

Sandtoft Scene

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ACCREDITED
MUSEUM

News and Views from
The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft



Sandtoft Transport Centre Limited
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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: Still on its flat rack container after completing the journey by sea from New Zealand, Wellington 82 is manoeuvred by lifting gear during the unloading process at Felixstowe. *Photo: Stephen Oliver*

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

Graham Bilbé's article "*Making Sandtoft the Trolleybus Museum*" in the January 'Scene' explains how, in collaboration with the British Trolleybus Society, we are embarking on an ambitious long-term project to expand and develop the Museum. This proposal should be an inspiration to everyone involved with Sandtoft, as it opens the door to transforming what we have now into something truly remarkable, both as an experience for our visitors and for the enthusiast community. Meanwhile, considerable patience is needed whilst two things happen. First, the purchase of the additional land - whilst fully supported by both the Museum and the BTS - will take some time to bring to completion. This depends on many factors, not least the negotiations with the seller. Second, before any work on constructing new buildings can begin, we really need to prepare and agree a blueprint for what the Museum might look like when everything is finished.

The second item presents the greater challenge. We have to visualise how all the facilities are going to fit together: depots, access roads, car parks, reception and shop buildings, the running circuit and the display buildings. Getting all this right, both for our visitors and for our volunteers, is an essential prerequisite to locating the new buildings in the correct places - we only get one chance in a lifetime to do this ! And the fact that we already have an operational museum running successfully makes the process much more complex than if we were starting with a blank canvas. This means that not only do we need a blueprint for the finished result, we also need a viable roadmap to take us there in a series of manageable stages. This is also important because the funds we have are finite and each stage will depend on a further burst of fund-raising. In addition, our volunteer labour force is also finite, meaning that at times we will find ourselves stretched between the demands of operating the museum and the demands of developing it.

Having the blueprint will clearly demonstrate that we are serious about our vision of raising the Museum's profile as a visitor attraction, and having the roadmap will help to persuade our future sponsors that we are serious about the practicalities of turning that vision into a reality. Our leaders will be very busy with work on planning the Museum's future during the coming months, and, as Graham has already said, they will be pleased to receive all your suggestions and proposals. Meanwhile, as we try to balance the short-term and longer-term goals, we are appealing for your financial support on two fronts. Restoration is a vital part of our *raison d'être* and our major project for 2013 is Doncaster 375 (see page 6), whilst the Museum Development Appeal - to fund the second of the new buildings - is now taking off (see page 18).

Please note: News deadline for the next *Sandtoft Scene* is 10 June 2013

NEWS ROUND-UP

...including contributions from Steve Harrison, Bruce Lake and Brian Maguire

Gift Aid: Financial Director Francis Whitehead is delighted to report the receipt of £12,836.88 from HM Revenue & Customs for Gift Aid reclaimed by the Museum during our financial year 2010-11. A large proportion of this comes from major donations to Johannesburg 589 and London 1348, whose restoration funds now receive their shares of the total reclaimed. Grateful thanks are due to John Zebedee for collecting the data together and preparing the claim. John has reminded us that Gift Aid represents an important contribution to the Museum's annual income, and that this could be even larger if **all** our members who are UK taxpayers sign up for the scheme. Go to <http://www.sandtoft.org/joinus/giftaid.pdf> to download a Gift Aid Declaration form, or write to John Zebedee, 16 Erskine Close, Bewbush, Crawley, RH11 8GL.

Events for 2013: This year's late-September event will be a European Trolleybus Event, arranged to coincide with the fourth European Trolleybus Day organised by *Trolley*, a European advocate group supporting towns and cities in their efforts to implement or expand this form of transport. The BTS will partner the Museum in creating this weekend, and we will receive support from the *Trolley* group. This collaboration should both increase our profile across Europe and generate interest in new UK trolleybus systems. For more information about *Trolley* and its activities visit: <http://www.trolley-project.eu/>.

The Box Van, which has served for decades as the staff rest room and dining area, has been completely refurbished. The interior has been re-panelled in white boarding, new flooring has been laid and electrical fittings replaced. The sink has been relocated with new plumbing and water heater now installed.

An article covering the history of the Box Van and its recent renovation is planned for the next issue of 'Scene - Ed.

Working Weekend 23 - 24 February: Whilst it was pretty chilly, the sun did come out and it was quite pleasant as long as you kept warm by working ! A great deal of painting was done, as well as concreting, plumbing, gardening and general tidying-up. In *The Tea Trolley Café* the last set of seats was renewed, after Andy Thornton had completed his work on re-covering them over the previous few months. A small group continued work on Doncaster 375, which was still in the workshop, taking advantage of the winter season when the workshop tends not to be needed for other tasks.

Demonstrating super-human strength, working weekend volunteers Dave Chick, Chas Allen, Richard Goddard and Mike Johnson apparently make light work of moving a traction pole.....





.... or rather something slightly less challenging: here they are loading the second of the feeder tubes onto the traction pole stack

Photos: Bruce Lake

Working Weekend 9 - 10 March: Extremely wet weather limited outdoor activities, but nevertheless our volunteers made substantial progress in both the *Tea Trolley Café* and the Box Van. Following alterations to the surrounding woodwork by Richard Petty and Chris O’Hea, a new fridge and freezer have been installed in *The Tea Trolley*, whilst the woodwork around the dishwasher has also been tidied up. New soap dispensers are now fitted in the toilets and Box Van and the air-fresheners have been serviced. New plumbing in the Box Van now provides both hot and cold water.

Many thanks to everyone who turned up during either or both the working weekends: great steps were made towards having the Museum ready for the Easter visitors.

To enable work to start on Marseille 202's cracked windscreen, it needed turning round in the depot, so, on 9 March, Bruce took advantage of the situation to give it the Museum's first trolleybus run of the year. Here, 202 is seen parked in something of a lake

Photo: Bruce Lake



In addition to the improvements made during the Working Weekends, John Whipham and Tony Ferris took advantage of fine days in mid-February to repaint the zebra crossings

Photo: Bob Ashton

DONCASTER 375

Doncaster trolleybus no.375, a 1945 Sunbeam W with a 1955 Roe body, was a favourite performer at the Museum back in the 1970s. With the 50th anniversary of the closure of Doncaster's trolleybus system coming up, we are planning to return 375 to service. This is Doncaster's only surviving trolleybus and it is very important that the Museum's "local" system should be represented in our operational fleet.



Bob Ashton launches the appeal for Sandtoft's next major restoration project *Photo: Barry Coward*

The goal for this renovation is to have 375 sufficiently restored for a special day of operation on Saturday 14 December, exactly 50 years after the Doncaster system closed. Doncaster motorbus 94 (which is fitted with an ex-trolleybus body) may also be running at the event. Further work during the winter would then see 375 re-launched into Sandtoft service in 2014. As the owners of 375, DO&LRS would welcome as much physical and financial help as possible to achieve these goals.

375's restoration was formally launched by Bob Ashton shaking the bucket at the London 1348 Donors' Day last October. During the initial process of planning and costing, over 100 jobs have been identified to be carried out over the coming months. Initial work on the project is already well underway and Bob's article below describes the progress made so far.

Readers can keep up to date with news and progress of the 375 project via the website: <http://doncaster375.blogspot.co.uk/> . Doncaster 375 has waited many years to be restored to service and now its time has come. This is another ambitious project and we will need lots of support if we are to achieve our objectives.

PLEASE MAKE A DONATION NOW

Send a cheque made payable to "Sandtoft Transport Centre Limited" to:

Doncaster 375 Restoration, 8 Woods Terrace, Gainsborough, DN21 2RP.

Donations are eligible for Gift Aid if you are a UK taxpayer, and the extra income that this generates is very important to us. If you do not already have a Gift Aid arrangement in place with the Museum, please complete a Gift Aid Declaration form and send it with your donation. (Download it from: <http://www.sandtoft.org/joinus/giftaid.pdf>).

Service in Doncaster for 375 ended almost fifty years ago with its final run on the Beckett Road route on Saturday, 14 December 1963. Since then, two restorations have already taken place. The first - between 1964 and 1968 - included a full interior repaint, and the second - in 1973 - was carried out by Doncaster Corporation Transport Department for the town's *Impel '73* event.

375 was in regular use at Sandtoft from September 1972 and served the Museum well, being very popular with our visitors from Doncaster. Like many other Sandtoft drivers at the time, I have fond memories of driving 375 as it was such an easy vehicle to drive.



375 on the last day of trolleybuses in Doncaster
Photo: Bob Ashton

However, the need for repairs and maintenance increased in the late 1980s and sadly the vehicle failed its ticket for 1990. In the absence of further work, the vehicle was then hidden away in the depot with the other DO&LRS vehicles, and only appeared as a static exhibit at events such as the 'Gathering and St Leger Day. Occasionally, 375 would receive a mechanical check, only to fail with further faults.

By 2012, the vehicle was looking terrible, as the paintwork faded and the varnish cracked and peeled. Funding was found for a new set of tyres, but in the absence of funds for further restoration, 375 was put back in the depths of



375 in operation at Sandtoft in 1973 on the (then) new inner circuit
Photo: Bob Ashton

the depot again. Fortunes improved when 375 was on display at the entrance to the workshop road for the DO&LRS St Leger Rally in October 2012, and attention turned to exploring the possibility of getting restoration work underway, with funding organised on a similar basis to that of London 1348.

The restoration work began with the cleaning of the interior top deck, and after a couple of weeks, the entire upstairs ceiling had been transformed from its dull grimy-grey finish

to the original shiny, slightly off-white colour. This work, along with the removal of the grime and mildew from the seats, made the top deck much brighter inside and it is now looking as good as when the vehicle was last in service at Sandtoft. Paint-stripping has now started on the lower deck ceiling, but this has proved to be a formidable task.



