

Sandtoft Scene

January 2015
No. 96



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



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Membership Secretary: If you change your address, please advise David Needham membership@sandtoft.org to ensure that your next *Sandtoft Scene* is mailed correctly

FRONT COVER PICTURE: Under a shining web of metal, Derby Corporation wartime utility 172 prepares for twilight operations on 25 October *Photo: Bob Ashton*

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.

SANDTOFT SCENE

NUMBER 96

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FROM THE EDITOR

During this “quiet” season it is worth taking a moment to reflect on how well things have gone for the Museum over the past year. You can read more about this in our reports of last Autumn’s running days, with their ever-increasing variety of themes and activities. For further good news, have a look through our AGM summary: visitor numbers up, membership up and our finances in very good shape.

However, it’s not all wonderful news, and (as explained on page 26) our progress with the land purchase has been particularly fraught-filled, with events essentially following a timescale determined by our neighbour from whom we are buying the land. We also have quite a challenge ahead with providing continuity of services in *The Tea Trolley* café, which will probably mean offering a minimal set of refreshments until a substantial new team is built up - and we still need new volunteers to make that possible. A further setback has been a 50%-reduction in our regular team of site workers, following Tony Ferris’ accident in early January when he suffered a broken ankle. Fortunately his absence should only be for a couple of months, and we all wish Tony well for a full and swift recovery. But an incident like this does underline how dependent the Museum has become on a very small number of key workers who spend a very large proportion of their time there. We are very short of site workers and once again we would like to appeal to anyone who is able to help - ideally long-term, but at least to see us through Tony’s absence from active duties. You can do this by joining our

WORKING PARTIES

Although the weather can often be discouraging whilst the Museum is closed for the winter, we still need to continue with maintenance of the site and also take the opportunity to tackle specific jobs that cannot be done during the running season. One such task is realigning the kerbs and putting up the 1930s cast iron shelter at the main trolleybus stop.

We would like to thank those who participated in this year’s first working party on 8 January, and to invite as many as possible to join the next one on Saturday 7 February. Further working parties will be arranged before Easter and members who are on the members@sandtoft.org mailing list will be notified by e-mail. To receive details please ensure that you are on that list and that the e-mail address recorded there is your up-to-date one. To add your name to it, just send a blank e-mail to member-subscribe@sandtoft.org or for other queries contact webmaster@sandtoft.org. To provide extra momentum, we are also expecting one of our March working parties to be supplemented by a group of aeronautics trainees who have kindly volunteered their services to support the Museum.

Please note: News deadline for the next Sandtoft Scene is 10 March 2015

TROLLEY DOLLIES' FAREWELL

The end of the 2014 season saw the retirement of several of our long-serving café volunteers, who have built up *The Tea Trolley* to achieve an enviable reputation for friendly service, quality food and good value. Whilst members are sorry that they are standing down, we all know that they have made an outstanding contribution to the Museum over the past ten years, and that their retirement has been very well earned.



An emotional farewell to three "Trolley Dollies": (left-to-right) Judy Martindale, Cherryll Crowther and Bernice Needham. Also stepping down from mainstream *Tea Trolley* duties is Gill Ferris, but who was away on the day. Gill has agreed to continue with providing the café refreshments on TDE days.

Photo: Bruce Lake

Those present at the AGM were able to express their appreciation to three of them personally, joining Chairman Graham Bilbé who led the tributes and presented them with gifts to mark the occasion. He also reminded everyone that our "Trolley Dollies" had been hard at work during the afternoon of the meeting, carrying out an end-of-season clean-up of the café and its equipment, so that their successors can take over with everything in a smart and presentable state.



Their last weekend serving visitors had been the Twilight Trolleydays, when photographer Bob Ashton managed to catch a larger group of our café volunteers together

(left to right): Cherryll Crowther, Audrey Rennie, Bernice Needham, Gill Ferris and Judy Martindale with (not retiring just yet!) Joanna Hanchett

And finally, a special word of gratitude to Audrey Rennie, who appears in the lower picture opposite. Audrey has worked with the café team for several years and her cheerful personality has always made her very popular with colleagues and customers alike. Despite being in her mid-80s she displayed amazing stamina during busy events, but sadly her mobility has suffered with the onset of arthritis and she was out of action during most of 2014. We wish Audrey all the best for the future and we thank her for everything she has done for us.

WELLINGTON 82 RESTORATION

Francis Whitehead

The brief note about no.82 in October 2014's 'Scene and earlier updates in January and July rather masked what else has been going on with this restoration project !



