

# Sandtoft Scene

January 2014  
No. 92



News and Views from  
The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft



**Sandtoft Transport Centre Limited**  
The Trolleybus Museum, Belton Road, Sandtoft,  
Doncaster, North Lincolnshire, DN8 5SX.  
Registered in England No.1747475

**Registered Charity No.514382**

**Give As You Earn Reference:** 000495640

**HM Revenue & Customs Giving Through Self Assessment Return Reference:** RAQ90NG

**Information Line:** 01724 711391

**Fax/ Messages:** 01724 711846

**Website:** [www.sandtoft.org](http://www.sandtoft.org)

**e-mail:** [trolleybusmuseum@sandtoft.org](mailto:trolleybusmuseum@sandtoft.org)

#### **Directors:**

Chairman & Engineering Director	Graham P. Bilbé	<a href="mailto:grahambilbe@sandtoft.org">grahambilbe@sandtoft.org</a>
Company Secretary	C. Bruce Lake	<a href="mailto:brucelake@sandtoft.org">brucelake@sandtoft.org</a>
Managing Director	Steven J. Harrison	<a href="mailto:steveharrison@sandtoft.org">steveharrison@sandtoft.org</a>
Financial Director (& Development)	Francis R. Whitehead	<a href="mailto:fwhitehead@sandtoft.org">fwhitehead@sandtoft.org</a>
Director	Nicholas G. Broxholme	<a href="mailto:nickbroxholme@sandtoft.org">nickbroxholme@sandtoft.org</a>
Facilities Director	Anthony G. Ferris	<a href="mailto:tonyferris@sandtoft.org">tonyferris@sandtoft.org</a>
Director (& Retail Services)	Christopher N. Proctor	<a href="mailto:sales@sandtoft.org">sales@sandtoft.org</a>
Operations Director	Ian H. Wilson	<a href="mailto:ianwilson@sandtoft.org">ianwilson@sandtoft.org</a>

Correspondence should be addressed to the Director responsible for the relevant area of operation, or to the Managing Director. As necessary, letters/ emails will be forwarded to the appropriate person. A SAE for a reply is always appreciated.

© Sandtoft Transport Centre Limited, The Trolleybus Museum, Belton Road, Sandtoft, Doncaster, North Lincolnshire, DN8 5SX.

#### **Sandtoft Scene Editor:**

John Stainforth 25 Old Kennels Lane, Winchester, SO22 4JP.

**e-mail** [scene@sandtoft.org](mailto:scene@sandtoft.org)

Typesetting and Layout by John Stainforth & Francis Whitehead.

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.

**Printed by: Culverlands, Winnall Valley Road, Winchester, SO23 0LN.**

**FRONT COVER PICTURE:** Clandestine observations as Huddersfield 619's movements are captured by a Soviet infiltrator (alias Sandra Lemons) using 1960s hand-held technology. (Full story on page 18) *Photo: Kirstin Ramskir*

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

Welcome to a new-look *Sandtoft Scene* for the New Year ! We have upgraded to professional printing and we hope you like the result. For the past 12 years the printing has been done in the home of Francis Whitehead using PC-connected laser printers. However, with the recent steady growth of both our membership and the size of the magazine, the scale of the operation has also grown - taking around five person-days to print, collate, assemble and staple what is now a 36-page magazine with a print run of 500 copies. Also, the printing of 'Scene no.91 last Autumn ended the life of our older colour printer, and after a crop of technical problems plaguing the newer one, we decided that home production was really no longer going to be sustainable. Having reviewed several commercial quotations before going ahead, we believe that the chosen supplier provides good value for money and we also received confirmation that the volumes involved would make web-litho technology more economic than digital printing. So, here we go with a smooth-finished high-quality offering: please let us know your reaction.

November's Twilight event brought the 2013 running season to an end on a very high note, with many visitors enjoying both the daytime services and the evening rides. It was an excellent day financially and, taking the whole year's open days into account, the Museum's overall revenue has held up very well indeed, continuing the healthy results of the previous year reported at the recent AGM. Around 5,000 people visited during 2013 (a very similar number to 2012) and it is reassuring to read what they have to say about us. A quick look at the *Trip Advisor* website (see page 35) reveals satisfaction ratings and visitors' comments that serve as a real source of encouragement to all our volunteers.

Meanwhile, the process of acquiring the land to extend the Museum continues to nudge slowly forwards, and, whilst no show-stoppers are anticipated, the succession of minor obstacles encountered during the past twelve months would make anyone reluctant to place money on a completion date. We are confident, but "Watch this space...." is all we can sensibly say.

## NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to:

Mrs Sheila King (Maidenhead)

Mr Alan Hopkinson (Rotherham)

Mr Peter Davies (Goole)

Mr David Hemsley (North Shields)

## SANDTOFT SCENE ONLINE

Members joining over the past year may not know that 'Scene is available online at [www.sandtoft.org/members](http://www.sandtoft.org/members) - the "members only" part of the Museum's website. If you prefer the web version, rather than having a printed copy by post, please e-mail David Needham ([membership@sandtoft.org](mailto:membership@sandtoft.org)).

**Please note: News deadline for the next *Sandtoft Scene* is 10 March 2014**

## NEWS ROUND-UP

**Ian Metcalfe:** our best wishes go to Ian Metcalfe of our engineering team following a serious road accident in November. Ian's injuries included badly-damaged limbs and he was in hospital for quite a while. We know Ian's recovery will take some time and look forward to seeing him back at the Museum as soon as he is well again.

**Steve Harrison and Lyn Smith:**

Congratulations to Steve and Lyn on the announcement of their engagement in November. The picture (right) shows the celebration cake specially made by Cherryll Crowther being shared by Steve and friends in *The Tea Trolley Café* during "Twilight" weekend.



Photo: John Stainforth

**The Tea Trolley Café** received its regular re-inspection by the local council's environmental health team and successfully retained its Food Hygiene Rating of 5. This is the highest standard achievable, so congratulations go to our café team on their continuing diligence to make this possible.



Photo: Graham Bilbé

**Hull Trolleybus Memento:** the Museum was delighted to receive a fine model of a Hull Coronation trolleybus, which had been made by the late George Birks and was donated by Richard Foster who was visiting Sandtoft on 17 November. The photograph (left) shows Dave Chick in *The Trolleyshop* with this lovely donation.

**Trolleybus Driving Experience 2014:**

Places on our TDE days are always in great demand, and when the 2014 opportunities went on sale on 1 December they were snapped-up very quickly, with all the places being booked during the following fortnight.

**Terry Cooper:** we were sorry to learn of the death last June of Terry Cooper, probably best known for his book *The Wheels Used To Talk To Us*, which

recorded the memories of London Tramwayman Stan Collins. Terry had been a supporter of the restoration of London 1348. He kindly made the lettering for the number plates and fleet numbers and came to Sandtoft to fit them for us.

## RECENT RUNNING DAYS

### Bank Holiday Weekend 24 - 26 August

Dave Chick

The British Trolleybus Society presented this event and six vehicles from the BTS fleet ran in passenger service over the three days, with Cardiff 203 making a welcome return after seeing little service since its restoration and launch in 2010. The BTS had been hoping to use the event to launch Walsall 872 into passenger service following its major restoration, and a great deal of effort was applied during the preceding months to complete the electrical and mechanical work. During the week before the event, Graham Bilbé and Ian Metcalfe were concentrating on 872's high-pressure hydraulic braking system. This was expected to be problematic, but actually required more work than anticipated, the main difficulty being that the four slave cylinders turned out to need overhauling. Unfortunately the local company that they were using was unable to complete the work in time for the launch, which meant that 872 would be unable to run in passenger service.

So as not to disappoint those looking forward to 872's launch, the team decided to go ahead, but with operations restricted for safety reasons to a few low-speed demonstration runs, using only the electric and hand brakes, which had been thoroughly proven.

Saturday was a "normal running day" with all six running BTS trolleybuses providing a diverse variety of liveries, chassis types and body manufacturers. On the Sunday morning, final preparations were made for 872's launch. A long queue formed ready for Reception to open at 11:00am, and the visitors were soon flowing in to ride on the trolleybuses and sample our other attractions. Especially for this event, Dave Hall was presenting digital photo shows in the *Regal* cinema, charting the history of the BTS and the early days at Sandtoft, and followed by a presentation on Walsall 872. The launch ceremony took place in Sandtoft Square at 2:00pm, and after the official photographs with those closely associated with 872's restoration, Ian Metcalfe drove the trolleybus carefully around the site. A line-up with 872 and the six other vehicles was staged at 3:00pm, then operations continued busily until closing time, after which 872 performed another demonstration run for the benefit of members.