4 March 2013: lower deck interior seats removed and panels being taken off *Photo: Bob Ashton*

The regular Wednesday working team is now concentrating its efforts on the exterior paintwork, including the roof. Paint scrapers, paint-stripper, wire wool and much hard labour have been applied with good effect to the removal of the 1973 paintwork, together with earlier layers in some places. The original 1955 primer put on by Roe of Leeds is something else and is a tremendous challenge ! Panels

continue to be stripped but it was found necessary to replace six of them. So far, five have been renewed and the sixth panel (the one below the lower rear window) will have to wait a short while longer.

In late-February a new team was set up to tackle the lower deck interior. All the seats have now been taken out and many of the interior side panels removed for attention. This will also enable access to the motor, which will be removed and sent away for servicing. The mechanics of the vehicle have been checked out and items for attention listed. These include the electrical wiring and identifying which pieces of electrical equipment require repair, servicing or renewal.



7 March 2013: work on the exterior is well underway *Photo: Bob Ashton*

In my opinion, an important achievement has already been made: a good start with the number of people involved. For me, history is repeating itself, as I was part of the team that helped repaint the vehicle after it was withdrawn from service and taken to outside storage at Premier's bus yard at Stainforth some 49 years ago. With sufficient funding and a large enough workforce, 375 could be very presentable by October 2013 for the St Leger Rally and operation under wires for the December anniversary is even a possibility.

For more photographs, visit <http://doncaster375.blogspot.co.uk/>

OBITUARY

Wayne Little

written by **Graham Bilbé**

We are very sorry to record that Wayne Little tragically died on 16 October 2012. Wayne, together with his wife Tanya, had been the owner and operator of the Foxton Trolleybus Museum in New Zealand.

I only met Wayne on the one occasion, in 2009, just a year after his father, Ian, had died. Ian was the creator of this unique museum operation - operating a circuit on public roads, with an additional branch line in occasional use. Ian had been over to Sandtoft on at least two occasions and was most enthusiastic about what we have achieved. Equally, what **he** had built, almost single-handedly it seems, in Foxton, was an even greater achievement. When Ian died, the future of Foxton's trolleybus line was immediately called into doubt, but thankfully his son Wayne stepped into the breach with a sure determination to keep it going. Wayne was undoubtedly a do-er, a grafter (as his working gear testifies), but was also blessed with that wonderful laid-back New Zealand approach to life, which made him a real pleasure to encounter.



Shielding his face from the bright sunshine, Wayne Little alongside Wellington 48 at Foxton
Photo: Graham Bilbé

When our party of six arrived in 2009, he took us round the circuit just once in Wellington 101 to show us the line, pointing out a couple of tricky spots on the way round. Then, with a casual wave, he announced: "Well, you're all trolleybus guys, I've got work to do, she's all yours, have fun !" After a couple of hours he came out to change vehicles for us to Dunedin 43, and left us to it for another two hours. We then went to see him to "pay for our power", and to thank him profusely for being so generous, and his response was: "Surely you haven't finished already? You don't want to come all this way just to cut off your trip at the knees - you've still got 48 to go yet !" With which, Wellington 48 was duly wired up and we were left for another two hours ! This could really

only happen in New Zealand and we were eternally thankful to Wayne for his kindness in making his father's legacy so freely available to us. In the end, we did just manage to coax him out of the workshop to have a beer with us, as the only small "thank-you" we could offer at the time.

What a tragedy for his mother and family, and for New Zealand trolleybus preservation, to lose Wayne at such a young age. It is to be hoped that some way of keeping this unique installation might be found, though without Wayne as fixer-in-chief, the prospects for the Foxton trolleybus line look grim indeed.

In sadness

Graham Bilbé

VEHICLE REPORTS

Compiled from notes supplied by Chas Allen, Andrew Fieldsend, Bruce Lake, Brian Maguire, Jim Sambrooks, Geoff Welburn, Francis Whitehead and Ian Wilson

Comings and goings: London 260 returned to the East Anglia Transport Museum on 29 November 2012. Walsall 872 came back to Sandtoft on 10 January 2013 after being repainted by Thamesdown Transport, and was exchanged for Huddersfield 631. Reading 174 and Nottingham 466 have returned to the Museum site from White's shed to enable work on them to be carried out. South Shields 204 has temporarily taken a place in White's shed.

Bradford 562 has had two pillars made and fitted to the rear sides. A new wheel-arch is now in place on the nearside, and one has been made for the offside. Framing is being prepared for the rear near-side, and new panels are being cut. Surprisingly, the entire nearside panel proved to be one complete piece, from the door to the back of the vehicle: Brian Maguire writes: "Of all the trolleys I have restored, this is a new one on me! Foreign trolleys are often panelled that way, with a roll of steel welded to the whole side, then the doorways are cut out (that is why I am not keen to restore a foreign trolley, especially as steel tends to rust in the damp climes of our museum). In the absence of any original drawings or detail photographs, we are having to adopt a trial-and-error approach to the reconstruction of the cab."



New timber taking shape to form the structure of 562's cab front and wheel arch *Photo: John Crossley*

adopt a trial-and-error approach to the reconstruction of the cab."

In addition, the chassis is being cleaned and painted, the front seat bases are in place and the bell works. The handbrake is now working, thanks to John Crossley, who had new ribbons made and then fitted them (ribbons are the long straps that go from the brake controls at the front to the back wheels). A handbrake lever is still needed to complete this job and another requirement will be a steering column.

Bradford 746: Work has been taking place to repair damage following a minor collision between the platform edge and a traction pole last summer, which distorted the body framing on the platform corner and the panel between the rear wheel and the platform. This panel has been lifted and beaten back into shape, but so far the body frame is resisting attempts to push it back into true, before the panel can be re-fixed and the paintwork touched up. The opportunity has been taken to deal with some corrosion on the corner of the platform.

Bradford 792 saw regular service throughout 2012 following the renovation of its front resistance bank. Operation on St Leger Day was prevented by a failing contactor, but this was repaired in time for service on the Twilight

Trolleyday. Fortunes took another setback during the Santa Weekend, when a dewirement at the electric frog resulted in a broken trolley boom. 792 is now out of service pending repairs.

Cleethorpes 54: Work is progressing in two directions. First, the external paintwork is being given its final rub down before gloss painting can start. Secondly, work is continuing on completing the 12-volt wiring, with the circuits being traced out and new cable being ordered to complete the task.

Huddersfield 470's chassis has been repainted for the new season.

London 1348 has had the long handrail removed from the lower deck, and this is now away for new castings to be made to allow two new handrails to be fitted. A new cab-door strap has been acquired to replace the broken one, and 13 other outstanding jobs are to be attended to before 1348 will be ready to use again.

Reading 174's seats have all been removed and they are going to be reupholstered soon.

Rotherham 37 is receiving attention to its brakes, mainly to the brake cylinders, and further work is needed before 37 resumes regular operation. Re-registration with the DVLA of the original number FET617 has finally been achieved and 37 now has a modern red "log book".

Wellington 82 was moved on 12 February from Dallinghoo (near Ipswich) to Thamesdown Transport's depot in Swindon, where it has joined Huddersfield 631 to undergo renovation work. An initial inspection on 82's arrival in the UK confirmed that the external paintwork is quite shabby and a few parts of the bodywork need remedial repairs. The interior should require only a small amount of painting, as many of the surfaces do not have a paint finish and just require thorough cleaning. The seats may need to be re-trimmed and the chrome tops re-plated, and some of the linoleum will be replaced. Overall, 82 appears to be very sound, with only a small part of the nearside around the centre exit doors needing significant attention.

Bradford 558: The radiator grille has been removed and repaired by a specialist, and an opportunity was then taken to straighten the offside bottom edge of the aluminium radiator, which at some time had been pushed in. By placing a car jack and a piece of wood on the front axle, it was quite easy to wind the jack and push the radiator back into shape. The damaged wiring between the upper-deck lights and the switchboard in the cab has been replaced. Handrails and timber window cappings have been refitted.

Doncaster 22: The gearbox has been removed, cleaned out and a new oil seal fitted. A rear wheel-arch panel has been removed to enable the framework underneath to be repaired. New wood has been obtained and cut to size.

Doncaster 94 has moved to Belton Motor Services for repairs to its vacuum brakes, and hopefully 94 will be roadworthy in the near future. This has been made possible by a generous donation from a member.

East London RN100 attended three events during 2012 to show off its new East London livery: the Heath Common Rally in Wakefield (organised by the

Dewsbury Bus Museum) in May, the St. Leger Rally to Sandtoft in October, and the LVVS Open Day in November. Unfortunately, RN100 suffered minor damage when exiting the site on an Isle Tour in December. One of the main gates “bounced back” after being opened and caught the panel behind the *London Buses* logo on the offside. It created a slight dent and damaged the paintwork. Bruce’s painter, who did the original paint job, is repairing the damage and has already applied the undercoat.

The Tractors: The Museum has purchased a Leyland tractor to replace the International tractor on towing duties. It has power steering and a full cab with doors that can be removed if required. It is a 1973 Leyland 270 (which stands for 2-wheel drive 70 hp) with a Leyland 4/98 NT engine and Leyland gearbox with ten forward and two reverse gears. Training will be given to all staff required to drive it.

DONATION OF MEMORABILIA AND EQUIPMENT

In addition to all our vehicles and the “heavy engineering” exhibits, one of the Museum’s attractions is the growing collection of smaller memorabilia of life in the 1950s and 1960s. We are always glad when members consider giving items of historic interest, but it is important to consult us in advance before bringing them along. Special, rare or otherwise relevant pieces will always be accepted, but we do need to be selective, especially as storage space is limited and we already have a more than adequate stock of items such as cameras, tape recorders, black-and-white televisions and radios. In particular, we seem to have enough cameras to open a camera museum ! Please also note that, in keeping with professional museum practice, any donations of exhibitable items (large or small) must be accompanied by a completed donation form signed by the donor. We will then know where they have come from and whether they are on loan or donated, and this will also help us to decide what to do with surplus items in the future.