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

No.82 was actually low-loaded from Swindon to First South Yorkshire's Rotherham works on 27 May 2014 and work started on it 3 days later. It had only been on 12 May that representatives from First had examined 82 with Graham Bilbé and Francis Whitehead and discussed our requirements, particularly with regard to authenticity as far as practicable in replicating 82's original design detail - something also demanded by the Arts Council England (ACE) PRISM grant. It was agreed that work would be undertaken in logical stages, that there would be ongoing liaison on progress, problems and solutions and close monitoring of costs with regular invoicing and payments.

The first agreed task was to deal with the roof area and investigate the extent of any problems caused by a rust hole that had formed in the cove panel above the central doorway on the nearside. So, towards the end of June, Bruce Lake was asked to call in at Rotherham to inspect what had been uncovered and discuss necessary repairs. In short, there was a massive amount of corrosion, with some steelwork wasted away to nothing. The affected area included the main body frame above the nearside windows and part of the structure that effectively makes up the concealed trolley gantry. The only solution was to laboriously fabricate the many different steel components and re-construct the affected

Left: 1 February 2013 and, having just arrived at Thamesdown Transport's depot, 82 is carefully reversed off a low-loader under gravity, steadied by a winch rope

Photo: Graham Bilbé

Right: 82 waiting for action at Swindon surrounded by Dennis Darts

Photo: Dave Hall



structure. As luck would have it, sufficient “evidence” of what should be there existed in varying degrees of condition on other body bays and hence it was possible to undertake an authentic reconstruction. A curious complication was that a number of (mostly) timber components that effectively enabled interior panels, stanchions and sundry fittings to be secured in place were, themselves, not connected to the body structure ! It is surmised that as 82 was the first of the batch to be constructed, and the fact that it was needed for a proving trial run in Walsall and hence there were tight time constraints, the MCCW labour force made a number of “shortcuts” that would otherwise, in the normal course of constructing a new variant of body, have been resolved properly: this is only a suggestion and short of undertaking investigations on sister trolleybus no.83 in New Zealand, cannot be proved one way or the other. Notwithstanding, it was decided to now properly fix these components, many of which had fixing holes already provided.

Following a further visit to no.82 in mid-July, Bruce reported that progress with the repairs was good and the standard of workmanship to be very high. Francis Whitehead visited no.82 at the end of August to note further good progress and the high standard of



Above-left: 82 at Rotherham “cocooned” in staging to give access to the roof *Photo: Bruce Lake*

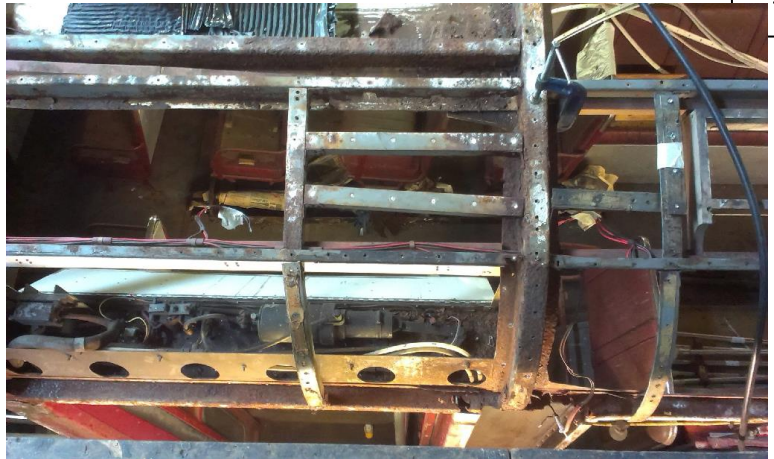
workmanship. An accident-damaged pillar just behind the centre doorway has been repaired and new (and cleaned-up old) steelwork has been painted as reconstruction has progressed. By mid-September, much of the roof panelling, including a new aluminium sheet, had been fitted and the badly-dented rear dome had been skilfully beaten back into shape such that no-one would know it had ever been damaged.

The PRISM grant awarded to the Museum for the restoration of no.82 was for up to £19,431.00, just short of the £20,000 ceiling imposed by ACE for any one “object” and representing 75% of the anticipated overall project cost when the application was compiled (early 2013). The grant comes with a number of conditions designed to ensure proper care (in all senses) of the “object”: good access for the public when the project is completed and the proper spending of the grant monies. ACE also require, amongst other things, authenticity as far as is practicable, proper consideration in choosing alternative materials where this is necessary and due acknowledgement of the PRISM grant in information associated with the “object” and the project.