Bank Holiday Monday followed a similar format, with the exception of activities involving 872. Visitors arrived steadily and exceeded Sunday's numbers, and in



Sunday morning, and Graham Bilbé applies the Walsall coat-of-arms to 872 with Roy Pearce (who undertook much of 872's internal restoration) and his son, Jamie, looking on

Photo: Andy Thornton





Re-launched Walsall 872 in the centre of the ceremonial line-up, together with the six BTS trolleybuses in service over the Bank Holiday weekend *Photo: Andy Thornton*

total over the whole weekend 1,009 passenger journeys were made on 97 service trips. Everyone reflected on a very successful weekend with excellent team-working by BTS and Sandtoft volunteers. Both the timetable of events and the traffic operations were very well-organised, and thanks for that are once again due to Stewart David and all the staff.

### Model weekend 7 - 8 September

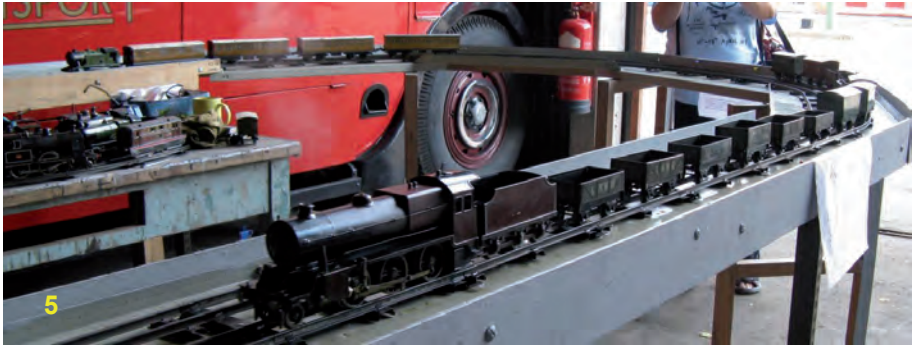
This weekend's stars of the show were the ones on display indoors.....



1. Ashley Bruce with his freelance "3-axle Rotherham streamliner", as it might have been in about 1932 – a fictional, but very convincing model!
2. Halifax Bus Station in miniature, with a variety of long-gone liveries of the local operators
3. SYPTE 2450 on Paul Shepherd's layout
4. A Brawa articulated trolley completes a busy scene on John Huddlestone's splendid layout "Cronenburg", as displayed in the Pelham Building
5. In the main depot, Graham Bilbé was running vintage 'O'-gauge trains, either steam or clockwork. Here a 1930's Bassett-Lowke steam-powered LMS 'Mogul' leads a train of even more vintage wagons

*Photos: 1,4,5: Graham Bilbé 2,3: Andy Thornton*





## European Trolleybus Day 21 September

Dave Chick

Saturday 21 September saw the 4th European Trolleybus Day celebrated across the continent, with the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft marking this event for the first time. The aim is to provide a family fun day out and to promote the trolleybus as a modern transport solution for cities.

Visiting children received card models of a modern articulated trolleybus to make up, and everyone was given a European Trolleybus Day pen and a leaflet about the Leeds trolleybus project. Nick Broxholme had devised competitions including a wordsearch of European trolleybus systems and a trail with clues around the grounds. As part of the promotion of modern trolleybuses I gave present-



Nick Broxholme, complete with "Green, Clean, Smart" T-shirt and (behind) a Trolley:motion poster

Photo: Andy Thornton

ations in the *Regal* cinema, showing *The Trolley Movie*, followed by a talk about the trolleybus as a green, clean and smart option for urban public transport, and culminating in a slide show about the trolleybus system due to open in Leeds in 2020. We received a great deal of positive feedback about the event and we now have ideas about how to make the event bigger and better in 2014 !

### **St Leger Rally 13 October**

As recent experiences with the 'Gathering have shown, the enjoyment of any rally depends very much on the number and variety of vehicles attending, so special efforts were made by Jason and Brenda Bowers to alert the owners of as many potential visiting vehicles as possible.

The rally organisation work, led by Chris Proctor, began months before the St Leger event itself, and Jason's first task was to hand out 90 entry forms at the Lincoln steam traction engine event in August - a job that took about five hours. Knowing that our rally visitors appreciate seeing a diverse selection of vehicles at Sandtoft, they targeted the owners of traction engines, road rollers, Romany caravans and even a portable railway track from Doncaster. The aim was to add variety to the usual classic cars, commercials, buses and coaches taking part, so forms were handed out to the owners of fairground organs, hand-turned organs, stationary engines, historical caravans and fire engines. The Historic Caravan Club was also keen to support the St Leger event, and at the time seemed interested in displaying some of their caravans.

In early September, Jason and Brenda visited the Doncaster Show to distribute more entry forms, and again attracted more interest for St Leger. When talking to potential entrants, they also realised how important it is for the rally entry forms to be available in good time for download from the Museum's website. A week later, their public relations skills were in use again at the classic car show at Burton Constable Hall, near Hull, where they handed out a further 64 vehicle entry forms. The following weekend took them to *The Festival of the Plough* at High Burnham Farm, near Epworth, widening the trawl for entrants to take in the agricultural community, and distributing another 24 forms, as well as generally spreading the word about the Trolleybus Museum in the local area - itself a very valuable exercise. Finally, on 22 September, they were at Crich Tramway Village working hard to gain support at the VW Festival event, where they handed out another 27 entry forms.

Without all this preparatory work, there would have been very few exhibits in the rally, so when the big day arrived, it was good to see the interesting selection taking part - over 80 in all. The rally began, as usual, at Aeroventure, the South Yorkshire Aircraft Museum in Doncaster. Although the day started off wet (which may have discouraged some visitors), the afternoon was fine and sunny for the displays, and nostalgic memories were rekindled when visiting vehicles came together with the trolleybuses in service. Thanks again go to DO&LRS for organising the day, in particular to Chris Proctor and Ian Wilson and of course to Jason and Brenda and all the other volunteers involved.





## St Leger Rally 2013

Above: A row of smart classic cars on display behind the Pelham building



Above: One of Ken Thompson's East Kent Dennis Lancets makes a photo stop in Epworth on the Isle of Axholme Tour

Right: Passengers on board the Isle Tour receiving their tickets

Below: A varied array of commercials, buses and coaches under blue skies on display in the rally field

Photos: Jason Bowers



### ***“2013 Terminus; All Change, Please !”***

The final operating day of our 2013 season proved to be another successful one, both in terms of staff attendance and visitor numbers. With an ample supply of conductors and drivers, the Traffic Department ensured it could operate a continuous stream of trolleybuses throughout the day and into the twilight. In fact, it was our busiest day since the August Bank Holiday and we carried a total of 545 passengers on 53 trolleybus trips. For this season-finale we used Huddersfields 541 and 619, Bradford 792 and South Shields 204 for both the daytime and twilight operations.

Elsewhere at the Museum, the café proved as popular as ever and there was certainly very little cake left by the close-of-play on Sunday evening ! The entrance was kept busy with a healthy amount in the tills and the Isle of Axholme tours also attracted great interest, with Doncaster 22 starting to fill up 15 minutes before departure time.

The day ended with a stunning line-up of the four serving trolleybuses across Sandtoft Square, which certainly seemed to please the enthusiasts who illuminated the whole of Sandtoft with a continuous blast of camera flashes ! The novelty of a twilight trolleybus service also entertained our younger visitors. On the final trip of the evening, with all four trolleybuses running a simultaneous service, I had two young lads on the 'bus who found it great fun when the whole bus plunged into darkness every time we passed under a dead-section ! These are the types of unique experiences we can offer to visitors who don't remember trolleybuses in service.

The Traffic Department also had a helping hand from Jim Sambrooks and Doncaster 22 who joined in the trolleybus circuits to provide a slightly different service to the normal Trolleyday. From my perspective the unique grumble of 22's AEC engine certainly offered a very pleasing soundtrack to the silent trackless it accompanied.

So with all that, the 2013 operating season closed on a high point as we all packed our ticket machines away for another winter.

*Note: Space pressures in this issue of 'Scene mean that our "Twilight" evening photographs have to be held over until the April edition - ed.*

## **THE 2013 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Museum's AGM took place on 16 November 2013 with 40 members attending. In his opening remarks, Chairman Graham Bilbé began by wishing Ian Metcalfe well during his recovery from a serious road accident. The minutes of the 2012 AGM were distributed to and accepted by those members present.

In his Chairman's address, Graham explained that 2013 had been a year of both successes and disappointments. Particularly disappointing was the continuing delay in purchasing the additional land, a year having gone by without contracts being exchanged. He reassured members that the succession of hurdles had not been major ones, and that only a few small

obstacles were still unresolved. A further disappointment was the lack of progress on repainting the traction poles: another contractor will now be sought to carry out this work. There had also been other setbacks during the year diverting considerable management time from our mainstream mission.

On the positive side, 2013 had been a year of successful operating events with good visitor feedback. A magnificent number of visiting vehicles came to the 'Gathering rally, and the *Blues and Twos* weekend had been particularly memorable and well-attended. Vehicle restoration had progressed, particularly on Johannesburg 589, whose rebuilt body frame is now taking shape. Another major achievement was the arrival in the country of Wellington 82 and the securing of a large grant to help restore it. Both these vehicles are being restored off-site; meanwhile at Sandtoft, special thanks are due to John Whipham for his splendid work on Nottingham 367.