In a similar vein, we need to manage carefully any “non-exhibitable” pieces of equipment being donated or stored at the Museum. Items like jacks, boxes, wheels and various vehicle parts turn up regularly and can often become clutter. If you bring anything for a particular purpose (for example to be fitted to your bus or trolleybus) please mark it clearly with your name and what it is for, especially if you leave it in a “communal” area like the workshop. If you bring general-purpose items like tools, make sure that they are going to be useful first. Otherwise they will have to be treated as random junk and disposed of. We have limited space and we do need to keep things tidy and organised, so any “sundry rammel” will have to go.

A REMINDER TO VOLUNTEERS

Facilities Director Tony Ferris is asking everyone for help with avoiding the problems caused by missing keys. Hunting for keys has wasted too much time recently, so if you need to borrow a key for any of the locks in the Museum, please ensure that it is returned as soon as possible to the person who lent it to you, or to the place you borrowed it from. Thank you all very much !

ROTHERHAM 73 RESTORATION UPDATE **Tim Stubbs**

Progress on 73 at its off-site location has resumed, albeit slowly. It is a truth that conditions change as the restoration - really a rebuild - progresses. As a result of which, some of the work previously considered as complete will need to be re-done. An example is the detailed design of the trolley gear. For 73, this is to a rare design used only by Bradford and Rotherham, and, even then, only on single-deckers. The equipment needed has had to be manufactured from scratch using 1914 drawings obtained from the West Yorkshire County Archives in Wakefield, where the ex-Bradford City Tramways Drawing Office material is kept. Some aspects of the design are still not too clear and we have been uncertain as to how the springs were tensioned when the vehicles were in service.



Left: a close-up view of the newly-manufactured trolley gear on the roof of 73

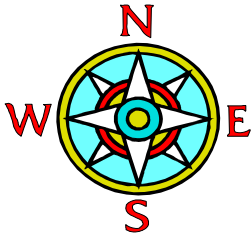
Photos: Tim Stubbs

Right: in between the all-important tea breaks, some work on 73 does happen. Miraculously, seats are upholstered, paint is spread, bodywork is repaired and contactors installed ! And all this whilst gallons of tea and tons of cake are consumed and many stories are told.

In the picture: Tim Stubbs, Clive Walker, Mike Johnson, Peter Swift and Nigel Tilly - or are they the ghosts of Rawmarsh Road Depot, where 73 was based ?



Although Tom Bowden and Steve Collins did meet some Rotherham fitters in the 1970s, they failed to realise that this could be an issue once restoration commenced, so forgot to ask ! We therefore had to make an educated guess, but have since had second thoughts and realise that the method chosen could introduce risk into the tensioning process. The result of our "risk assessment" has been a re-design, and some of the component parts are now being re-machined. Once they are fitted a trial will commence. Until this is complete we won't know whether the method chosen will be practical. Watch this space !



THE ROUTE TO SANDTOFT

THE RESCUE OF CLEETHORPES 54

Steve Collins

Part 2: From the Jaws of Destruction

(Part 1 appeared in Sandtoft Scene 87)

In Part 1 of this article, Steve explained how Grimsby-Cleethorpes trolleybus 154 had been discovered by accident in a Grimsby scrap yard in 1967, and how Tom Bowden had been persuaded to approach Mr. Hill and buy it for preservation. A working party had spent a day clearing out unpleasant debris from inside 154 and the race was now on to extract the vehicle safely from Mr. Hill's domain before his new metal-munching machine got to it first.

Tom and "Roger the Bodger" made a special trip to Hill's scrap yard to change the wheels, and, if necessary, to pressurise Mr. Hill into clearing a path through the scrap so that 154 could be pulled out. They decided to travel to Grimsby by bus instead of by train, and both the route and vehicles used are worth a mention. First they went from Nottingham to Newark by Gash Daimler CVD6, then onto Lincoln by Lincolnshire Bristol LD, and finally from Lincoln to Grimsby, via Outer Obscure and The Back of Beyond by Lincolnshire Bristol SC4LK. The SC4LK was packed with the kind of load most bus operators today would give their eye teeth for, and its raw power was demonstrated on the climb out of RAF Binbrook Camp, when, with foot to the floor and first gear engaged, the driver was able to pass all but the most sprightly of pedestrians. All in all, the trip from Lincoln to Grimsby took over four hours.

When, laden with jacks, wheel braces, tools and lunch, they reached Hill's, an unpleasant surprise awaited them. Mr. Hill had been clearing a path so that 154 could be pulled out, and, during the operation whilst a large lump of trawler was being craned out of the way, a chain had snapped causing the ship to guillotine the back end of the trolleybus. At first Tom thought that the project was over before it had begun, but closer inspection showed that the damage was not as bad as it looked, so they heaved the damaged lumps into the lower deck, and looked for something to prop the back end up. What they found were two large props, which they cut to length and fastened to the 'bus with some shelf brackets and two bicycle axles. Tom said it would do as a temporary job, but it goes without saying that it was still like it twenty years later !

Mr. Hill's metal muncher must have had a voracious appetite, because a large area of the yard was now clear. Grimsby 23 had been tipped over, and hacked into several large ragged chunks. It was a very untidy job, not the sort of thing any self-respecting Barnsley lad would admit to, and it was further proof that Mr. Hill wanted the buses out of the way. Tom and Roger changed all the wheels and swapped the rancid steering wheel for the virginal white one borrowed from Nottingham 502. When they had finished, everything was ready for the 'bus to be collected the following week. As they left the yard, Mr. Hill reminded them that if they didn't remove the 'bus next week, his muncher would see to it the week after, so they went back to Nottingham feeling

somewhat tense.

The following Sunday had been arranged for the tow to Plumtree, and The Teacher's driver friend agreed to pick up the working party. He wanted the job to be finished by Sunday lunchtime, so he demanded a start at 4.30 in the morning. In order to simplify things, Roger spent the night at Ted's house, which was not far from where Tom lived, so that the three of them could be at the pick-up point on time. I still don't know how Tom made it, but he did: to him, 10.00 on Sunday morning is the middle of the night, so it must have been a real effort to get up at 4.00am. Possibly it was worry at the thought of his beloved Cleethorpes going into the muncher, but whatever it was, it worked !

The three heroes were waiting when the tipper turned up, dead on time, and then it was realised that there was only room in the cab for one passenger, which meant that two of them would have to ride in the open lorry. Ted had offered to steer the bus back, and, knowing that there were no windows in it, had kitted himself out in good, thick, warm clothes as a precaution. In view of this, he unselfishly volunteered to ride in the back. So did Roger, whether from altruism or as a direct result of his state of mental health I don't know. Tom went in the cab.

Even in midsummer it can be very cold at half past four in the morning, and, in the back of a lorry travelling at fifty along traffic-free roads, it can be more so, as Roger found out once they had gone over Trent Bridge and were on the way to Newark. Fortunately, the back of the lorry contained an old, oily tarpaulin, which Ted had viewed with some distaste when they had first climbed in, so Roger was able to wrap himself up in it, to keep reasonably warm. They followed the usual route through Newark and Lincoln, and reached the yard at about 7.30am but found it locked. Tom had the address of the key holder, but the driver decided to wait for a while to see if he turned up, rather than go to look for him. While they were waiting, Ted and Roger started singing hymns, and were halfway through *Onward Christian Soldiers*, when an upstairs window in one of the houses opposite the yard opened. A head emerged from the window and a loud voice demanded to know what all the noise was about, as decent people were trying to sleep. Roger informed him that they had come to collect a trolleybus, and was asked in return: "Can't you do it quietly ?" The answer to this was: "It **is** Sunday morning and we're singing hymns". The window closed again.

In view of this altercation, and because time was ticking away, the tipper driver thought it might be a good idea after all to try and find the key holder, so off they went to the address Tom had been given. They found the house without difficulty, and were informed by an old biddy who looked about 102 that her husband had already gone, and should be at the yard. They retraced their route and pulled up at the gate just ahead of a geriatric cyclist, who turned out to be him. With the tipper engine revving impatiently and Roger singing *All things bright and beautiful*, they waited while the old cove fished the keys out of his voluminous trousers, and then they were in. As the tipper moved into the yard, the window in the house opposite opened again, and there was a stream

of abuse in which the word “police” featured. At this, Roger made a gesture which I understand signifies disrespect, just before the lorry turned out of sight behind the metal muncher. Everything was in order and the driver suggested that the easiest thing would be to tow the 'bus out backwards onto the road and then connect the tow bar. Once on the road things went smoothly, with Tom helping the driver, Ted running wires for an intercom between the cab of the tipper and the cab of the 'bus, and Roger crawling onto the upper deck to see if his army greatcoat was still where he had left it. While these simple preparations were going on, the window opened again and a strident voice asked: “When are you b*****s going to p*** off?” Ted replied: “We'll be off in a minute”, which drew a further stream of invective, then all was ready.

So, with Ted at the wheel, and Roger in the cab wearing his army greatcoat to keep out the cold, Grimsby-Cleethorpes trolleybus 154 was off on the longest trip it had made since it was delivered in 1937. Ted was delighted with the way it behaved; the steering was superb, which is very good when one considers the vehicle had stood in a scrap yard for eight years. It was not yet 9 o'clock and it was a Sunday, so not many people saw the last trolleybus in Grimsby on the road. Some who did, stopped in their tracks to have a look, and one fellow stood open-mouthed in amazement as the cortege swept past, but whether he was shocked by the sight of the bus, or by the sight of Roger sitting in the cab eating an unpeeled banana, is difficult to say. Roger took advantage of the lack of windows to shout abusive comments to several unwary pedestrians, and how these people felt about their day of rest being shattered by a huddled schizophrenic hurling unjustified insults is something I would rather not think about. He did, however, make one error of judgement when he shouted something at the driver of a milk float on the outskirts of Grimsby. He obviously believed himself to be on safe ground, but what he didn't know was that they were, in fact, approaching some traffic lights which had just changed to red. This gave the milk float a chance to catch up, and the driver was able to give Roger a verbal battering before the lights changed again.