Right: With roof panels removed, the extent of the corrosion to the roof structure above the central doorway can be seen, with (on the right) the "holed" stress panel that supports a trolley gantry member, itself badly corroded, completely wasted away.

Below: Seen from the saloon, the renewed roof members in course of reassembly

Photos: Bruce Lake



Following a review of progress, it was decided that various elements of the work should be brought forward to reduce the overall project timetable: replacement bumper bars have been fabricated, the traction motor overhauled, wheels taken off, shot-blasted and new tyres

fitted, replacement window rubbers sourced and, more recently, replacement linoleum-type floor covering purchased. Some of this has been done by First, but in some cases it has been ourselves, in liaison with First, who have sourced and purchased items. The roof vents had seriously corroded and, being an obsolete model(!), after various possibilities had come to nothing or been horrendously expensive, member Andy Feather was consulted and it turned out he had five of the very thing we were after "in stock"! They have now been fitted.

We are currently trying to source replacement destination blinds as all the existing ones have their problems. Ideally, we would like to obtain genuine trolleybus blinds from New Zealand, but it may be that we repair three of the existing and get the fourth completely renewed as it is beyond salvation. An interesting feature of both number blinds is the omission of the number 13: they otherwise run from 1 to 50, although Wellington's trolleybus routes never used all those numbers.

Work continues on no.82 and the plan is for it to be ready to be launched at the 20-21 June Worldwide Trolleyday weekend.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined in recent months:

Mr Mark Corfield (Staveley, nr.Chesterfield)

Mr Ben Goodman (Doncaster)

Mr Anthony Robson (Southampton)

NEWS ROUND-UP

Traffic Department Report for 2014

Stewart David

Once again the Traffic Department has had a very successful operating season. We undertook a total of 12,254 passenger journeys over 1,061 service trips - up by an impressive 14% and 9% respectively on 2013's totals. I'm very pleased to say that the traffic operation I inherited back in 2005 when I was appointed Department Manager is now almost unrecognisable and huge improvements have been made in safety, operational and training procedures in the interim. More improvements are planned for 2015 season, including distribution of the long-awaited *Vehicle Movement and Operations Guide*, setting out the standards we expect and providing further robust evidence of a professionally-managed and, above all, safe operation.

We now have a really effective and impressive "regular" core team of traffic staff attending the Museum for public open days and the Trolleybus Driving Experience (TDE) sessions. The 100th TDE candidate will very shortly complete the process since we started these back in 2009. TDE sessions are usually held on a Monday following an open weekend, and over the past years have raised a considerable sum for Museum funds.

Site Work

Some of the improvements made during the 2014 season are recorded here:

Right: fencing beside the ditch is now complete, after sustained effort by John Whipham

Photo: Andy Thornton



Left: Smartly-laid paving now in place between the depot and the workshop, thanks to John Whipham - a great improvement on the uneven (and often muddy) old footpath

Photo: Andy Thornton

Right: Gerry Carroll painting one of the period lamp standards

Photo: Bob Ashton



Leeds NGT visit

Bruce Lake et al

On 19 September 2014, the Museum hosted a delegation from the Leeds New Generation Transport (NGT) project. After slow but steady progress, this has now completed its public consultation phase and, despite some local objections, there is still much optimism for the return of trolleybuses to the City of Leeds in a few years' time. The NGT team was very interested to learn about our practical experience of running a fleet of trolleybuses and maintaining their infrastructure - something that has not been done commercially in the UK for over 40 years.

They rode on London 1348 and some of our more modern overseas trolleybuses, including Marseille 202 with its dual-mode operation and automatic rewiring capabilities, Edmonton 189 and Athens 5088. They were impressed with the acceleration characteristics of these vehicles. Dave Chick was able to share his experience of recent visits to modern systems abroad, with photographs including brand new trolleybuses recently entering service in the Czech Republic – they were particularly interested in photos of streets with trees where trolley wires were close to them which were almost invisible. Dave was also able to inform them about the large number of trolleybuses manufactured over the last year, and the fact that Skoda had just had to double their production lines. All these points are being cited as problems with the introduction of trolleybuses in the public inquiry.

Overall, the NGT team was able to gain a new perspective of many aspects of their project and they were pleased to talk to people who were enthusiastic about trolleybuses. We very much hope that developing the relationship between Leeds NGT and the Museum will bring significant mutual benefits.