Looking ahead to 2014, Graham mentioned several projects, including the installation of a fire alarm system, the launch of Wellington 82, the World War I commemorative display and a three-day *Blues and Twos* weekend. The Board will also be working to achieve renewal of the Museum's accreditation status.

Reporting the financial results for the year ending on 31 January 2013, Francis Whitehead presented a summary of income and expenditure, with comparison figures for the previous year. [A key measure of the Museum's operations (Admissions + Catering profits + Trolleyshop profits) totalled £39,194 – a modest increase of 1.4% on the previous year - ed.] Francis also presented an informative set of charts (including visitor numbers and membership statistics), showing positive trends over recent years - a remarkable achievement during an economic recession. The latest charts from David Needham show membership at an all-time high of 495 and continuing to rise steadily. If any member would like a copy of the 2012-13 year-end accounts, please contact Francis Whitehead (contact details on page 2).

The meeting then confirmed the re-election without a ballot of three directors retiring by rotation and unopposed: Francis Whitehead as Financial Director and Graham Bilbé and Nick Broxholme as Ordinary Directors. By a very large majority, the members present also approved the re-appointment of Stephen Kerry as Company Auditor.

Finally, the members present voted by a large majority to approve a special resolution to increase the annual subscription rate from 1 April 2014 for Ordinary Members to £19.00 (or £16.00 for those joining through a Contributing Society), with an increase to £12.00 for family members and £475.00 for life membership. These increases are in line with the rises in postage and production costs of *Sandtoft Scene* since the previous subscription rates were fixed in April 2011.

After the conclusion of the formal AGM and a break for refreshments, members returned for the discussion forum. The Chairman first introduced Susan Hopkinson, Museums and Heritage Manager for North Lincolnshire Council. Susan has been the "museum mentor" for Sandtoft for over seven years and attends our Board meetings. She explained this mentoring role as

one of providing independent museums like ours with advice, support and guidance on curatorial issues. She said that although there were around 1800 accredited museums in the country, it was unusual for an independent, volunteer-run museum to have achieved this status - something that the museum profession takes seriously and which will be helpful in bids for external funding. With the Trolleybus Museum's accreditation coming up for renewal in 2014, we can expect to encounter higher standards for governance, operational management and sustainable care of our collections. Feedback on the customer experience (from *Trip Advisor*, for example) and our involvement with local schools will all be important factors. Susan feels that the Museum is clearly at a "cross-roads" with the land acquisition and the development projects that lie ahead.

With discussions open to the floor, several topics of interest were covered:

- ❖ How to keep the smaller projects going at the same time as concentrating on major development activity? More volunteers would be a great help.
- ❖ How to encourage more volunteers? Could the redundancies at the steelworks in Scunthorpe provide a source of skills and labour? Could we offer more training?
- ❖ Additional cafeteria space is urgently needed. Could a conservatory-style extension be built on the "lawn" side of *The Tea Trolley*? Could a local conservatory firm provide a favourable quote in return for advertising space? An extension of this type would also be a very fitting way of remembering the late Trish Harrison and her contribution.
- ❖ Further themed weekends: possibilities for 2014 could be a 1960s event inspired by the 50th anniversary of *Radio Caroline* and a 1940s wartime weekend with appropriate music. Several volunteers came forward to explore these ideas and try to make them happen.
- ❖ As soon as the land purchase is confirmed, serious planning will be needed to decide where the buildings should be located and how they will be utilised. Discussions with the BTS and the owners of *Burntwood* will be an important part of this.
- ❖ Proposals for naming new buildings in recognition of special individuals would also require further debate, including discussion with the BTS leadership.
- ❖ Graham Bilbé is looking to procure a quantity of suitable uniforms for the traffic staff. Professional-looking badges for our volunteer staff are also badly needed and Steve Harrison agreed to follow this up.
- ❖ Ideas are taking shape for the World War I exhibition, led by Dave Chick. This will be held in the Pelham Building and will run for four years starting in August 2014. Various interesting models will be on permanent loan and period uniforms for drivers and conductors will be on display.
- ❖ Museum publicity still requires an owner, as none of the current Board members are able to take on the former role of Commercial Director in its entirety. In response to Francis Whitehead's appeal in *Sandtoft Scene*



for help with publicity work, two volunteers have come forward to assist with leaflet distribution.

- ❖ How could the Museum be promoted more vigorously to people living in the local area? Possibilities include a stall at Epworth Show, delivery of leaflets and displaying an “ambassador” vehicle such as Doncaster 22. Tony Ferris explained that by Easter 2014 a new large aluminium sign mounted on the road-side fence will be in place to publicise the “next event”.
- ❖ Tony was not optimistic that much could be done to improve the signposting of the Museum from the main roads in the area with further official tourist attraction road signs. It was nevertheless very frustrating that the adjoining Sandtoft car boot sales were very well signposted from the A18 with unofficial temporary signboards.

The meeting closed with the Chairman thanking all participants for attending and contributing to a very positive and constructive discussion.

## **TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

### *From Stewart David, Traffic Department Manager*

Looking back over the past season, we have certainly made some very impressive progress in a fairly short time. Following the long-overdue managerial and training position changes that we made in the earlier part of the season, things have now settled down nicely and many people have commented on how much better-organised and managed our traffic operations are. There are still some improvements to be made, however, especially on staff resourcing for open days. I feel (as others do) that we need to adopt a more structured approach to this important aspect, as our present arrangements are a little “ad-hoc”, a good example being the European weekend when we had seven drivers on Saturday and just three on Sunday !

Training-wise, thanks to the efforts of David Croft and Mike Johnson, we now have four more properly-trained conductors on our books, and with John Zebedee's passing out as a driver we have a total of 18 fully-operational trolleybus drivers and an amazing 27 conductors. Clearly we have the resources: we just need to plan their deployment more effectively - not an easy task when dealing with a voluntary workforce but one which I'm sure we can manage better and ideas are invited on how this can best be achieved.

Around 11,000 passenger journeys were made on our trolleybuses during this operating season - an excellent achievement. Vehicle-wise we have had relatively few problems to contend with, although the number of dewirements is still a concern and some of our drivers do need to pay much more attention to speed when going through frogs and crossings. It is, however, interesting to note that certain vehicles seem to be more prone than others to dewirements.

Safety is always a prime concern for the Traffic Department and, in accordance with the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999, I have reviewed our present traffic H&S procedures and found them fit for purpose and therefore don't propose any changes.

To conclude, we have some great events planned for 2014, in particular the Roe event at the end of May which promises to be an impressive show. Several of the required vehicles are already part of our collection and on site, and I understand that Jim Sambrooks and Ian Wilson are arranging for a considerable number of Roe-bodied visitors to supplement them.

***From David Croft and Mike Johnson, Platform Staff Instructors***

And so, another season at the Museum has come to an end. It's been a challenging one for the two of us, as we have had to deal with our new role as Duty Traffic Inspectors and also take on the responsibility of training and testing new conductors, whilst continuing to act as conductors ourselves. However it all seems to have gone quite smoothly. We decided from the outset that we would both do the training and testing, alternating our roles each time a new volunteer came along. Before getting down to the job, we sorted out the theory elements, David revised the training programme and Mike reviewed the testing procedures. Progress this season firstly included the effective re-training of Richard Jackson, followed by refresher training for Geoff Sandford at the end of May. Rob Whitehead was successfully passed out next, having been given "fare gatherer" status the previous summer, then Robin Symons and Sheila King passed out as conductors during September.



In front of Huddersfield 619 with Bruce Lake in the cab are Mike Johnson, Richard Jackson, Patrick Wilkinson and David Croft. Patrick is an aspiring future conductor who hopes to join the training programme later this year.

*Photo: Peter Wilkinson*

Training is not just teaching people how to ring the bell and issue tickets - that's the easy bit. We both feel strongly about the importance of ensuring that the public enjoy their day at our Museum, so new conductors learn how to deal with visitors' questions and to anticipate their needs. These include helping passengers on and off the trolleybuses, or fetching the disabled step and bringing trolleybuses forward to their loading point. Training is also about dealing with emergencies such as visitors who fall over or get stung by wasps. So there's always plenty for us to do to keep us out of mischief.

## **JOURNEY TO THE BLUNT END** *Part 1* Richard Jackson

*The trials and tribulations of a trainee driver and those charged with training him...*

Whether captivated by motorbuses, trolleybuses, trains, or trams, any transport enthusiast will probably agree that there is always a desire to ultimately find yourself behind the controls of these magnificent machines. At our Museum, this journey from conductor to driver is a lengthy one, and, with all 'buses having their "interesting peculiarities", practice is the only way to achieve this aim. For the purpose of these articles I have been keeping a record of my journey, and hope that this experience sheds some light on the progression systems for volunteers at the Museum.