All continued to go well, until, at a place called Welton Hill, near Lincoln, they attracted the attention of The Law. A police car was parked in a lay-by when 154 zoomed past. The tipper was making good time as the roads were very quiet, and, as the “constabules” probably didn't have much to do, they pulled out and gave chase. The police car followed for a while, then sped past and finally pulled up about half a mile in front. The tipper passed the parked police car and carried on, and Ted had a clear view of two sets of eyes scrutinising the operation as they went past. A few minutes later, the police car passed them again, and, as before, pulled in up the road and watched the 'bus pass them. In all, the police car overtook the 'bus four times, but they did nothing to interfere. Possibly they thought the 'bus was not as dangerous as it at first appeared; perhaps they were concerned in case the tipper lorry was not capable of towing such a large vehicle, but were, on inspection, reassured. Alternatively, the sight of Roger leering insanely from the cab had unsettled them. We will never know.

The trolleybus arrived at Plumtree without incident and in good time. The

tipper driver parked it up, loaded his tow bar, pocketed his fee, and left amidst protestations of good will and mutual admiration. 154 settled into its new home for a stay that was to be as long and as uneventful as its sojourn at its previous resting place had been. Apart from being shunted round the site, usually in a vain attempt to hide it, 154 would not move again until December 1974, when it became one of the last trolleybuses to leave Plumtree. Where it went, and what happened to it before it arrived at Sandtoft in April 1977, are tales that will have to wait for another day.

Postscript

Hill's yard was still there in 1987, but there were no signs of any trolleybuses ever having been there. Two souvenirs did, however, survive. Tom found the towing hatch cover of FW 8988 in 154's lower deck, which led to the mistaken belief that the burnt out 'bus was Cleethorpes 52. It was, as I have already said, No.155 (FW 8991). So why 52's hatch cover



Some time after the rescue, Cleethorpes 54 rests at an unidentified location

Photo: Steve Collins

was there is still a mystery. The other item was salvaged by Ted, and is the Karrier badge off the front of Grimsby 23. Ted kindly gave this badge to me, so that in the future it can go onto the front of Nottingham 466. One last point of interest is that on 31 March 2012 - over 53 years since it last ran in Grimsby - I saw 154 run under its own power at Sandtoft. That is by far the best postscript I can add to the story, and is a credit and vindication to everyone who has ever had faith in the project, and a tribute to the skills and abilities of the people who have made it possible.

TROLLEYBUS ANNIVERSARIES

Compiled by Geoff Welburn

April to June 2013

Systems Opened

- 100 years since Keighley opened on 3 May 1913
- 85 years since Hastings opened on 1 April 1928
- 85 years since Maidstone opened on 1 May 1928
- 80 years since Bournemouth opened on 13 May 1933

Systems Closed

- 60 years since West Hartlepool closed on 2 April 1953
- 60 years since Notts. & Derbys. closed on 25 April 1953
- 45 years since Belfast closed on 12 May 1968

SANDTOFT MEMBERS' WEB PAGE

2012 was the year in which *Sandtoft Scene* went online, via the “members’ only” part of the Museum’s website, where you can browse and download a “PDF” version of this and several previous editions of *Scene*. Go to: www.sandtoft.org/members which also contains links to additional items mentioned in the magazine, together with more photographs of events. A big “Thank You” goes to website manager Aiden Proctor for making this happen.

MUSEUM EXPANSION UPDATE

Graham Bilbé, Chairman

I am pleased to report that as I write this, negotiations regarding the land purchase are moving forward and I hope to be able to announce completion of the purchase in the not to distant future.

Then we need to work-up the blueprint for the whole expansion scheme. This will enable us to break the work down into specific projects with target completion dates and estimates of costs.

Those of you who attended the last AGM will recall that the BTS has the funding in place to provide one 12 to 14-vehicle building. It will allow us to bring back some, but not all, of our out-posted vehicles. A second building will enable us to achieve our objective of housing all of them within the Museum. Current thinking by your Board is to eliminate the rent for out-stationed 'buses as soon as we can. Accomplishing this will help fund a third building, after which we can start to redevelop the site of the existing depot bordering Sandtoft Square.

As always, everything depends on how much you, the members, are willing to pledge to the expansion project. Offers of a one-off donation or a regular standing order donation - or both - are welcomed. At this stage we need to gauge the extent of potential financial support within our membership and supporters.

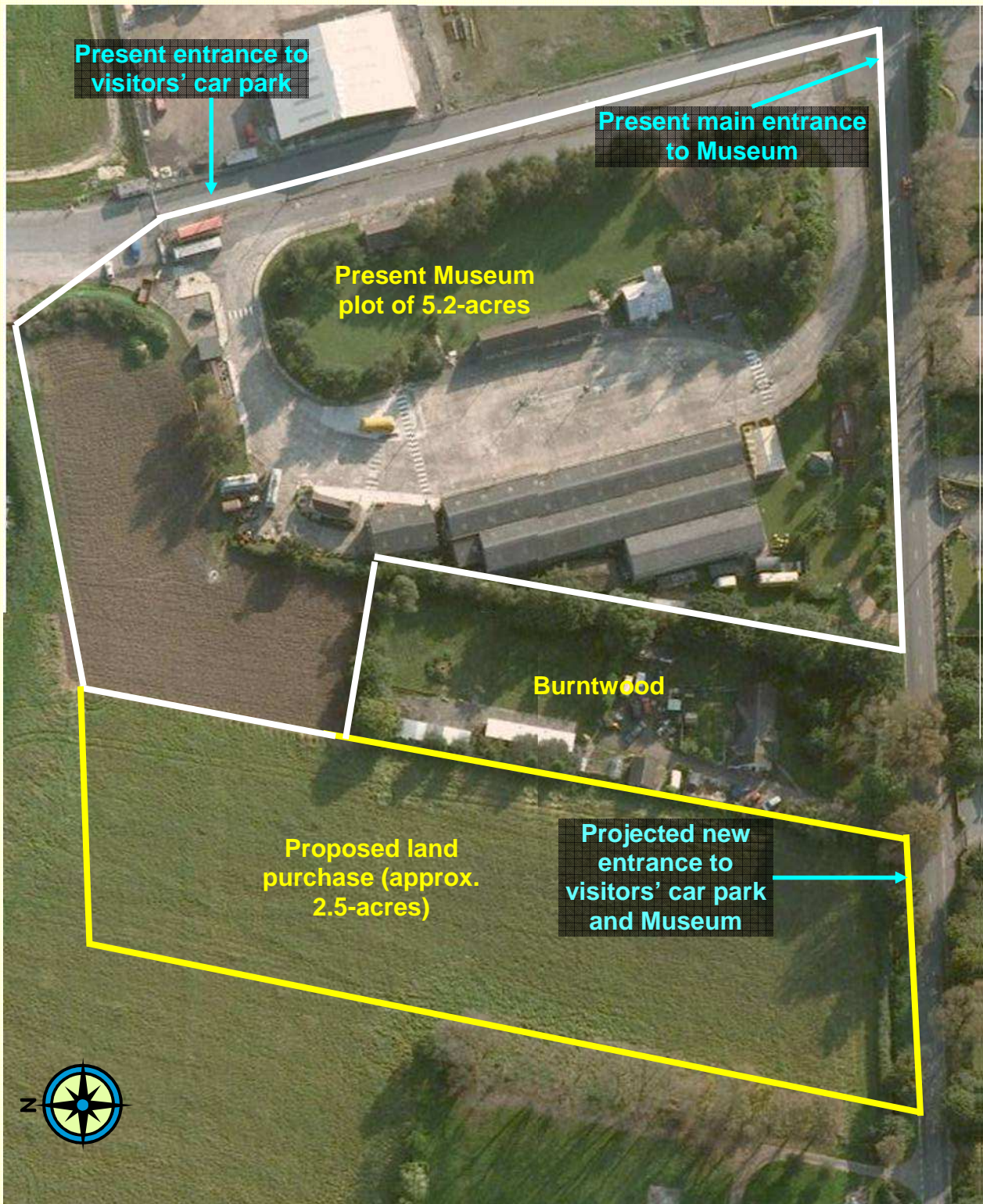
Please complete and return your pledge as soon as you can. The “taxman” will boost your donations by 25% through Gift Aid if you are a UK taxpayer - and you only have to look at how much tax (see page 4) was reclaimed for the 2010-11 financial year to appreciate how much extra income we can get via Gift Aid, basically just by us each signing a piece of paper ! If you do not already have a Gift Aid arrangement in place with the Museum (or you are not sure if you have), please make sure you complete the Gift Aid section of the pledge form.

The Museum, our vehicles, our visitors and staff will all benefit from our expansion and associated improvements, so your generosity will be appreciated for years to come !

Thank You !

