from the time I visited it on an open day some years ago. I can only agree with the Editor's speculative comment about the reason for the damage to the front nearside panel. It's all the more ironic that, of these 35-foot long vehicles, it was the only one of the ten completely repainted during the life of the Glasgow system, running as it did behind the last service trolleybus from Queen's Cross to Hampden Garage on 27 May 1967.

Last month, I got a chance to see the other preserved single-decker, TBS13, presently locked away from public gaze at the Glasgow Museums' Resource Centre at Nitshill. True, it was housed at the GVV'T's Bridgeton Museum following the decision to move it out of the Kelvin Hall Transport Museum. However, at the museum authority's insistence, it was later transferred from Bridgeton to Nitshill: this took place on 4 October 2010. There are currently no plans to move it to the new Riverside Transport Museum which opened in June 2011, but the situation could change as the Coronation Mark I tramcar no.1173 is now being prepared for its transfer from Nitshill to Riverside in September 2012. This is in connection with the 50th anniversary of the Glasgow trams' closure, mentioned by "Black Rod" in the same issue of 'Scene. To see TBS13 at the moment, you have to book one of the occasional Transport and Technology afternoon visits through the Glasgow Museums website. Sadly, photography isn't allowed in the store, so the sooner TBS13 appears in public again the better. Perhaps Sandtoft could get involved and stir things up a bit now that Wellington RETB1 no.82 has been gifted to Sandtoft just a thought !

Best wishes for the continued success of Sandtoft and the 'Scene.

Brian Deans (Glasgow)

OBITUARY

Charlie Bullock, K5G

written by Jim Sambrooks

Charlie Bullock passed away at his Scarborough care home on Friday, 17 August, aged 97. It is quite appropriate that he should leave us on a Friday as that day always played a big part in his life. He was born on a Friday, retired and bought the "Old Beauty" on a Friday, recently after moving into the care home his flat was sold on a Friday, and of course, his funeral has been arranged for over 30 years now and that is prescribed to be on a Friday.

Charlie will best be remembered at Sandtoft as the voice on the "tannoy", latterly only at the 'Gathering, but on many Trolleydays in his younger days. He was the first to give a running commentary on the Isle of Axholme tours: I well remember him telling the punters as they approached the gate on return that the tour was entirely free. "We only charge you to get back in, but", he would tell them, "it's the General Manager's birthday today and he said he would pay for you!". On another occasion he told them: "We're going to have a whip round, hoping to raise enough to buy the driver a haircut".

When Charlie was 80 years old, he was given honorary membership of the Museum, which pleased him no end. I can still remember the late Mike Dare's words after he took the microphone out of Charlie's hand:

"Charlie Bullock, you're always on this microphone. You must think people like listening to your voice." Charlie's face dropped. "And it's because you're always on this microphone and people do like listening to your voice that the Board has asked me to present you with honorary membership". Charlie was speechless for a few seconds. Some said we were mean giving life membership to one so old, but he got 17 years out of it.

A native of Scarborough, Charlie had always wanted to be a driver and achieved this at the age of 17. At 21 years old he hired a Gilford coach and passed his PSV test "with flying colours", later obtaining a job with the United Automobile Services, where he remained for most of his working life, driving mainly Bristol buses, a type he came to love and respect, especially those



Charlie Bullock receiving his long-service award from Mike Dare at the St. Leger Rally in 1995
Photo: Jim Sambrooks

with Gardner engines and sliding mesh gearboxes: "proper buses" he would call them.

In 1975, a very special Bristol was allocated to Scarborough depot - no.61 (FHN 923), a K5G new in 1940 that had been rebuilt as a towing wagon - and Charlie was very pleased to be given the job of driving the "Old Beauty". Four years later, he persuaded the United to sell 61 to him for preservation. Charlie was 64 then and took early retirement so that he would have time to enjoy the "Old Beauty" before he was "withdrawn from service". He managed to keep 61 on the road for the next 28 years, taking her out daily, but eventually had to part with her to the Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Society, who have a number of former United vehicles in their collection.

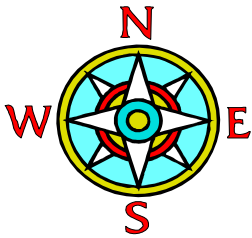
At the time of buying the vehicle, Charlie arranged his funeral, to be held on a Friday afternoon with the "Old Beauty" conveying him to the crematorium. A number of drivers had been arranged over the years but Charlie has outlived most of them. "If he makes a mess of them gears", Charlie would say, "I'll be out of that box and sorting him out!"