All potential and current bus drivers will have their own reasons for wanting to take to the driver's seat. My father got his PCV licence because he wanted to experience driving large vehicles. Others like the notion of having 245,000 miles of British road network as the view from the "office window". My reasons: well, I am generally keen on most forms of historic transport and enjoy working with vehicles which have passed from modern-living memory. Whereas most 18-year-olds earn their beer money from working the night shift at supermarkets, I spent my college and university holidays working as a conductor on the Beamish Museum Tramway. This was really the start of my obsession with vintage vehicles. Unfortunately I finally had to get a proper job, and it turned out to be in Leeds, which meant that my Beamish days have become virtually non-existent. Then I came to Sandtoft as a visitor and caught the "trolleybus bug". One year on, and having completed a season of trolleybus conducting, I am now progressing through the "Driving School". Below is the record to date of this tumultuous journey from the platform to the driver's seat.

At the time of writing this article, the brave souls who have accompanied me in the cab are Bruce Lake and Chas Allen. For reasons to which I shall not take offence (although I know who you are !), I always seem to have a different conductor on the platform! So, Dave and Mark, how bad was the ride ?

For the benefit of those who have never driven a trolleybus before, I ought to explain the basic starting procedures - apologies to those who already hold a licence. Prior to any trolleybus operating in service, the vehicle must undergo an earth-leakage test, a process requiring a conductor to remove each of the booms in turn whilst the driver applies the power and brake pedals with different circuits complete. To date I've always been at the boom-end and will be able to offer a fuller description as soon as I have experienced the process from the driver's cab.

Once one finds oneself behind the controls, it's not just a simple matter of "ding-ding, off we go !" To control the motive power there are two circuit breakers mounted within the cab, one negative and one positive, which need to be turned on in that order. There might also be a compressor to be switched on for the airbrakes. These are the three primary controls which learners need to ensure are activated prior to attempting to move. There are of course many other switches, and some buses have batteries which need to be connected

for the conductor's bell to function. These may be hidden underneath the seats in the lower saloon. The other control that needs checking is a direction handle which switches between forwards and reverse. On some trolleybuses this has five different positions; (1) forwards on the battery, (2) forwards on the overhead power, (3) off, (4) reverse on the overhead power and (5) reverse on the battery. For safety reasons this handle should be left in either the "off" or "forwards" position.



Conductor 558 (and hopeful future driver) under instruction at the wheel of Manchester 1344 Photo: Mike Johnson

Sandtoft certainly likes to ensure that its staff are constantly kept on their toes. In the interval between my first and second training sessions, the engineers had inserted a new "dead section" in the overhead wiring. So, just as I had got my bearings, they change the network ! For those who aren't sure of the reasons why, this particular one is a new safety measure, enabling drivers to check that they are on the correct wire after proceeding through the automatic frog. This will hopefully eliminate any instances where the auto-frog is mistakenly activated and the crew don't realise it. The driver will now receive an additional buzz (or a light-flash on the dewirement light) to show that they are on the main circuit, rather than on the curve back into the loading bay. Hopefully that is going to

be the last alteration to the network before I take my test !

Once the main three switches are on and you're ready to go, there are a few important issues to consider. Firstly, the power pedal is on the left and the brake is on the right. Secondly, the handbrake is used much more frequently than when driving a car. Thirdly, there are a few clever safety features with trolleybuses to ensure drivers don't accidentally have a "clutch moment". By this I mean that when we do an emergency stop in a modern car, we automatically floor the clutch, which is on the left. However, on a trolleybus, applying the brake automatically isolates the power pedal. So, if a trolleybus driver had a "clutch moment" and floored the left-hand pedal whilst braking, no power is applied as the brake over-rides it. This mechanism prevents the trolleybus from leaping forwards with the circuit breakers banging out.

As a general guideline, the driver must always wait for the conductor's signal before getting the bus moving. Once two bells and a "*hold tight, please*" have been received, the driver would then engage the first notch of power and release the handbrake. On some trolleybuses, the first notch has no effect, so you have to then go to the second. All this will hopefully become second



nature. The reason that the conductor's signal must consist of both two bells and a "*hold tight, please*" is simply to reinforce safety. By giving a verbal command the driver gets reassurance that it is actually the conductor who has rung the bell. Occasionally children are tempted to press the bell and this "double signal" eliminates the risk of the driver setting off on a passenger's bell.

During last year's August Bank Holiday weekend, I was fortunate enough to get an opportunity behind the controls of Glasgow TB78. For those of you who have enjoyed a ride on this 'bus, I'm sure you will agree that it is far from smooth ! For reasons unknown to me, it wobbles around profusely. There are many comments I could make about a Scottish bus being unsteady on its wheels, but I won't go there ! The Traffic Department has unofficially decided that the prefix "TB" must stand for "Terribly Bouncy". Anyway, couple this stomach-churning ride to a driver with "L"-plates on and you're in for a memorable journey.

If I was a believer in omens, I might have started to worry after that training session, because I set off with two conductors on the back and ended with only one ! Forgive me for a minute whilst I address one of my colleagues: "David Croft, why did you only manage one trip ? How bad could it really be ?" (Actually, don't answer that !). I have to say that I have never heard the words "*hold tight, please*" called with such insistence and trepidation! In addition, when we finished, the first port-of-call for my instructor was the toilet block. (Chas, I shall remember that too !). Is this normal for a learner to cause all their colleagues to go scampering in every direction ?

When the trolleybus has completed its circuits around the Museum and returned to the stand, the driver must ensure that both the breakers have been knocked off. This is another safety measure to avoid any unintentional movement of the vehicle. Generally speaking, during an operating day the compressor can be left on and the direction handle left in "forwards". I would like to add an additional note here: on many of the trolleybuses the "forwards/reverse on the battery" isn't actually functional. During their service life, they would have carried a battery reserve to allow them to navigate around road closures or accidents and generally limp out of harm's way if the need arose: at Sandtoft we don't really use this function as we have tractors on standby should a trolleybus become stranded.

The August Bank Holiday weekend was the first time I had to contend with another trolleybus on the network at the same time as me. London 1812 was out giving a refresher lesson in the opposite direction. For some unfortunate reason, we always seemed to pass on the corners. This was a valuable learning opportunity, but I feel I need to pass on another apology to Chas. (Should I just list all my apologies in an appendix at the end ?). I did give slightly too much space for the oncoming bus, which caused the booms to stretch to very nearly maximum reach! I'm not sure how close they came to actually popping off the wires, but Chas certainly seemed a bit frazzled. However, he has been out with me since, and I hope he holds no grudges.

*To be continued*

## SANDTOFTGRAD 2013

After discussions during the post-AGM forum the previous day about more themed events, an unexpected theme was much in evidence throughout the Twilight event, following the arrival that morning of a sizable group of visitors dressed to re-create the Cold War period in Eastern Europe. Equipped with espionage props and mementos including newspapers announcing the assassination of President Kennedy, this sinister-looking team rapidly infiltrated their way round the Museum, creating some unsettling reminders of the Soviet era. Despite the fact that a Russian trolleybus was not available to transport them to Red Square, they were pleased to learn that one day we may acquire one of the Skodas from the world's longest trolleybus route in the Ukraine.

Among their number was David Hemsley, alias "Red Squirrel", who writes:

*"In the dark days of November, news went out to operatives across the People's Republic of Yorkshire that renegade agent "Blue Squirrel" had been seen heading towards Scunthorpe. A hastily assembled team headed east under the codename "Operation Rasputin", intent on bringing the renegade to heel, or failing that, sole or toe. At Sandtoftgrad they spotted their target, and a few minutes later, spotted him again. Giving thanks for the unique transport system that had confounded the renegade's best efforts to evade them, and stopping only for copious cups of tea at the magnificent People's Café, the agents surrounded "Blue Squirrel" and retrieved the plans for "Lotus X", but that's entirely another story. Or so the disinformation and propaganda goes ...*

I was asked at Sandtoft if we were an organised group. "Sort of" is the possibly unhelpful answer. We mostly met through steampunk events (best Google that !) but decided that being neo-Victorian was a little too constraining, and that a lot of fun could be had from themed days out at suitable venues (such as Sandtoft, Crich and many others). Any appearance of organisation is entirely coincidental !

Our day out was made perfect by the warm reception we received and our thanks go to the volunteers for being so friendly and accommodating."

---

### Photographs opposite:

1. Conductor Michael Potts remonstrates with black-hatted passengers on board Bradford 792. Are they having difficulty with our ticketing customs ?
2. *Pravda's* news photographer in private consultation with an unidentified Cossack officer
3. Has she now charmed away (or otherwise disposed of) the driver of South Shields 204 ?
4. More red trolleybuses than blue ones in Sandtoft Square, with more communists around than on a normal Sunday
5. Could this be a "honey trap", as the lady with the camera invites unwitting engineers to step on board 792 and share their technical secrets ?
6. A suspicious encounter with sabotage equipment changing hands beside a barbed-wire fence reminiscent of 1960s East Berlin
7. Seen leading a procession of female agents, this Russian peasant-lady later claimed to be the Commissar's wife when challenged by our Chairman. Perhaps their four-legged companions give the game away !