Graham Bilbé

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE PROPOSED EXTENDED PREMISES



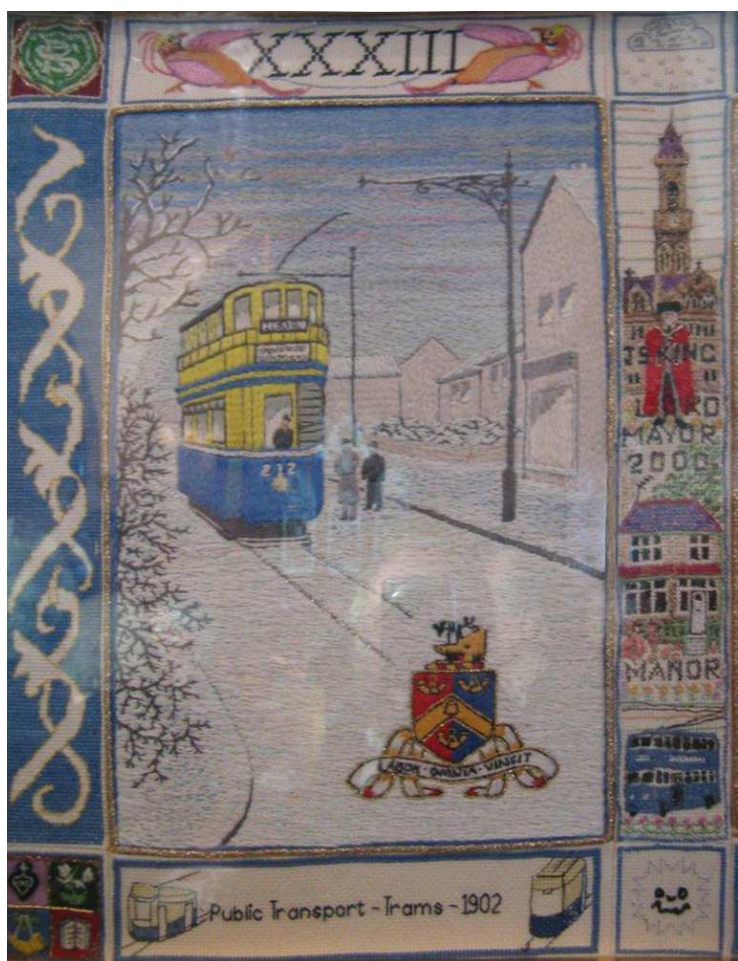
NOTE: This satellite photograph is for illustrative purposes, is not necessarily to scale and the boundaries shown are approximate only with new boundaries subject to change.

The white lines indicate the present Museum boundaries and the yellow lines show the extent of the land to be purchased by the British Trolleybus Society and the Museum

REVISITING 2012

Space pressures in recent editions of 'Scene have delayed the appearance of several items, including these photographs of happenings in 2012.

(below) Stanley King, our late President, is commemorated - along with his favourite modes of transport - on this panel of the millennium tapestry in St Barnabas' Church in Heaton, Bradford *Photo: Graham Bilbé*



(right) Miles Cartwright about to scatter the last of Charlie Bullock's ashes in the memorial garden on St Leger Day. In accordance with Charlie's wishes, some had first been scattered in the bus park at Scarborough and the rest at Sandtoft, where he "might be picked up in a tyre and taken with us". Charlie was given a last trip round the circuit and scattered from Doncaster 22

Photo: Jim Sambrooks

(above) An unusual occasion when the chairmen of all three of Sandtoft's Contributing Societies and the Museum's own chairman were there together. The event is the St Leger Rally : they are (left to right) Jim Sambrooks (DO&LRS), Graham Bilbé (TM@S), Dave Chick (BTS) and Gary Wilkinson (BTA). The trolleybus was totally neutral, being London 260, on loan from the LTPS

Photo: Andy Thornton



NEW FROM OUR *TROLLEYSHOP*



Once a Busman by our member Bernard Jefford is a recent publication chronicling his life and work in the bus and coach industry. His autobiography covers the many and varied stages in his transport career, which included driving trolleybuses in Nottingham, serving as a revenue protection inspector with Trent Motor Traction, and, finally, managing National Express rail replacement services on the West Coast main line. In the early chapters, Bernard describes in detail his experiences of training and qualifying as a trolleybus driver and recalls happenings both serious and light-hearted. *Once a Busman* is published by Green Chain Publishing and is available priced £12.00 from *The Trolleyshop* in-store and on-line at www.sandtoft.org/shop/ (£3.00 extra for P&P).

TROLLEYS ON THE WEB

Go to www.sandtoft.org/members for links to the following items:

“Marzahn as it once was”: Mike Crabtree sent us a link to a fascinating set of photographs taken in the village of Marzahn, near Berlin, probably in the late-1950s. They show single-deck trolleybuses with trailers running in deserted cobbled village streets, with hardly any other vehicles visible apart from horse-drawn carts in the adjoining fields. The bleak wet environment reminded Mike of Denaby (on the Mexborough and Swinton system) on a bad day ! Marzahn remained a rural site until 1977 when the East German authorities ordered a start on the construction of vast housing estates on its fields.

Walsall Trolleybuses: a film by Barry Coward: This video on You Tube was compiled from 16mm film and 35mm slides shot by Barry Coward between 1967 and 1970. It runs for 25 minutes and depicts trolleybus landscapes typified by housing estates, cooling towers and wide main roads. Worth special mention is a sequence filmed after a fall of snow.

Bradford Trolleybus Dewirement in 1972 – by John Fozard: Bradford 846 receives assistance from the overhead crew after a dewirement in the vicinity of Four Lane Ends. The 1972 working practices seen in this video would definitely fall well below today’s rigorous health and safety criteria.

TROLLEYS IN THE PRESS

Oxford Street trolleybus proposal: A surprising article appeared in the *London Evening Standard* on 18 December 2012, describing an initiative to reduce exhaust pollution and traffic noise in London’s Oxford Street. An engineering study sponsored by the magazine *Autocar* is advocating trolleybuses based on the NB4L (“Borismaster”) design as a more practical and affordable alternative to a tram or LRT scheme. The trolleybus shuttle service would run between Marble Arch and Tottenham Court Road, connecting with the new Crossrail station. Visit www.sandtoft.org/members for a link to the complete news article.

INTRODUCING WELLINGTON 82 Francis Whitehead

Wellington City Transport no.82 is a 33'-6" long, 17'-6" wheelbase, 1963-built BUT (Leyland) RETB1, 8'-0" wide, with MCCW B42D (+20 standees) body and English Electric equipment incorporating a hydraulically-dampened controller and an EE410 traction motor. Wellington's trolleybus fleet (all single deckers), after its initial (1949-50) batch of ten Crossley TSD42/1s, was standardised on the RETB1 chassis, there being 109 in total, delivered in four batches between 1951 and 1964 with bodies by various manufacturers, no.82 being from the third batch. It is of particular interest that no.82 was tested on the Walsall trolleybus system, where Mr. R. Edgley Cox was General Manager, on 25 November 1963. Despite this and it being the first-numbered of the 19-strong batch, it was no.83 that was featured in official photographs and in the technical press. The body design was of similar appearance to that of the second (1958) batch, except that it featured (possibly uniquely amongst the standard and otherwise similar MCCW single-deck bus bodies of the period) wrap-round windows to the rear corners.

Over its long production period (1948-64), the RETB1 chassis, along with the LETB1 left-hand-drive variant, marketed by BUT, is believed to have been based



25 November 1963, and Wellington 82 is seen with (presumably) personnel from Leylands, MCCW and Walsall Corporation during its test run. Note that there is no fleet number, and that the trade plates are Birmingham-registered. Mr. R. Edgley Cox is the gentleman third from the left in the front row: can anyone identify who the others are, and where in Walsall this photograph was taken ?

Photo: Sandtoft Transport Centre Limited Archives



One of the official photographs of Wellington's MCCW-bodied batch of trolleybuses numbered 82-100. For some reason, 83, rather than 82 (the first-numbered of the batch) was used for these photographs. This view appeared in the May-June 1964 edition of *Leyland Journal*. It is remarkable how few modifications have been made to 82

Photo: Metro-Cammell Weymann Limited

on the contemporary Leyland Royal Tiger and, later, Worldmaster motorbus chassis types (ETB standing for Electric Trolley Bus). 82's batch, and the run-on fourth batch for Wellington, were assembled in the Scammell factory at Watford, which had become the Leyland Motors Limited Specialist Vehicle Division. 82's batch were all bodied in Birmingham and shipped to New Zealand as fully built up vehicles, whilst the fourth Wellington RETB1 batch were exported as completely knocked down (CKD) chassis, to receive locally-built bodies.



83 (left) and 82 (right) seen soon after entering service

Photo: Keith McGavin

82 entered service on 13 March 1964, carrying registration number P476. This batch of trolleybuses was actually purchased to replace the city's remaining trams, which were finally withdrawn, with due ceremony, on 2 May 1964. 82 was always "one-man-operated" and would have run over all this very

varied and interesting route network that once included no less than five tunnels ! An interesting feature of many New Zealand 'buses was a specific facility for carrying prams and push chairs: 82 was no exception and has two external "open lockers" on the nearside below floor level where prams can be stowed (presumably once Baby has been extracted !). Other places, notably Christchurch and Dunedin, had pram hooks on the trolleybus fronts. During 1966, as part of New Zealand's scheme to rationalise vehicle registration numbers, 82 received a new registration number, EV6757, which it carried until withdrawal during 1986, when the BUTs were replaced by new Volvo B58 trolleybuses with Coachwork International bodywork.

The circumstances surrounding 82 (and various other Wellington trolleybuses) being preserved are not clear, but it remained the property of Wellington City Transport (WCT) and appeared soon after withdrawal at Foxton, where the late Ian Little had established a unique museum trolleybus line over the public

roads there. 82 certainly operated at Foxton but at the moment, little is known about its time there. Despite Ian Little's ambitions, economic reality meant that he had to reduce the size of his bus and trolleybus collection and as Ian Little owned sister trolleybus 83, 82 was transferred during 1999 to the Omnibus Society of New Zealand Inc. (OSNZ), still as a loan from WCT, and moved to the Wellington Tramway Museum at Queen Elizabeth Park, Paekakariki, near Wellington, where it spent some time stored in an open "barn" before being moved outside.