Now the time has come, so it's "over and out" from Charlie, "clocked out" for the last time. He will be sadly missed, but those who knew him will have many happy memories. The "K5G" after his name was bestowed by me in honour of the "Old Beauty" and Charlie loved the title.



Charlie's final ride took place in Scarborough on 31 August 2012 on board his beloved towing wagon and his coffin was draped in a specially-made destination blind. The party from Sandtoft travelled in Doncaster 22 and joined the cortege of special vehicles at the Station Yard *Photos: Jim Sambrooks*





THE ROUTE TO SANDTOFT

THE RESCUE OF CLEETHORPES 54

Steve Collins

Part 1: Discovery and Preparations

This article is based on one previously printed in *Fleet-Lines* - the Journal of the Doncaster Omnibus and Light Railway Society under the title "Soggy Sacks and a Whiff of Fish". The original appeared in June 1987 and has been revised for *Sandtoft Scene* by the original author.

This story begins in 1967, when Harold Wilson was Prime Minister, when cash was counted out in pounds, shillings, and pence, and when the word "gay" meant happy or cheerful. Britain basked in contentment, blissfully unaware that apocalyptic horrors like AIDS, global warming, mass unemployment, and the Leyland Olympian were about to descend on us. For Nottingham-based trolleybus enthusiasts, Plumtree was the centre of the known universe, and Plumtree was controlled by The Chairman. His plan was simple: Plumtree was to be **the** home of **the** collection of trolleybuses. All systems in the East Midlands would be represented, as would the pick of what the rest of the country had to offer - subject, of course, to his approval. In 1967 he had been following this plan for five years and everything was as it should be: the trolleybus collection was growing and he had done his bit by buying a Barton motorbus.

This vehicle was BRM 596, a 1936 Leyland TD4 that had started life with a Massey body as Cumberland 291. It had been re-bodied by ECW in 1949 and had passed to Barton ten years later where it gained fleet number 816. Why he picked 816 I don't really know. Probably it just happened to be available at the time he was able to buy a bus. Whatever the reason, in 1967 it was his pride and joy, it was taxed and on the road, and it earned its keep taking parties of enthusiasts to places of transport interest on selected Sundays. Who decided what constituted "a place of interest" is another fact I don't know, but whoever it was, he must have been an original thinker of great talent and style, because the place he chose for the trip which is of particular interest to us was Grimsby !

Why any party of normal, sane people should want to go to Grimsby on a Sunday is, in my opinion, a mystery to rank alongside such gems as the *Marie Celeste*, the Bermuda Triangle, and the contents of Dennis Haigh's pipe. It could be said that they went to see what, if anything, remained of the Grimsby-Cleethorpes trolleybus system, which had passed into history only seven years before. It could also be said that they went to saunter along the Cleethorpes sea front, eating sea food, eyeing young ladies, and chortling over saucy postcards. Valid though these explanations might sound, they can offer no rational reason as to why they went into Armstrong Street.

Armstrong Street dated from the mid-nineteenth century and even when it was new it can't have had a lot to recommend it, but by 1967 it was well past its best. What buildings there were, were typical industrial revolution era terraced houses that looked as if they were ready for the "condemned" notices to go up. There were large scabrous patches of waste land where similar houses had once stood, and a large, untidy scrapyard festered quietly to itself, to help dispel any illusions a casual visitor might cherish. I have been told, and I have

no reason to doubt it, that no-one on that bus knew the scrapyard was there, let alone what it contained.

It is a fact of nature that, just as summer follows spring, a party of bus enthusiasts who find a previously unknown scrapyard will stop for a look. The yard was closed and locked up, which on a Sunday is to be expected, but The Chairman was able to see into it, and to his amazement he saw two Grimsby-Cleethorpes trolleybuses. He was knowledgeable enough to be able to tell that one was a 1947 Roe-bodied Karrier, and that the other was a 1937 Park Royal-bodied AEC. The AEC was of particular interest to him because it was identical to four ex-Cleethorpes vehicles which had run in Nottingham from 1940 until 1952, and of which he had many fond memories. Apart from noting where the yard was, nothing more could be done that day and, in any event, he had other plans.

As I have said, The Chairman controlled Plumtree, and as soon as he knew a pre-war Cleethorpes trolleybus still existed, he wanted it for "his" collection. The fact that he could not afford to buy it didn't enter into it. Plumtree needed the Cleethorpes and the Cleethorpes needed Plumtree; all that was necessary was the means to bring them together. Even as far back as 1967, he knew that if a person existed who could be conned into buying a festering scrapyard reject and taking it to Plumtree, that person was Tom Bowden.