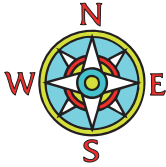


## САНДТОФТГРАД 2013 ... an impromptu theme



*Photos: 1 & 4 - Andy Thornton, 2 - Graham Bilbé, and with thanks to visiting Soviet-era photographers Mark Cudworth (3), Kirstin Ramskir (5) and David Hemsley (6 & 7)*





## THE ROUTE TO SANDTOFT

### BLACK ROD KNOCKS ON THE DOORS - OF SANDTOFT !

“Black Rod”

#### PART 8: Cracks in the wallpaper and financial confusion

*All accompanying photographs by the Author*

As 1964 dawned, prospects appeared bright for the National Trolleybus Association (Nottingham Group) - the former Nottingham Trolleybus Group, which (for the sake of continuity) I shall continue to refer to as the “NTG”. The National Trolleybus Association (NTA) had been formed as an “umbrella” organisation to promote co-operation between trolleybus societies. One of its original constituents, the well-established and respected Reading Transport Society, had withdrawn from the NTA when the prospect of a new “super group” had been discussed. This course of action had been agreed and the NTA had now changed into a new fully-integrated national organisation. Two trolleybuses were now preserved under their auspices. Nottingham 466 was being purchased by NTG members who were paying off an expensive loan taken out to secure the vehicle. Manchester 1250 had been bought outright by the NTG Treasurer (“The Librarian”) on the understanding that the cost of £40 would be paid back to him. The principle was that everybody paid £1 per week to pay off these debts. It was thought in Nottingham that the greatly enlarged NTA membership would assist in the purchase of these trolleybuses. In addition, a storage site had been located at Plumtree Station near Nottingham, although no trolleybuses had been taken there at this time.

I would remind readers that following three years of heavy involvement (for the most part as “Hon. Sec”) your scribe was now on the periphery of the preservation movement. Due to accepting a job that entailed long periods away from home, it was just not workable to continue with these secretarial duties that demanded virtually daily access to the postal system. You had to be based at home to read and respond to correspondence ! At this stage I would also wish to state my personal opinion of the Plumtree site. Contrary to popular belief at the time (and subsequently) I never considered Plumtree as a prospective permanent site or potential operational museum. Whilst it had features to commend it, the greatest operational drawback was a lack of space to turn trolleybuses at the end of the driveway leading out to the entrance. A tramcar could simply change ends and a motorbus venture out onto public roads and turn in the next convenient location. A trolleybus simply could not do this, and whilst the late lamented Marseilles system certainly had termini where trolleybuses turned in the width of the street, there was just not the width in the drive to permit this manoeuvre. I also felt that the location, approximately half a mile from a “select” village, would not lend itself to sympathetic handling by “Town and Country Planning” authorities. Finally, a rate of £1 per week (yes - here we go again !) had been negotiated as the rate to park **one** vehicle on site - this parking space being clearly marked out on a plan of the site provided by British Railways. Under Dr Beeching, this was hardly known as a benevolent organisation and it could be easily anticipated



that expansion of the parking area would prove prohibitively expensive.

Hindsight is 20/20 vision and there is no doubting the sincerity and enthusiasm for the “new” NTA from all its early participants nationally. However, certain decisions were now being taken in all good faith that would unwittingly cause problems within the organisation. A seemingly innocuous decision was taken regarding membership rates. The cost of joining the NTA was £1 per year with 10 shillings (50p) for juniors. However, Nottingham people had already paid a similar membership fee to the NTG. Some felt aggrieved to be asked to pay again to join a society of which they believed they were already a member! Additionally, some NTG members were family – wives and parents of members - who joined simply to accompany their kin on tours. There were a few people (I remember a lady and daughter from a shop on St Ann’s Well Road in Nottingham) who just liked the trolleybuses that ran past their house. When they heard of the NTG tours in Nottingham they wished to participate. They did not mind paying £1 per year to support the NTG and to learn of the trips, but they were not interested in joining a national organisation or receiving its newsletter. The result, although not immediately realised, was that the NTG lost income of £35 - £40 per year. Although not a huge amount now, it had provided some financial support to The Librarian - particularly if the £1 per week “subscription” was lacking - which of course it often was ! The other decision innocently taken was the rationalisation of tour organisation. The NTA Treasurer was Paul Cresswell. Paul’s interest was not particularly in the vehicles but with the overhead wiring. His knowledge of overhead layouts was encyclopaedic. He was a superb and efficient organiser and an obvious candidate to take charge of the NTA tours. Again many of your older and more fortunate readers will recall the memorable trips organised by Paul on behalf of the NTA - oh that we could repeat some of them today !



On an NTA tour organised by Paul Cresswell on 26 April 1964, Derby 185 negotiates an unwired curve between Railway Terrace and Midland Place opposite the Midland Station. This was a “Farewell Tour of Kingscroft and Burton Road Routes” which also covered several other sections. The services scheduled for closure lasted until 3 October 1964 and 185 survived rather longer, being withdrawn on 9 November 1965. The honour of being the final utilities with original bodies to be withdrawn later fell on Derby’s 181 and 184 in February 1966

Naturally a comprehensive programme of tours was drawn up for 1964. So where is the problem you ask ? Simply that the NTG had organised its own tours. Whilst early visits were a financial disaster, later outings had proved profitable and contributed to paying off loans, towing charges, etc. This revenue stream was now also closed. The impact of these understandable simple decisions was again underestimated and the effects were not immediately apparent. Any thoughts on NTA finance, if discussed, were certainly not communicated to the NTG membership. One suspected that the Chairman agreed to certain proposals without considering their ramifications and based merely on his indefatigable waves of optimism and enthusiasm. The problem



Nottingham 562 is shown operating another NTA tour on 24 May 1964, during the period when co-operation between most member societies was considered normal policy. Despite the fact that the RTS had withdrawn from the NTA, the NTG continued to support the "national" concept. Such was the attendance on these tours that two trolleybuses were hired for this one. Utility 460 had been used on sections where this type of trolleybus had become a rarity. 562 was allocated to Bulwell Depot and consequently scheduled to run on sections not covered by services operated by this depot. Market Street was not used by any service trolleybuses as shown by the arcing trolley heads ! Trams now use this street in both directions

was that despite the severe curtailment of NTG income, the NTA did not seem too keen to contribute towards paying for 466 or 1250. If any reader has evidence to the contrary I should be delighted if they responded to this article but it did seem that "cracks were appearing under the wallpaper".

There were, of course, many positive steps within the NTA. In February 1964, the NTA, in conjunction with the West Midlands Branch of the Railway Preservation Society (RPS), was given Wolverhampton 616. It was stored at Hedgesford, near Wolverhampton, at RPS premises. I also seem to recollect that a letter had been forwarded from Nottingham to Huddersfield regarding the purchase of a Karrier with Park Royal body featuring the distinctive three-front-window layout on the upper deck. I should be pleased to be corrected on this point, but I am certain that the Chairman and I visited Huddersfield to investigate. We found out that there were two candidates still in existence retaining the original 3-box front destination display - nos. 541 and 544 - and this was duly reported back to the NTA. What is also certain is that the NTA

either took over or commenced communication with Huddersfield and to their lasting credit secured the donation of 541 to the organisation. With 616 at Hednesford, there was now 466 to be moved from Gunthorpe, 541 to be collected from Huddersfield and 1250 already paid for but also still in Manchester.

### **Financial confusion**

It had been planned that 1250 should be the first trolleybus for movement to Plumtree. However, there were problems in moving 1250 (with the “slave” tyres, I seem to remember), when circumstances conspired to make the removal of 466 from our back garden at Gunthorpe rather urgent. Basically, my parents had sold the house ! Therefore on 7 June 1964 a towing lorry arrived to extract 466. As Steve Collins remarks in his article, the trolleybus had sunk into the mud somewhat. This was due to my digging a channel down which 466 could roll for a few feet in my successful attempt to show a local council official that the vehicle was “mobile”. The tow should have been straightforward, but the tow truck driver had not realised that the trolleybus would not fit beneath a railway bridge on the A46 Fosse Road near Saxondale cross roads at Newton, this being the most direct route to Plumtree. We therefore had to take a circuitous route via Nottingham. I confess to being rather pleased, since it meant that 466 would again travel under wires - but, I stress, unfortunately, not connected to them. We even passed near 466’s spiritual home: Parliament Street Depot in Nottingham.