New handbooks: some readers may be wondering what happened to the two volunteers' handbooks that we were hoping to distribute last year. Various delays arose during the final stages of reviewing their content, when it turned out that some of the procedures that we were documenting needed further discussion before they could be finalised. We are also revisiting whether certain topics not currently covered should be added now or in a later issue. At the moment, printing is on hold whilst the discussions continue.

A MOST UNUSUAL RELIC

Robin Symons

With additional information from Claire Pendrous

The last significant trolleybus relic known to exist in the UK and not already in either private or museum preservation is the remains of Wolverhampton trolleybus 274 near Coven, a village about five miles north of Wolverhampton. There are, of course, still a few (very few) traction poles and wall rosettes to be found in towns that once operated trolleybuses, and maybe the odd electrical sub-station which has yet to be re-developed. Many years ago, there was a rumour that the bottom deck of a pre-war Bournemouth MS2 might still exist in South Wales, but nothing further has been heard. Does anyone have any more information about what was thought to be either 151 or 169 (significantly registered BRU 2 or BRU 20) which probably indicates more than just an idle rumour ?

Wolverhampton 274 (BJW 174) was built as a Sunbeam MF2 with Park Royal bodywork and was delivered in August 1938, as one of a batch of twelve vehicles (264 to 275). With just over eleven years in service, 274 was withdrawn and de-licensed after it was involved in an accident on 20 October 1949. Two days later on 22 October 1949, the motor and electrical equipment were removed from the vehicle by engineers and the vehicle was then put up for sale. On 5 November 1949, it was purchased by a Mr S.B. Church of Fallings Park, who lived just down the road from the Park Lane depot. It was subsequently towed to Anchor Bridge at Cross Green (near Coven) where it was converted into a summer home and named "The Brubet".

Two other members of the same batch (270 and 272) were also withdrawn in 1949 and sold locally. However, the other nine vehicles were sold to Southend on 24 March 1950. Three of them (264/ 7/ 9) were moved straight away, followed by the other six in April 1950. They each served Southend between three and four years before final withdrawal.



Taken on 29 October 1963, this view shows what was quite clearly a lived-in, double-deck trolleybus, with a peculiar roof modification.

Photo: D E Smith

Rather like the Hastings trolleybus at Sandtoft (now thought most probably to be no.46), Wolverhampton 274 was eventually built completely into a dwelling, although unlike 46, its existence has been well known to enthusiasts since the 1960s. I first saw 274 in April 1970, whilst it still had its top deck and, as can be seen in the photographs, the upper deck roof had been raised. This might have been to provide more headroom, or possibly to accommodate water tanks. However, by my next visit, in August 1971, the top deck had been removed and the upper deck floor covered in roofing felt. This change was apparently made in response to a request from the local authority to bring the structure into compliance with stricter planning regulations, although it is questionable whether those would have been enforceable in retrospect. At this stage the ground floor of the property did not seem to have been extended to compensate for this loss, although the structure did grow with time, until it completely engulfed the trolleybus.

(right) Little change was made over the years to 274's exterior, seen on 17 April 1970, with the upper deck still in place...

... but by 9 August 1971 (below) the top deck had been removed and shrubbery encouraged to grow

Photos: Robin Symons



The property became known at various times as both "Sunnydale" and "Sunningdale" and was located in Dark Lane, Cross Green, in a plot adjoining the banks of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. In 1986, local historian and transport photographer Claire Pendrous visited