During the week following The Chairman's discovery, Tom was summoned to the presence and informed about this wonderful new development in his (Tom's) life. All his previous commitment to trolleybuses was as nothing compared to this momentous discovery. How could he (Tom) even think his life was complete without a Cleethorpes AEC to lavish affection on ? How could he (Tom) sit there drinking tea while this unique vehicle was in the clutches of some vile scrap merchant who could cut it up at a moment's notice? How could he (Tom) contemplate going to Plumtree on Saturday when he was needed in Grimsby ? And so on. All Tom's objections, such as the fact that Cleethorpes trolleybuses meant nothing to him, were brushed aside by sowing the seeds of the idea that it could be restored as Nottingham 437 (originally Cleethorpes 59 from the same batch).

At this time, cars were not in vogue among Nottingham trolleybus enthusiasts, most of whom had been reduced to penury by buying too many trolleybuses, and thus having to pay too much in rent. So, on the following Saturday, Tom set off for Grimsby on the train. He was joined for the day by Roger the Bodger, who thought that a trip to Grimsby sounded like a good idea, and when they arrived, the first place they made for was the bus depot on Victoria Street. At the depot, they asked the way to Armstrong Street and were surprised when a fellow offered to take them in his car. They didn't know it then, but this chap was John Pitcher and their paths were to cross many times after that. John had recently bought Grimsby AEC "RT" no.81, which is now at Sandtoft. He knew all about the trolleybuses and was all in favour of Tom buying one of them.

The scrapyard, owned by R.E. Hill & Co., is, in fact, still there today, but in

1967 when Tom and Roger the Bodger extracted themselves from John Pitcher's A35, it was much more untidy. It was an all-purpose yard, which contained everything from old washing machines and gas stoves to large lumps of trawler. Everything was jammed together in no semblance of order, and the trolleybuses were visible over heaps of clutter with no means of access except mountaineering.



Three trolleybuses seen in Hill's scrapyards some time before fire ravaged the vehicle on the left. In the centre is Cleethorpes 54 (later Grimsby-Cleethorpes Transport no.154), with sister vehicle 55 (later 155) on the left and Grimsby 23 on the right.

Photo: Alan Colley (courtesy Andrew Reeve-Smith)

Further investigation showed that there were in fact three trolleybuses in the yard, but one had been burnt out and had collapsed to a point below the surrounding piles of scrap so that it could not be seen. All three were in a line along the back of the yard, facing the wall. The first vehicle on the left of the line was the Roe-bodied Karrier no.23 (AEE 26). New to Grimsby, this was one of a batch of six (19-24) and had last run in service in June 1955. This was complete, but the nearside was badly damaged by the pressure of all the scrap leaning on it. It had no windows left, and was full of what appeared to be sacking or some kind of fabric. This bus was the only one of the six not to have been sold to Bradford after the system closed in June 1960 (Bradford never actually used them). In the middle was the Park Royal-bodied AEC no.154 (FW 8990), originally new to Cleethorpes as no.54. This also had no windows and was full of sacking, but had only superficial damage to the offside. On the right was the burnt-out wreck of 155 (FW 8991), identical to 154, which had mysteriously caught fire the previous bonfire night. All 155's wooden structure had gone, but the steering column could be seen sticking up out of the pile. The remains were partially buried by scrap that must have been leaning on the bus when it burnt away. 154 last ran in service in December 1958, and 155 in January 1959, so at this time the buses had been in the yard for about eight years.

After having convinced himself that 154 was worth having, Tom approached the owner and raised the subject of buying it. Mr. Hill was all charm: he complimented Tom on his taste in old buses, he pointed out that it was the only one, and that he (Tom) had come at just the right time, as the yard was

about to be tidied up, including the area occupied by the buses. He very generously suggested the special price of £85, as it was very much a case of "buy now, while stocks last". He was certain that Tom was the right person to take on 154 and would obviously give it a good home. The only thing that surprised him was that Tom had not been to see him about buying it before. As Tom and Roger left the yard, Mr. Hill indicated the new metal-munching machine that was being constructed, and pointed out that though the machine was happy with a diet of old fridges and oil drums, a bit of trolleybus would go down just as well, so it would be better if Tom could make his mind up and act very quickly.