It is as long ago as mid-October 2005 that 82 was offered to a UK museum: OSNZ were offering no.82 free of charge and shipment was apparently available on a freight ferry, *MV Purbeck*,



82 seen in service at the Basin in April 1974

Photo: Stephen Oliver



82 (left) at Foxton in 1991 with 48 (built 1956 with body by Commonwealth Engineering) and 107 (built 1964 with body by New Zealand Motor Bodies) *Photo: Tony Belton*

expected to be returned to the UK later that month. In 2005, TM@S had just purchased the 1.2 acres of land currently used for visitor car parking, so could not commit to the potential cost of taking 82. In May 2007, Ian Little visited us at Sandtoft and, impressed by our Museum, offered to look into shipping 82 to the UK for us: this came to nothing and, sadly, Ian died in 2008. The prospect of 82 joining our collection - it would fill many “gaps” in our overall collection - remained, with the cost of such an ambitious project being the biggest obstacle. OSNZ Chairman, Peter Rendall, visited London in January 2009 and we met with him and discussed 82 “over a beer or two” (actually, it was ale !).

The unexpected acquisition and return to the UK of Johannesburg 589 in Spring 2009 confirmed that organising a long-distance shipment of a trolleybus was within our capability and inspired us to explore further getting 82. *Sandtoft Scene* for July 2009 carried a résumé of possible additions to our collection to fill “gaps” and included details of 82: this brought a very generous pledge towards the shipping costs from a member and efforts continued to find further funds. Discussions started with shipping companies and agents, and our dialogue with Peter Rendall and OSNZ continued. John Whitehead inspected 82 during a trip in May 2009 and reported that it seemed to be complete and in sound condition, albeit in need of a repaint inside and out; Graham Bilbé, during his round-the-world trip in 2010 also saw 82 and confirmed John’s report. The OSNZ were now coming under increasing pressure from the tramway museum to move 82, which by this time had become their property having been gifted to them by New Zealand Bus (successors to WCT), but we still had not found the necessary funds. Then, in May 2012, an anonymous member came forward with a donation to complement the earlier pledge so as to get 82 to a UK dock gate: suddenly, we were in business ! 589 had been shipped on a roll-on-roll-off (ro-ro) ship, but whilst a ro-ro service operated NZ - UK, it did not serve Wellington (where 82 was located), which meant that 82 would have to be transported to, probably, Auckland - an added expense and not an easy journey. It occurred at much the same time to both OSNZ and ourselves that maybe it would be a better proposition to move 82 on a container ship. Quotations obtained independently in the UK and NZ showed that not only was shipping from Wellington possible using a container, it was markedly cheaper than ro-ro !

Accordingly, a passage was booked with Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) and marine insurance arranged through TM@S’s brokers, Rigton; OSNZ formally transferred ownership of 82 to TM@S for a nominal £10.00 and arranged for export documentation and the tow (courtesy of New Zealand Bus) to Wellington Port - and without further ado, no.82 left the tramway museum on 15 October 2012 bound for England. Upon arrival at the wharf, and witnessed by OSNZ’s Mike Flinn, it took two large fork lift trucks working together to load the trolleybus onto a 40’0” flat rack container (this had been specially transported to New Zealand) for its long voyage. 82 was craned onto the *ER Brisbane* on 20 October and set sail, the ship calling at Auckland and Tauranga (both in North Island) and then Lyttelton (South Island), before heading for Melbourne, arriving there on 28 October. 82 had to be trans-

shipped at Melbourne and 7 November saw it loaded onto the *Santa Rosanna* for the journey (calling in at Freemantle) to Singapore, where it arrived on 23



82, leaving the Wellington Tramway Museum at Paekakariki en-route for Wellington Port on 15 October 2012

Photo: Trevor Burling



82 at Wellington Port being carefully lowered onto its 40'0" flat rack container (effectively an open-topped, open-sided container for "out-of-gauge" loads (like trolleybuses): two fork lift trucks were used, one under each axle using packing timbers under the spring mountings

Photo: Mike Flinn



Just 9½ weeks later, and 82 has travelled half way around the world to Felixstowe ! Here it is seen on 21 December 2012 being fork-lifted off its container and about to touch English soil again after 49 years

Photo: Stephen Oliver

November. Four days later, 82 was put on board *MSC Eva* (one of the world's largest container ships) for the last stage of its journey: this, of course, took the ship through the large area of ocean that is roamed by pirates from Somalia - indeed, the *MSC Eva* had been raked by machine gun fire from pirates in two skiffs some 20 months before ! We had been tracking 82's progress, but it was "out of range" for much of the journey across the Indian Ocean until it was arriving at Salalah (Oman). During 10 & 11 December it traversed the Suez Canal and at midday (GMT) on 15 December it was tracked in the Mediterranean approaching the Gibraltar Strait at some 20.5 knots! *MSC Eva* berthed at Felixstowe late on 18 December and 82 was discharged from the ship the following day.

Customs clearance followed without any hitch on 19 December and arrangements to collect 82 were able to be confirmed. Because the exact timing of release by customs was uncertain, it had been decided to delay the move from Felixstowe until Friday, 21 December. Through Bruce Lake's connections with the Ipswich Transport Museum, we had secured the services of Derek Spall to undertake the move: the Friday before Christmas was not a good day to plan to carry out a long tow of a vehicle of unknown mechanical condition and on tyres of unknown quality. Ipswich Transport Museum had very kindly offered secure storage over the Christmas period, but would need 82 to be gone soon after New Year - and, of course, bad weather might be a problem; Derek generously offered to keep 82 at his yard until weather conditions were such that the proposed move to Swindon (Thamesdown Transport) could take place without smothering 82 with salt (after all, 82 had never been on salty roads) - and further, he could move 82 to Swindon on a low-loader, thereby avoiding the need to change tyres.

21 December turned out to be nice and sunny, if not a little chilly - but at least it was dry ! 82 had been held in the dock area since unloading from the ship, but we were to take delivery at the yard of Rigrity (one of MSC's container handling contractors), just outside the docks. Dock security appeared to be having a "go slow", and 82 did not appear at the yard until well over two hours after it was originally expected. Very quickly, and still on its 40'0" flat rack container, it was taken off the delivery lorry with a gigantic mobile lifting device, and then very carefully unloaded from the container using a massive fork lift truck. For the first time in around 49 years, 82 was standing on English soil again - and we were able to inspect our latest acquisition. Derek Spall, who had been on standby (and had meanwhile been out on a HGV emergency recovery job) duly arrived and hitched 82 up to be suspend-towed in the gathering gloom of the shortest day of the year to his Dallinghoo (near Ipswich) premises - a tow that was, thankfully, uneventful.

Thanks are due to OSNZ for 82, all its members who assisted in preparing and moving 82 in NZ - and Peter Rendall for all his input into the project and being our main contact in NZ, NZ Bus, MSC, Rigrity and Derek Spall for their part in moving 82, Chris West for arranging UK customs clearance, our anonymous benefactors for their enormous generosity, the various photographers for the use of their photographs, and other assistance from Ipswich Transport Museum and many other individuals.

A GOOD DAY OUT **Ann Gray, Jean Gray and Delia Eyre**

In the style of "The Undercover Hotel Inspector" and "The Mystery Shopper" our three incognito visitors made their personal assessment of the Museum on a major running day. They are not transport enthusiasts, but were genuine newcomers to Sandtoft, tasked with testing out the visitor experience and writing an unbiased report of their findings.

We visited The Trolleybus Museum on a cold, bright May Bank Holiday Monday. We had heard from a friend that it was worth seeing and that there was a free bus at holiday times from Doncaster Interchange, leaving at 12.00 noon and returning at 4.00pm. This is worth knowing because Sandtoft is a good way out in the wilds on the border of South Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. There is no publicity displayed at the Interchange in Doncaster because of the high cost, which we now think is a loss to Doncaster tourism, but the people at the Inquiry Desk did know that the bus would leave from Bay C6.

The bus driver gave us our first impression of the open, friendly attitude to visitors, which persisted and grew throughout the day. He was easy and courteous to everyone, including a rather eccentric individual who could not decide whether he wanted to come to the museum or just to have a ride. We set off on time and had a most comfortable ride on upholstery which was much better and thicker than on the modern buses !

When we arrived at the rather bleak site we were greeted efficiently in the reception office with smiles and clear information about the layout and times of the different events. The staff are all volunteers and come from very varied backgrounds. Their enthusiasm and their combination of skills set the tone straight away: one of affectionate pride. We made straight for the café to take advantage of the "home-made food" we had been promised. There was a wide variety of simple choices served by cheerful volunteers who managed beautifully in a rather crowded space. What is more, the prices, like the entry charges, are very modest. You get good value for money.

The shop was particularly interesting with a fascinating collection of postcards of our own local area trolleybuses and of others, in their own liveries, from much further afield. Adults and children were also enjoying the beautiful miniature models. In the cinema hut, with very comfortable seats, a tape was running showing trolleybus routes from different periods in the Rotherham and Conisborough areas. The good, clear commentary brought to life the practical aspects of negotiating the bends and slopes of the local terrain and gave a fascinating reminder to some of us of local areas in our own lifetime !

When we first arrived, we were given an old penny coin and an information leaflet which is extremely well written and comprehensively helpful. The tone is welcoming and it is organised to be informative about the history, the purpose and the layout of the whole site. The fact that the grounds are part of a former wartime aerodrome makes sense of the entire atmosphere ! The penny is to be offered as an authentic fare when taking rides on the trolleybuses on site. During the day there will be guided tours of the huge collection of vehicles, from abroad as well as from all over England, which are kept in the sheds to

be worked on and restored. (It would be very interesting to be able to watch some of this restoration work actually being done !) The Museum also offers half-hour tours of the local Isle of Axholme surroundings as far as Epworth. These include a commentary which, though humorous in tone, mentions the Wesley connection and other famous people who have lived in the area. The museum site is simply landscaped - perhaps a bit more gardening will be done in time.