---



Nottingham 466 in the back garden of “The Elms”, Gunthorpe on 12 May 1964. The trolleybus appears to be facing downhill as a result of the author digging out a small trough to allow 466 to roll forward a few yards and prove that it was actually mobile and therefore did not require planning permission ! The white coating on 466’s lower saloon windows was “Windolene”, the photo being taken during a regular session of cleaning windows on the trolleybus

All was well until we reached the village of Tollerton on the A52, where another low bridge is situated. The tow truck driver fortunately stopped and measurements were taken. 466 would fit under – just ! To ensure safe passage and with our final Plumtree destination a short distance away, the precaution of letting some air from 466’s tyres was undertaken. It was just as well. When we started, very slowly, to crawl under the bridge, there was a strange scraping noise. Clearly it was not the actual roof - thankfully - but when 466 had cleared the bridge its booms sprung skywards and became entangled

---

with telegraph wires at the roadside. Obviously the bridge was sufficiently low to unhook the booms from under their retaining hooks but thankfully no further damage was sustained. However, whilst I was “fishing” with the bamboo cane to retrieve the errant booms, a police car pulled up behind the ensemble. My heart sank, remembering the previous occasion when a highly bombastic police inspector had “moved us on” from a previous location in Giltbrook - allegedly for obstructing the highway. This time could not be more different. “Hi there”, he said, “Do you want a hand ?” I replied that we would be on our way within minutes. “That’s fine”, he responded, “there’s not much traffic but I’ll direct it round you”. He could not have been more helpful. 466’s booms were disentangled from the telegraph wires and we bade farewell to our cheery policeman. His parting shot was: “I have sometimes directed traffic around trolleybuses that have come off the wires in the city. I never thought that I’d be directing traffic around a trolleybus with its poles off - but 3 miles away from the trolleybus wires !” 466 duly became the first trolleybus, and indeed the first preserved vehicle, to arrive at Plumtree. This prompted another useful article and welcome advertising in the local newspaper entitled “Britain’s old trolleys head for Notts”.

541 followed to Plumtree on 21 June 1964 following an official handing-over ceremony at Huddersfield’s Longroyd Bridge Depot. It was towed, with considerable help from a certain Mike Dare, by a Dennis coach that had been recently acquired by London members of the NTA. About this time a character that Steve named “The Student” appeared on the scene. I recollect that he visited Plumtree and worked on the trolleybuses, bringing extra help with him at times. He also attended one of our regular “get-togethers” at the Chairman’s house. Promises were made of financial support following the usual £1 per week system. He then did a disappearing act, not to be seen again for some time when the process was repeated.



Nottingham 466 and Huddersfield 541 at Plumtree Station on 21 June 1964, the day when the latter trolleybus had arrived on site. 466 had been the first vehicle to arrive at Plumtree from storage in our back garden a few weeks earlier on 7 June

---

1250 was finally towed from Manchester to Plumtree on Sunday 27 July 1964. It proved interesting when the trolleybus passed through Nottingham city centre. On the back of a tow truck and in red and cream livery that contrasted with Nottingham’s green with three cream bands, 1250 sported “Belle Vue” on its destination blinds. This was the (then) well-known zoo and amusement park



on Manchester's outskirts and was set on 1250's destination blinds to promote interest in the trolleybus and identify its home city to any passer-by. In Nottingham's Old Market Square, 1250's progress was halted by traffic lights: a Nottingham trolleybus on service 43 left the stop and pulled out in front; the lights changed and the Nottingham vehicle took off - pursued by an intended passenger. Sitting on the top deck of 1250, we noticed that having missed the 43, he then turned his attention to 1250 and leaped aboard - after all, it was a trolleybus ! We went downstairs and stood in front of our "passenger" who had sat on a rear bench seat and was busily reading his newspaper. Realising our presence, he did not look up - simply proffering a "threepenny bit" coin saying "Midland Station please !" We put him off there....

---



Manchester 1250 was added to the line-up at Plumtree Station and is seen alongside Huddersfield 541 and Nottingham 466. This photo was taken minutes after 1250's arrival on site on 27 July 1964. These were heady days with three trolleybuses arriving within a few weeks of each other !

With three trolleybuses now on site, the financial problems of the NTG were exacerbated. Although repayment of the loan on 466 was now approaching completion, the Plumtree rent was now required - every week. Since previous income generators were now denied to the NTG, their only method of financing everything was via the usual "£1 per week" scheme. It had been anticipated that the NTA would substantially contribute to the funding. All three vehicles were regarded as NTA preservation schemes, with 1250 purchased in their name and 541 presented directly to them, but for some reason, no financial contributions at all were received. Several Nottingham members (including your writer) were now paying rather more than £1 per week. Again, if any reader has alternative information it would be good to learn, but my recollection is that not one penny was ever received by the NTG from the NTA. It is difficult to understand the NTA's reluctance - even possible refusal - to support the Plumtree site at this stage - again, any additional explanation would be welcomed.

However, the NTG still wished to support the NTA. There was a naive feeling that the question of finance had arisen due to some sort of misunderstanding - or there might be timing issues involved in NTA monetary assistance. Simply, there was financial confusion in Nottingham. Would the Chairman ultimately be able to improve circumstances or could things possibly get worse ?

---

## VEHICLE REPORTS

*Compiled from notes supplied by Andy Thornton, Bob Ashton, Andrew Fieldsend, Gary Wilkinson and Francis Whitehead.*

**Wellington 82:** The application for a PRISM grant from Arts Council England has been successful and this will fund a very large part 82's restoration, which will begin soon at the Swindon premises of Thamesdown Transport.

**Cleethorpes 54:** Upholstering of the replacement seats has been completed, and these will be fitted when 54 is close to entering service. The task took around 20 years and firstly required the fabrication of a new set of wooden frames for both seat backs and bases. For the latter, "Dunlopillo" cushions sourced from the Barnsley scrapyards were used while for the former it was possible to salvage the horsehair fillings from the original seats. Leathercloth was purchased new from a shop in Grimsby recommended by Grimsby-Cleethorpes Transport, while the fabric, purchased from the LTPS, is the London-style moquette which has the same blue-based colour scheme (but is of a different pattern) to that originally used on 54. Owner Andrew Fieldsend fitted the leathercloth (upper deck) and moquette (lower deck) to the seat bases, as this was quite a simple task, but the job of making the fluted upper deck seat backs and panelled lower deck seat backs was undertaken by a long-standing friend with an interest in upholstery and who possesses a heavy-duty sewing machine.



Andrew  
Fieldsend at  
work on  
Cleethorpes  
54

*Photos: Andy  
Thornton*



Progress on 54's electrical work has been slow, but new trunking has been installed that will carry the cables from the dynamo mounted on the motor to the battery located in the cab. The task of rubbing down the paintwork is now virtually completed and it is expected that 54 will be gloss painted during 2014.

**Doncaster 375:** Since our last report, the traction motor has been refitted and the exterior painting has continued, with grey primer and undercoat both completed during October. Maroon gloss has been applied to the roof and

much of the upper deck, but work came to a halt in mid-November owing to cold weather and dampness in the workshop affecting the drying of the paint. 375 was then moved from the workshop into the depot, for work to continue on the lower deck ceiling and floor, along with attention to the electrics and mechanics. The team has also repaired the offside front mudguard.



*Above:* Early October sees Steve the painter finishing off the primer  
*Top right:* By 20 October, 375 has maroon undercoat on much of the exterior ...



*Bottom right:* ...and ten days later there is gloss on the roof and upper deck side panels



*Left:* After extensive efforts, the old paint has finally been removed from the ceiling downstairs, together with the remains of the original advertisements. A couple of light fittings have been inspected and their wiring behind one of the ceiling panels satisfactorily checked. More to go !

*Photos: Bob Ashton*

For more pictures of the restoration progress visit [www.sandtoft.org/members](http://www.sandtoft.org/members) and follow the link "The Restoration of Doncaster's Last Trolleybus"



**Bradford 758**, which is owned by the Bradford Trolleybus Association, left Sandtoft on 2 November for a temporary home at the Keighley Bus Museum where restoration will be completed.

Immediately before the tow from Sandtoft to Keighley, 758's wheels are changed for a set with "road-legal" tyres borrowed from the KBM's preserved AEC Matador towing wagon. Ian Metcalfe keeps an eye on the team from Keighley Bus Museum as they do the hard work

*Photo: Gary Wilkinson*



With front wheels removed to achieve a level lift, 758 leaves Sandtoft behind the KBM's preserved Yorkshire Rider ERF tow truck

*Photo: Bob Ashton*

An unusual view from one of the bridges on the M62 as 758 approaches Bradford. After leaving the motorway, 758 journeyed over sections of several former Bradford trolleybus routes, via Wakefield Road, Canal Road, Shipley and Saltaire, where it passed the former trolleybus depot building (now a restaurant)

*Photo: Gary Wilkinson*







On arrival at Keighley Bus Museum the front wheels were refitted and 758 was finally moved into place by a small dumper truck. This view shows 758 safely under cover again and joining the company of another interesting collection of preserved vehicles

*Photo: Gary Wilkinson*

**Nottingham 367:** Restoration has moved forward very visibly during 2013, with new woodwork taking shape round the front of the vehicle and many other improvements being made. (*More photos and a full report in the next 'Scene – ed.'*)

**Nottingham 493's** electrical equipment has received attention - with owner Andy Thornton realising that the job of rewiring the vehicle was never considered when it was originally designed ! Some of the cables had temporarily been installed using an easier route when 493 was commissioned for its most recent spell of service, and these now need to be moved to their permanent location. Much time-consuming investigation and head scratching has resulted ! However, having a digital camera has helped the process considerably by making it possible to investigate "invisible" spaces deep inside and behind the contactor cabinet.