On the next visit, The Teacher offered to go, and take a working party in his car. The party consisted of Tom, Roger the Bodger and Ted White, then the owner of Derby trolleybus 224. In typical fashion, The Teacher was an hour and a half late picking up the other three, so the day started in a somewhat strained fashion. They arrived at Hill's in brilliant sunshine (which Tom thought was a bad omen) and found that the metal muncher was in action and earning its keep, but as yet the area near the buses had not been touched. The gang decided that the best thing would be to clear any easily movable junk from round the bus, and to empty the interior of its contents. The entire lower deck was full to a depth of about three feet with an assortment of old sacks, army greatcoats and string, the whole of which was, thanks to the lack of windows, wet through. As an added bonus, the vehicle and its contents exuded a smell of fish - at least everyone thought it was fish, except Roger the Bodger who was convinced it was something else.

Roger and Ted volunteered to empty the bus and were soon happily occupied heaving sodden sack bags in all directions. Ted was well-equipped for this work, as he had a stout pair of waterproof gloves and some decent overalls. Roger, however, had neither gloves nor overalls, but worked happily amidst the soaking contents which must have been a breeding ground for every kind of virus and bacteria from cholera to typhoid. He was particularly pleased when he found a noisome greatcoat which still had some buttons on it. He carefully spread it out to dry, saying he would sort it out later. The Teacher expressed doubts about the advisability of handling festering wet clothes and rags without proper protection, but Roger shrugged it off as being of no importance, as he tended to have a different view on hygiene to most people.

While Ted and Roger were occupied with the oozing interior, Tom and The Teacher were shifting a stack of rusty oil drums from the gap between 154 and 23. These oil drums had seen better days, most of them contained stagnant water, and to add a bit of interest when they were moved some of the bottoms fell out. During this operation, a pile of organic yellow goo was discovered hidden under the clutter close to 154's nearside. What this goo was or had been was never discovered, but it became the target of several barbed comments from The Teacher, for example: "I wonder if the NTA are out today digging one of their trolleybuses out of a heap of bright yellow stuff" (he didn't like the NTA and actually used an unprintable word).

By the end of the day, the 'bus was cleared out and all possible obstacles round it had been removed. All the tyres were checked and found to be at best dangerous, and at worst lethal. The steering was passed as adequate, but the steering wheel was viewed with suspicion. It was agreed that apart from a wheel change, everything else was acceptable. The following week a set of decent wheels was assembled from other buses at Plumtree, and The Teacher arranged with someone he knew to take them over to Grimsby in a tipper lorry. While he was there, the tipper driver gave 154 a once-over and said he would be happy to tow it to Plumtree. *To be continued*

DEAR 'SCENE

Dear 'Scene

As an old Manchurian, I was a "spotter" in the early 1960s, frequenting Piccadilly after school. Whilst buses were my main objective, trolleybuses often came in from the main-line station corner of the Gardens, especially the Ashton-under-Lyne vehicles. These routes and 'buses seem to feature a lot in various books.

However, I can still recall quite clearly that my family travelled out to Swinton to visit friends using the 57/ 77 route: we boarded in a side street off Deansgate, ending up in a house whose garden overlooked one of the rail lines (in a cutting), possibly to Blackpool or Southport. Sadly this was before I was a train spotter.

I have never seen mention in the books of the 57/ 77 route, out into the west side of the city, so wonder if my memory is playing tricks on me. If I'm correct, where was the depot and were there other routes on this side of the city ?

Can anyone provide clarity for me ? *Neil Mansfield (Nailsea, North Somerset)*

TROLLEYBUS ANNIVERSARIES

Compiled by Geoff Welburn

October to December 2012

Systems Opened

- 100 years since Rotherham opened on 3 October 1912
- 90 years since Birmingham opened on 27 November 1922
- 80 years since Llanelli opened on 26 December 1932

Systems Closed

- 60 years since Llanelli closed on 8 November 1952

REMAINING RUNNING DAYS IN 2012

Gates Open 11:00 am

St. Leger Historic Vehicle Rally	Sunday Free Bus 14 October
Twilight Trolleyday	Sunday 18 November
Santa Weekend	Saturday 🚍 & Sunday 8 & 9 December

🚍 denotes Isle Coaches service 291 11.00am departure from Doncaster Interchange Bay C5, connects with free Museum bus at Epworth. Return at 4.10pm to connect at Epworth with Isle Coaches service 399 to Doncaster (where it arrives 5.35pm)

Free Bus denotes FREE bus service from Doncaster Interchange, Bay C6 direct to The Trolleybus Museum: Departure times 11.30am & 12.00 noon and back again at 4.00pm & 5.00pm (*these times are for St. Leger Rally day ONLY*) Journey time approx. 45 minutes.