It is an attractive experience for youngsters and has a strongly evocative, nostalgic appeal for older visitors. It is well organised and makes ingenious use of recycled buildings and equipment. Above all, you begin to anticipate enjoyment on first arrival because of the aura of deep, but quiet, enthusiasm for the whole trolleybus era which pervades the whole place.

In summary, we would like to commend:

- 1 Free bus to and from Doncaster
- 2 Generous attitude all through
- 3 Quietly cheerful friendliness and courtesy from everyone
- 4 Carefully cleaned and beautifully-upholstered bus
- 5 Reception just right: communicates enthusiasm but is not overwhelming
- 6 Charges modest for entrance and food
- 7 Smiling faces and - it surprised us - people expressing *their* appreciation of *our* interest
- 8 Freedom to explore ourselves but helpfully clear directions to things and timing of events
- 9 The ingenuity of all the recycling of buildings and the background information coming through
- 10 Wonderful nostalgia and humour when you recognised familiar old signs and advertisements (especially the "polio warning" on the bus).
Courteous but firm old notices to children too !
- 11 Café simple but *very* good. Prices kind and range of sandwiches on offer surprisingly wide
- 12 Standards of hygiene are everywhere exceptionally high, notably in café and ladies' toilets which are lovely
- 13 Safety standards are high everywhere, but not allowed to be oppressive
- 14 Interesting to see young and old among volunteers
- 15 Information leaflet well organised and tone good
- 16 Especially fascinating collection of beautiful cards in shop
- 17 Small cinema is lovely and the films enthralling. Commentary good especially because it makes you realise the drivers' experiences
- 18 We loved the trolley sheds, reading foreign destinations too
- 19 We saw *signs* of how some vehicles are stripped and refurbished
- 20 The half-hour tour is a good idea. It reveals more of the setting and area's history - interesting and fun
- 21 This museum achieves two different appeals very well: awaking nostalgic memories for older visitors while younger ones gradually absorb insights into curious historical information about their own neighbourhoods

Comments we hope might be helpful:

- 1 Could you find some way of publicising more about the Museum in Doncaster and in the Interchange ?
- 2 We would love to see some of the stripping and refurbishing going on, ideally in reality, but otherwise on film, perhaps ?
- 3 We would love to know more of the past history of the buses, with anecdotes of how they were found or acquired, like the amusing example that had been a dwelling. Could something be included in information or a booklet ?
- 4 We were interested to learn about who owns some parts of the collection, after discovering by accident (through asking another question) that some individuals own a vehicle, rent garage space and visit their beloved pieces like pets in quarantine ! Some insight into how vehicles are traded or exchanged would be fascinating
- 5 Perhaps a bit more gardening eventually, although the site is well laid-out
- 6 Increasing café space might feature in future plans but please do not lose the reminders of loving “make do and efficiently mend”; that is definitely part of the charm
- 7 Could you quietly make it possible for visitors who have been surprised and appreciative to make a small donation in an unobtrusive way at the end of the visit ? We did see the invitation to join, which is nice

Thank You to Everyone !

Editor's note: Although I intended to publish a condensed version of this report, I decided to reproduce it here in full, as many of the details are very telling (in a positive sense !) and I wanted to share them with everyone involved in the Museum. Despite the possibility of a slight bias due to the writers being friends of a regular member of our traffic staff, their brief was to document their findings “warts and all”, which is why their suggestions for further improving the visitor experience are listed too. Their recommendation for more information about our vehicles is already addressed to an extent in the Museum Guide and Handbook. Were they aware of it, and, if not, is there a case for displaying it more prominently to our arriving visitors in the reception building?

A ROTHERHAM CENTENERY – Part 2

From the Rotherham Trolleybus Group

(Part 1 appeared in Sandtoft Scene 87)

The long-awaited fleet of replacement trolleybuses for Rotherham had arrived between 1949 and 1951. However, the running costs of trolleybuses, combined with changes to living and travel patterns, had led to several route closures and cutbacks in the early 1950s. It was clear that a policy of gradual abandonment was underway, although fortunately this policy took until October 1965 to see the last of the “tracklesses” off the roads.

In the meantime, the question was what to do with the 44 newly-delivered Daimlers: a fleet too large for the demands of the remaining routes. Alternatives to single-deckers were being considered and in 1955 the new general manager suggested that high-capacity double-deckers would provide a more economic solution. Trials using a three-axle double-decker hired from

Doncaster proved successful, and this led to 20 of the Daimlers being re-bodied by Roe as 70-seat double-deckers. Naturally they were all renumbered when they reappeared.

Returning to service in two batches in 1956 and 1957, the resulting vehicles were very good-looking, but, more importantly, they transformed operational losses into profits and were instrumental in extending the life of the system by many years. Seven of the single-deckers were retained in that form to operate the routes to Mexborough and Conisborough, which had a low bridge, leaving a total of 17 surplus trolleybuses.



Transformed into a 70-seat double-decker, FET616, is seen around 1961/2 at Bawtry Road, Brecks, opposite the Brecks turning circle on its return from Wickersley to town
Photographer unknown

Most enthusiasts are well aware of the export of a large number of London Q1-class trolleybuses to Spain in 1961, where they were allocated to a variety of operators for further service. Not so well known was the sale by Rotherham a few years earlier of their unwanted Daimlers, 15 of which ended up in Cadiz and another two in Tolosa (near San Sebastian). All those sold to Spain were of the CTC6 type.

Double-deckers now provided the services to Wickersley, Kimberworth, Thrybergh and Silverwood Colliery, whilst the single-deckers working the joint services with Mexborough & Swinton continued until the demise of that system in 1961. After that, only a very small handful of single-deckers remained, for use as peak-hour extras on the other routes. They were also in demand for enthusiasts' tours, until the last one (FET610) was finally withdrawn in 1962. The Wickersley route succumbed in January 1963, thus ending operation over the last remaining stretch of the original 1912 installation. The final conversion of the remaining routes came on 2 October 1965, with two private tours taking place on the following day, exactly 53 years since the inauguration of the Rotherham system.

The last trolleybus in service on the Saturday was FET339 (30, formerly 79) and, on the Sunday, the Nottingham Trolleybus Group toured the system in FET617 (37, formerly 17). The honour of being the last "trackless" to run on the system fell to FET618 (44, formerly 18) which spent the day on hire to the National Trolleybus Association and became the final one to drive into Rawmarsh Road Depot.

My parents married in 1939, but my father found himself on active service for five years in Malta and I was not born until after the war. Meanwhile, my mother spent her wartime years in Rotherham, and on Monday 20 January 1941 she wrote in her diary "Cyril's mother, dad and I went up to Black Carr Road. Bitterly cold and still frozen. Waited ages for the 87 'bus, then got the 'track' and walked from Stag". The latter was the name of the pub near the former Broom Road tram terminus. The word "track" was, of course, short for "trackless" and the one she rode on was probably a Cravens-bodied AEC664T. That winter was an extreme one, with the pipes freezing up in our house at Wickersley. The 87 was a "Cough" motor bus that ran from Maltby, through Wickersley and the Brecks to Sheffield. My mother caught the "track" to the Brecks and walked past Worry Goose Lane to Whiston. She would say "The tracks always ran but not the 87 !". The track only took her half way home, but prior to 1939, she could have continued her journey by trackless along Worry Goose Lane. The connection had been dismantled when Rotherham surrendered that part of the route in response to Sheffield Corporation's expansion plans.

From the earliest days, I was always "plugged-in" to the local trolleybuses. Still in my pram, apparently the only way to send me off to sleep was to wheel me the very short way along Black Carr Road to Bawtry Road in Wickersley. Here there was a frequent service mainly of AECs and Sunbeams travelling either on the short workings or the full length from Rotherham to Maltby. In 1947 the severe winter provided sparks and flashes, which eventually tired me out and when I was finally asleep we returned !

Among my childhood recollections, I well remember my father, probably pulling his hair out with tiredness, painting a box blue, gluing two straws on top and trailing two parallel pieces of string beneath the chairs. Occupied with this I could be perfectly happy for hours. Who needs IT ?

For many years, a journey from my family homes in Wickersley or Broom was on board the ubiquitous, centre-entrance, Daimler tracklesses which travelled past them at speed, offering a high-frequency service and serving all the villages on the 1912 route to Maltby. And, coming home from junior school one day in May 1956, Mum met my sister and me with the words "I know where we are going !" Puzzled, we raced down on our trackless, to be taken for a trip out to the Pumping Station. Mum had been to town earlier, but, not knowing what to expect, we travelled by the usual single-deck Daimlers to see the very first of the brand-new double-deckers. The first one to return from Roe, FET343, had been in All Saints' Square the previous day. The double-deckers seemed huge ! They were being "run-in" on route 5 to the Pumping Station and all fourteen were operating this route, on which the return journey could be made in twenty-two minutes ! It would still be a while before the Stag, Brecks and Wickersley routes were taken over by the newer batch of double-deckers, like FET618.

As the years went by, the tracklesses were always there and we thought they

always would be. Wrong ! The day finally dawned when I would travel on the last double-decker up Wickersley Road one Saturday night in 1963. After that, I hated travelling to town under unused wires, but happily the tracklesses still operated routes 5, 6 and 49. Not as convenient as when they ran past our house, but it had to do. Finally, a notice appeared in the *Rotherham Advertiser* announcing a tour to be run on the day following the closure of the system to the public on Saturday 2 October 1965. Of course I booked immediately.

On the Sunday, with very mixed emotions and not really knowing how I felt, I set off for Rawmarsh Road Depot. Arriving with trepidation, our motley crowd enjoyed visiting the Rawmarsh Road Depot areas where the overhead hardware had been made and maintained. Then we viewed the withdrawn double-deckers, still with booms raised and looking just as usual, as if ready for the first depot departure at about 3.30am to make the 3.50am trip to Silverwood Colliery. We shunned the ten sparkling Daimler motorbuses which were already taking over routes 5, 6 and 49 from first light. Wearing sports jackets or gabardines, well-suited to the mid-1960s, we boarded no.44, either sitting inside or lining the platform. Arguments abounded about who would pull the frogs.