John Whipham assesses Nottingham 367's upper deck framing with a view to renewal, now that the lower deck is substantially complete

*Photo: Graham Bilbé*

**The Tractors:** The report in 'Scene 90' about the Leyland tractor being in regular use for moving trolleybuses proved to be premature. Although it was actually used during one weekend last summer, the current fierceness of its clutch means that accurate shunting of vehicles can be difficult. We hope that this will be remedied in due course, but this is less urgent now that the International tractor is serviceable again, and the International continued to be our main towing vehicle throughout the 2013 season.

## MUSEUM SITE WORK DURING 2013

Many comments were made by visitors at this year's open days about the very presentable appearance of the Museum site. This reflects much volunteer effort, both in the public areas and behind the scenes, to keep everywhere looking tidy and to improve areas needing attention. We have already mentioned a few of these activities in *Sandtoft Scene* during 2013, starting with the winter working parties and including the improvements to the Skegness Building, the box van, the zebra crossings and even the drainage system. Much more has been going on, and what follows has been compiled from information supplied by Tony Ferris to bring the reports up to date.



Wielding the sledgehammer again, John Whipham extends the fencing behind the depot, and demonstrates how unwanted steel tubing can be reused, freeing up storage space elsewhere

*Photo: John Stainforth*

Many improvements and extensions to the paving have been made, largely thanks to the tireless efforts of John Whipham. New slabs have been laid alongside the Skegness building and concreting done on the path by the Pelham building. The seat in the memorial garden is now mounted on slabs, the wheelie-bin area has been concreted and a start made on concreting "rammel corner". Kerbstones along the back straight have been moved back to the fence and gaps left for water drainage. Further improvements by the Skegness building have included a new ramp and rear step; new woodwork had been fitted inside it along with new skirting and new downpipes outside, whilst the plywood sheets have been removed and photo displays put up on the walls inside.

Throughout the year, much goes on to keep the gardens and the trees under control. The grass always gets regular cutting, the hedges are trimmed and the trimmer deployed to keep the frontage by the roadside fence under control. This year the team has cut back the trees along the "back straight" and by the Isle Tour bus stop, and they have trimmed bushes all round the site. They have drastically pruned the apple trees, and - in an area well out of sight from our visitors - the trees behind the caravan. The grass areas have all been edged and the play area weeded and raked, whilst the patio area by *The Tea Trolley* café has been extended, the adjoining gardens tidied and new shrubs planted. Seven tree stumps have also been removed - never an easy task. In the field at the far end of the Museum the excavations for the new drainage pipes meant that lots more stones had to be cleared away and some new fencing has since appeared in that area.

The *Sunbeam Cycle Shop* has been painted this year and new woodwork

added, along with the new sign featured in 'Scene no.91. Both the bus shelter and tram shelter have been cleaned, and the stores prefab behind the depot has had a drastic clear-out. Behind the stores prefab and along our boundary with "Burntwood", the whole length of the dyke has been strimmed, raked and cleaned out, and the metal fencing alongside the dyke extended by several metres. External maintenance has continued on several of our buildings and repairs made to both the *Regal* cinema and the brown Sheffield tram body. Outer walls of the *Regal* cinema have been painted and the rear of both the *Regal* and *Pelham* buildings jet-washed. Windows and signs round the *Axholme Stores* have received attention, the downpipes on the 1950s Prefab painted, gutters on all the buildings cleaned regularly and weather boards on several doors added or renewed.

Outdoor clearance and tidying has progressed steadily throughout the season, with much work in the chassis display area and the space between the entrance and the Skegness building. The team has tidied-up the compound where building materials are stored and made a start on "rammel corner", whilst the surfaces of the paths all over the site have been made cleaner and safer with the use of the pressure washer. Worn-out tyres tend to accumulate and create an eyesore; this year we disposed of 21 of them and cleared the tyre storage area, whilst 15 wheels were taken away to have their tyres removed.



End of the operating season and time to put the benches and garden furniture into storage

*Photo: Bob Ashton*

On top of all this regular maintenance, the outdoor team has been working on jobs to improve the facilities we already have and to create some new features for our visitors. The Anderson shelter is destined for public display, illustrating its wartime use, and with this in mind it has had a coat of paint and been partially cleared of items stored inside it. A set of petrol pumps will eventually be installed by the *Sunbeam Cycle Shop*, and the holes in the ground to take them have now been prepared. The ladies' toilet now has a wheelchair ramp and has had its ventilation improved. Security of the Museum is an increasing concern, and with that in mind a set of CCTV cameras has been professionally installed, with the associated signs being put up by our volunteers.

And, as if keeping the main Museum premises shipshape has not been enough for Tony and his team to do, they also managed to completely clear the outside of the former chapel at Westgate as well !



## A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

Graham Bilbé and Mike Johnson

A Trolleybus Driving Experience Day with a difference took place on 19 August last, when London bus driver David Shailes was celebrating his 60th birthday, and he and four colleagues came to the Museum in their preserved London RMA Routemaster. Whilst many Routemasters have been

preserved, RMA58 is unusual, being one of the shorter-length front entrance types originally used on BEA's airport bus service. David is one of a team running Redroutemaster.com - a Brentford-based private hire company providing Routemasters for special occasions.



David and guests with RMA58 and 1812

*Photo: Graham Bilbé*

We felt it very poetic to be teaching **Routemaster** drivers to drive **trolleybuses** - just the reverse of what London Transport were doing 50-odd years ago ! Having proved their ability on Maidstone 72, they were each allowed a couple of circuits on London 1812, which evidently made their day... and for Dave's son and daughter, the

session concluded with a brief training trip on the RMA before they set off home. Incidentally, they were sufficiently impressed with our instruction standards that our instructor was recruited by them to carry out an assessment and guidance session for one of their (commercial) drivers - so we must be doing something right !

All five trainees performed very successfully on both trolleybuses and a good time was had by them and by Dave's family. At the end of the afternoon, presentation of certificates was followed by a special touch - presentation to Dave of a 60th birthday chocolate cake.

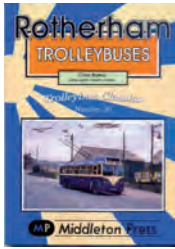
And well done, everyone on duty for the event, including Tony Ferris, Dave Shepherd, Andy Payling, Gill Ferris and Audrey Rennie.



*Photo: Mike Johnson*



## BOOK REVIEW



### **Trolleybus Classics No.30: Rotherham Trolleybuses**

*Written by .Colin Barker*

*Published by Middleton Press*

**Available in the Trolleyshop - £16.95**

and online at [www.sandtoft.org/shop/bookview.php?id=b0088](http://www.sandtoft.org/shop/bookview.php?id=b0088)

(£19.95 including p+p)

It was a joy to see one of the single-deck “tracklesses”, which used to dominate Rotherham’s roads, on the cover of this recently-published book, and this brought back a flood of memories. The trolleybus on the cover is FET609 (initially no.9, later renumbered 5), which seems little-changed from when new in 1950, apart from its colour scheme.

Inauguration of the system in 1912 had been delayed by the Ministry of Transport to allow the earlier systems to “settle-in”, but Rotherham was still very much a pioneer in railless traction, as illustrated by a Rotherham trolleybus venturing on the tramway to Sheffield as early as 1913, using the positive boom and a “skate” to provide power. At a time when the managers of municipal transport systems held sway, the strengths and priorities of those individuals abounded. Hence RCTD’s aim was to provide single-deck, centre-entranced trolley and motor bus services, which enabled a frequent and safe service to the public, characterised by the quick loading and unloading of passengers.

The book’s photographs show a variety of trolleybuses from 1912 until 1965, together with an abundance of what is now known as “street architecture”. These pictures are clearly labeled and feature early vehicles, roads, buildings and fashions. The overhead is illustrated, showing some of the wiring and turning circles along the routes, and there is information about the route numbers and the tickets used. The book reminds us of RCTD’s fixation with re-numbering both its trolleybus fleet and its routes, and all the vehicle types are depicted, including the East Lancs-bodied Daimler CTC6s that were sold to Spain between 1956 and 1961. RCTD was always a very resourceful and economical organisation, rebodilyng many of the fleet as double-deckers during 1956 and 1957 to achieve essential efficiencies. These made quite a change to Rotherham’s local scenery, which is shown clearly in the later photographs, with the town’s modern “developments” also beginning to change the local scenes. *Mike Johnson*

## **MODEL LAYOUT PARTS APPEAL**

Visitors to the Model Weekend in September will have seen some of the creations of our member John Huddleston. John is currently seeking to develop his exhibition layout of “Ober”, which uses the vintage Hamo model tramway system dating from the early 1950s.

Specifically, he needs more of the following Hamo accessories: Pantographs, couplers, light bulbs, destination boards and bogie springs. If you can help, contact: John Huddleston, 8 Wilmot Avenue, Chaddesden, Derby, DE21 6PL, e-mail: [huddlestonja8@hotmail.com](mailto:huddlestonja8@hotmail.com) Tel: 01332 676822 or 07779 792448.

## NEWS FROM OTHER MUSEUMS

**Bradford 704:** Following the decision of the Cardiff and South Wales Trolleybus Project to seek a new owner for Bradford 704, we are pleased to report that this trolleybus has now been purchased by a newly-formed group - the East Kent Trolleybus Group, based at the East Kent Railway at Shepherdswell, near Dover. 704 was towed to Shepherdswell on 5 October and will go on display there when restored. The Group is currently organising some form of covered accommodation for "Barney", as 704 has become known after a barn owl moved in. Their chairman is our member Jeff White, and members of the Group have already paid a visit to Sandtoft to examine sister-vehicle 706 as part of assessing the work needed to complete the partial restoration already undertaken whilst 704 was in Cardiff.

**Notts. & Derbys. 357** has become a recent addition to the fleet of the London Trolleybus Preservation Society. It is a 1949 BUT 9611T with Weymann H30/26R body and ran for many years in Bradford as 774. The vehicle requires restoration and will be stored in the Society's off-site workshop/storage facility before going to the East Anglia Transport Museum.

**Notts. & Derbys. 353:** Dan Shears of the West of England Transport Collection is looking at parting with Notts. & Derbys. 353, a similar vehicle to 357. In 1953 it became Bradford 770, running there until 1963, then being sold for preservation in 1967. For many years 353 was kept in covered accommodation near Bournemouth and is in good condition, having had a great deal of work done including restoration to Notts. & Derbys. livery. Dan will consider either placing it out on loan or selling it for £6,000. If you are interested, please e-mail [daniel.shearswetc@gmail.com](mailto:daniel.shearswetc@gmail.com) (Tel: 07855 125913).

## DEAR 'SCENE

### The Trolleybus in the First World War

There has been a good response to my appeal in the October editions of *Trolleybus* and *Sandtoft Scene*. I'd like to thank Colin Allan, Tony Ferris, Tim Stubbs and John Whitehead who have all provided help as a result. The BTS and the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft will be very grateful for further help in tracking down any artefacts which may still exist from this era and for members' ideas about how we can tell the story of the early trolleybus. If you can help, please contact me by email ([chairman@britishtrolley.org.uk](mailto:chairman@britishtrolley.org.uk)) or via the Museum address.

*Dave Chick, BTS Chairman*

+++++

*Dear 'Scene*

We visited on your Twilight day and this is just to say we had an absolute hoot of a day. Please pass our thanks to your lovely welcoming volunteers. They made it for us.

*Mark Cudworth, Harrogate*

*Sandra Lemons added...* Just to say a really big thank you to all the staff who made us so welcome yesterday when we visited ! We obtained some wonderful pictures, had a great time, and our canine companions ("Laika" and "Mushka") would also like to thank everyone for the greetings and fusses.

## MUSEUM DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Our long-term development goals, combined with the need to renew the Museum's Accreditation status this year, mean that we are taking every opportunity to involve our professional Museum Development Officers (MDOs) in both these aspects. As part of this the first of two planning workshops took place on Sunday 8 December, led by Dieter Hopkin of *Museum Development Yorkshire*. The theme of this session was "Establishing the Basics" and the day began by developing a consensus about why we exist, what we do, and how to articulate all that in a succinct way.

Our advisors feel that it is very important to understand the scale and complexity of everything we do, especially the business operations, and during the course of this first workshop we identified some specific issues that need to be addressed for the Museum to move forward effectively. An important element is having a clear statement of roles and responsibilities, and this coincides with work already in progress to bring up to date the Directors' Responsibilities chart published in 'Scene No.69. We will report more on this topic in the April 'Scene, with a review of progress following the second workshop in February.

## SANDTOFT ON THE WEB

In addition to our long-established website at [www.sandtoft.org](http://www.sandtoft.org) and the relatively recent Members' page at [www.sandtoft.org/members](http://www.sandtoft.org/members), readers may be interested to take a look at:

- ❖ **Facebook:** The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft *Facebook* Page is at <https://www.facebook.com/trolleybusmuseum> for which you will need *Facebook* access to use its facilities in full. This page provides news of up-coming and recent open days, and serves as a forum for comments, questions and answers about the Museum.
- ❖ **Google Tour:** A newly-added *Google Maps* extension gives a 3-D virtual tour of the Museum, letting you explore the outdoor public areas and even "walk inside" some of the buildings. The easiest way to access it is to Google "Trolleybus Museum Sandtoft" and click on the "red balloon" in the map at the top right, then click on the "yellow man" to enter the tour itself. Successful navigation does require practice, and it is easier if you have used *Google Maps* to do this before !
- ❖ **'Gathering 2013:** This YouTube video of Sandtoft Gathering 2013 made by member John Parkin runs for 16 minutes and stars some our best-loved moving exhibits and platform staff. Truly recommended viewing: the Museum is teeming with visitors and trolleybuses on the move. And watch for the mid-afternoon deluge when the cameraman is on board Manchester 1344. Go to [www.sandtoft.org/members](http://www.sandtoft.org/members) for a link.
- ❖ **Trip Advisor:** Visitors to the Museum have been using its presence on *Trip Advisor* to rate their experiences and leave comments about their day out. These all seem very positive and compare favourably with similar attractions. Go to [www.sandtoft.org/members](http://www.sandtoft.org/members) for a link.

# RUNNING DAYS IN 2014

(Open 11.00am - 5.00pm unless stated otherwise)

<b>Weekend Trolleydays</b>	Saturday, 29 March 🚍 Sunday, 30 March
<b>Easter Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>with an Easter egg hunt for the children</i>	Saturday, 19 April 🚍 Sunday, 20 April Monday, 21 April <b>Free Bus</b>
<b>May Day Bank Holiday Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>Presented jointly by the British Trolleybus Society, Bradford Trolleybus Association and Doncaster Omnibus &amp; Light Railway Society</i>	Saturday, 3 May 🚍 Sunday, 4 May Monday, 5 May <b>Free Bus</b>
<b>Spring Bank Holiday Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>celebrating the centenary of Chas. H. Roe – the Leeds bus body builder with a range of visiting Roe-bodied vehicles on display</i>	Saturday, 24 May 🚍 Sunday, 25 May Monday, 26 May <b>Free Bus</b>
<b>Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>and diesel bus demonstrations and rides</i>	Saturday, 7 June 🚍 Sunday, 8 June <b>Free Bus</b>
<b>Worldwide Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>featuring our trolleybuses from overseas</i>	Saturday, 21 June 🚍 Sunday, 22 June <b>Free Bus</b>
<b>Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>featuring a Teddy Bears' Picnic</i>	Saturday, 5 July 🚍 Sunday, 6 July
<b>'Gathering Saturday Trolleyday - a preview of 'Gathering Day itself: twilight trolleybus operation &amp; real ale beer tent</b>	Saturday, 26 July 🚍 (Open 11.00am - 10.00pm)
<b>Sandtoft Gathering 2014</b> <i>with visiting historic vehicles, transport flea market, live music, real ale beer tent &amp; lots for the family to see &amp; do</i>	Sunday, 27 July <b>Free Bus</b> (Open 10.00am - 6.00pm)
<b>Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>featuring Nottingham's trolleybuses</i>	Saturday, 9 August 🚍 Sunday, 10 August
<b>Blues &amp; Twos Weekend &amp; Trolleydays</b> <i>late summer bank holiday weekend featuring dramatic emergency services displays and demonstrations</i>	Saturday, 23 August 🚍 Sunday, 24 August Monday, 25 August <b>Free Bus</b>
<b>Model Weekend &amp; Trolleydays</b> <i>featuring model trolleybus, tram &amp; train displays</i>	Saturday, 6 September 🚍 Sunday, 7 September
<b>European Trolleybus Day &amp; Weekend Trolleydays</b> <i>featuring modern trolleybus technology &amp; operation exhibitions</i>	Saturday, 20 September 🚍 Sunday, 21 September <b>Free Bus</b>
<b>St. Leger Historic Vehicle Rally</b>	Sunday, 5 October <b>Free Bus</b>
<b>Twilight Trolleyday</b> <i>with twilight &amp; after-dark trolleybus operation; advance order fish 'n chips</i>	Saturday, 25 October 🚍 (Open 11.00am - 9.00pm)
<b>End of Season Trolleyday &amp; twilight running (finishes at 6.00pm)</b>	Sunday, 26 October

🚍 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 approximately 40 minutes)

**ADMISSION** (charges include a Gift Aid donation):

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

**On days shown on red background:**

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

For full up-to-date details, visit [www.sandtoft.org](http://www.sandtoft.org)