On tour on the day after the system closed, 44 makes a final photographic stop at the Pumping Station - a short working terminus on the route to Thrybergh

Photo: Mike Johnson



When our tour had started, we travelled, talked and stopped many times to take photographs. We were treated to a ride that was totally trouble-free: not once did a boom fly off the wires. I well remember our driver, a Rotherham regular, who was patience itself: nothing was too much trouble. A number of times during our day we met up with no.37 performing the other tour. As the day drew to a close, a buzzer sounded in the cab, signalling that we should return. We all asked: "Where is 37 ?" and we were assured that 37 had already returned to the depot ahead of us. Reluctantly, we accepted that our turn to return had also come. As expected, 37 was back in the depot and so our vehicle, no.44 (FET618) was the last trackless out and the last one to go back into Rawmarsh Road. Upon alighting, all seemed to go very flat. That was it - no more !

Although I have managed to come to terms with this, I have never quite got over the loss of the tracklesses, nor missing the opportunity many years later to see no.84, the sole surviving ex-Rotherham Daimler single-decker in Spain.

All this probably explains why I am delighted that 44 still survives, and why I enjoy attending Sandtoft, helping to maintain 37 after Brian Maguire's restoration work, and also helping Tim Stubbs to restore another survivor - No.73 (CET613).

Rotherham Trolleys in the Press

During the past two years, Mike Johnson has provided the Rotherham Advertiser with many letters and articles to raise local awareness of Rotherham's trolleybus history and to keep memories alive. Thanks once again to Mike's initiative, the paper recently published the following article to mark the town's trolleybus centenary.

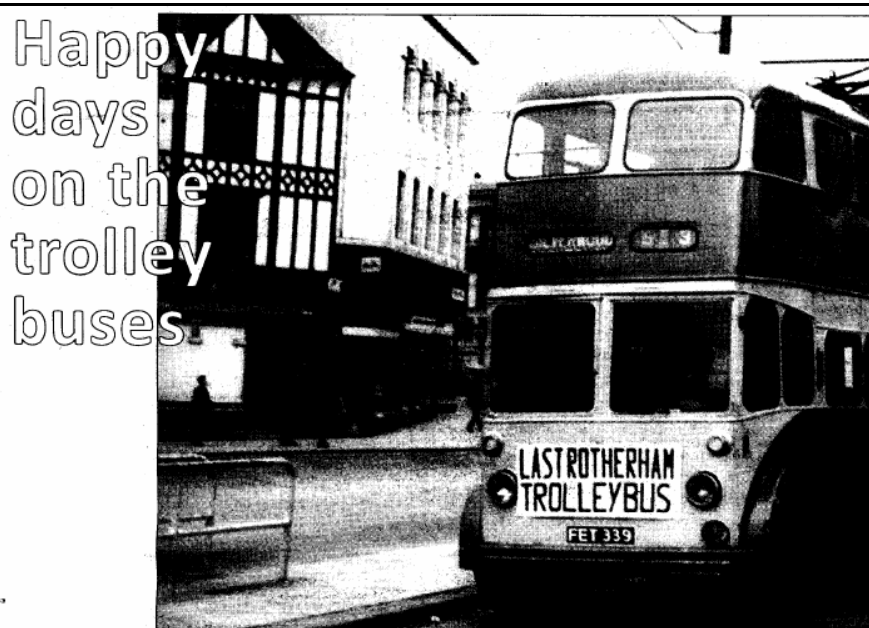
100 years ago *From the Rotherham Advertiser, 12 October 1912*

The results of the first week's working of the trolley bus route to Maltby have been a huge success, and the returns are a triumphant vindication of the enterprise of the Tramways Committee.

Throughout the week the new system has been well patronised and this was especially the case on the Saturday and Sunday. The experimental service run last Sunday was largely appreciated, and the fine weather was also in favour of the success of the venture. Many people travelled from Sheffield for the especial purpose of journeying on the new route, but even apart from the fact that the novelty of the system was attracting a number of people, the returns are ample proof of the fact that the new route meets a long felt want.

The trolleys have run the whole of the week without the slightest hitch, and the verdict of all passengers is the same: smooth running and comfortable in every way.

Another piece from the Rotherham Advertiser captures the final days of the system in 1965



Rotherham's last trolley bus takes centre stage in the week's old photographs feature. It was sent in by Gerry Dunne of St. Francis Close, Bramley. He writes: "I used to catch the trolley from town to Wickersley on my way home from 'steelos'. Happy days".

With acknowledgements to the Rotherham Advertiser for permission to reproduce these items, which were reprinted on 12 October 2012.

DEAR 'SCENE

Dear 'Scene

Last week, my wife and I were in Grantham and I picked up your brochure from the motel. I was pleasantly surprised to discover your Museum. Although my father was always a "tram man", he has a place in the trolleybus history book. While George Crowhurst was the driver of the first "Diddler" trolleybus to run from Twickenham in the early 1930s, my father, as the conductor on the second of the two 'buses, was also part of the historic event.

Prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, he was part of the team switching from trams to trolleybuses. My father taught conductors from 1939, and saw the first lady "clippies" join London Transport at Fulwell Depot. Later, he ran the trolleybus training centre at Stonebridge Depot in North London, until the opportunity to return to his first love, at Clapham, where he was in charge of the training for tram drivers. When the tramcars were replaced with "petrol buses", he moved to Chiswick and oversaw training of bus drivers, until his retirement. I have his Certificate of Long Service, over 40 years with London Transport, which I am justly proud of.

My wife and I intend to visit the Museum, when hopefully we move to the Grantham area. I am sure my father would love to have seen your museum, but I can do just that for him.

Ted Wallis

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Dear 'Scene

Many thanks for the latest *Sandtoft Scene*. I was very interested in the article on the Hastings trolleybus as I have been concerned for some time about the state of it and the restoration plans. Assuming that the similar vehicle "in a more advanced state of restoration" does get restored, I think Robin's idea of restoring it as an example of living accommodation is a good one. I would certainly support a fund-raising scheme for this.

Graham Collett, Copmanthorpe, York

PS: What a great London event in August. Well done to all concerned !

PPS: Great magazine !

(Graham kindly enclosed two archive press cuttings from over fifty years ago. I hope to include extracts in a future 'Scene –Ed.)

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Dear 'Scene








My good friend Bridget "Caroline" Thompson and I joined "Sandtoft" in 2010, having been irregular visitors in earlier years. From the Autumn of 2010 we did our best to travel over in our 1971 Land Rover and Caroline always got enjoyment from her visits and the café. She had not been in good health from May 2012, but we still got out and about. Then, in January 2013, she died suddenly at 49 years. She was Anglo-American and unfamiliar with "old things", but even so, the Twilight Weekends were something she enjoyed over the last three years, so at least for me it will be a source of positive memories.


Best regards

Stephen Brown-Bolton, Gainsborough

RUNNING DAYS IN 2013

(Open 11.00am - 5.00pm unless stated otherwise)

May Day Bank Holiday Weekend Trolleydays	Saturday, 4 May  Sunday, 5 May Monday, 6 May Free Bus
Spring Bank Holiday Weekend Trolleydays	Saturday, 25 May  Sunday, 26 May Monday, 27 May Free Bus
Weekend Trolleydays	Saturday, 8 June  Sunday, 9 June
Worldwide Weekend Trolleydays <i>featuring our trolleybuses from overseas</i>	Saturday, 29 June  Sunday, 30 June Free Bus
Weekend Trolleydays <i>featuring a Teddy Bears' Picnic</i>	Saturday, 13 July  Sunday, 14 July
'Gathering Saturday Trolleyday - a preview of 'Gathering Day itself: twilight trolleybus operation & real ale beer tent	Saturday, 27 July  (Open 11.00am - 10.00pm)
Sandtoft Gathering 2013 <i>with visiting historic vehicles, transport flea market, live music, real ale beer tent & lots for the family to see & do</i>	Sunday, 28 July Free Bus (Open 10.00am - 6.00pm)
Blues & Twos Weekend & Trolleydays <i>featuring dramatic emergency services displays</i>	Saturday, 10 August  Sunday, 11 August Free Bus
Late Summer Bank Holiday Weekend Trolleydays <i>presented by the British Trolleybus Society</i>	Saturday, 24 August  Sunday, 25 August Monday, 26 August Free Bus
Model Weekend & Trolleydays <i>featuring model trolleybus, tram & train displays</i>	Saturday, 7 September  Sunday, 8 September Free Bus
European Trolleybus Day & Weekend Trolleydays <i>featuring modern trolleybus technology & operation exhibitions</i>	Saturday, 21 September  Sunday, 22 September
St. Leger Historic Vehicle Rally	Sunday, 13 October Free Bus
Twilight Trolleyday <i>with twilight & after-dark trolleybus operation</i>	Sunday, 17 November (Open 11.00am - 6.00pm)

 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 (adjacent to railway station) direct to The Trolleybus Museum. Departs Interchange Bay C6, at 12.00noon. Return departs Museum at 4.00pm (journey time approx. 40 minutes)

Additional journeys will operate on 'Gathering Day and St Leger Rally day – see website for details

ADMISSION (charges include a Gift Aid donation):

Adults £7.00 Seniors (61+) £6.00 Concessions £5.00 Family (2 Adults + up to 4 Concessions) £22.00

On days shown on dark red background:

Adults £9.00 Seniors (61+) £7.50 Concessions £6.00 Family (2 Adults+ up to 4 Concessions) £28.00

For full up-to-date details, visit www.sandtoft.org