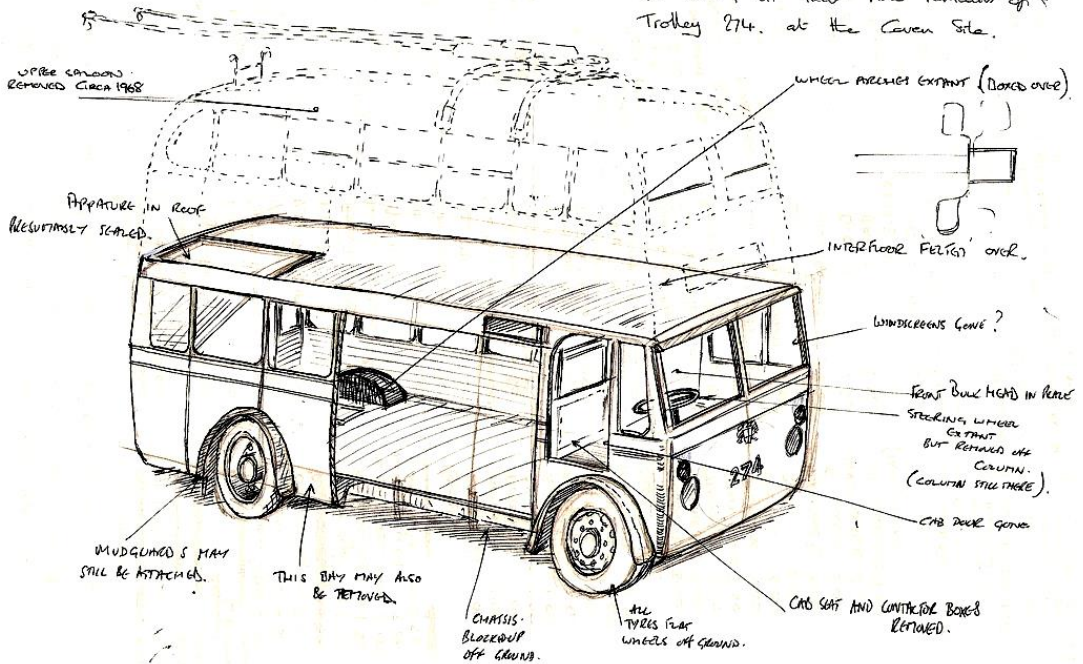
the vehicle and made a drawing illustrating the conversion of no.274. This diagram is reproduced below, with Claire's permission. No.274 was then owned by an elderly couple by the name of Warrilow, who very obligingly showed her around some of the interior. The driver's cab was still in the apple green and primrose colours of Wolverhampton Corporation. The steering wheel and column had been removed and stored under the vehicle. The Warrilows left not long afterwards and the new occupant was a Mrs Bruce, and when I made another visit myself in 1988, she kindly showed me around inside.

In 1990 there had been rumours of a proposal to clear the site and, although no development plans were submitted, it was unlikely at that time that permission would be granted for a new building as the area was classified as "green belt". A further complication was the threat in the early-1990s to construct the Western Orbital Motorway very close to the site, but these plans never materialised.

Mrs Bruce passed away in recent times and the property was put up for auction last year. Estate agents CP Bigwood described the lot as: "A freehold vacant bungalow in a derelict condition ideal for demolition and redevelopment, situated on the outskirts of Coven Village with an enviable canal side frontage", adding that it had been "...formed around a former trolley bus and has fallen into disrepair." The appearance of their sale particulars generated local press articles

Wolverhampton C.T. N°274. Sunbeam MF2/Parte Royal. H&R. 23-8-86

At Best, all that now remains of Troley 274. at the Green Site.



in the *Wolverhampton Express and Star* and in the *Birmingham Evening Mail* (see www.sandtoft.org/members for links to these items). However, a private sale was agreed and the auction scheduled for May 2014 did not take place.

By coincidence, in July last year on the day after I received my copy of *Sandtoft Scene* no.94 (where I had read about these events for the first time) I was travelling to the North-East for a wedding. The M5 and M6 were both congested, so we left the motorway at the M42 and came through Wolverhampton and the A449. I suddenly realised that this would take us past the site of 274 and called in to find that the property was deserted and that the back door was open. The property had been emptied of possessions but there, right in the middle, was what is left of 274. The chassis and lower deck floor are reasonably intact, as is the nearside bodywork and lower deck ceiling. Very little else remains, as most of the offside bodywork has been removed, along with the entire front to the cab. The front bulkhead is probably in place and maybe also parts of the rear bulkhead, but these were hidden behind cladding. The photographs show what little can be seen inside the property, especially the incongruous, now-exposed, nearside wheel and tyre!

After the sale of the property last May, Graham Bilbé contacted the selling agents, who passed on his request to the purchaser of the plot to make contact about our interest in salvaging of the remains of no.274 when the building comes



Above left: In July 2014, after removal of some internal fittings and panelling, this is what remained of the lower saloon, facing forwards

Above right: The nearside bodywork and rear wheel, forming an inner wall inside the house. This would have been hidden behind cladding when the house was occupied.

Right: The cab area, viewed from the nearside (lower saloon to the right) showing parts of the nearside front wheel, spring and chassis frames

Photos: Robin Symons

Below: The photograph accompanying the agent's sales particulars, reproduced by courtesy of CP Bigwood Chartered Surveyors



to be demolished. We have recently heard directly from the new owner, with confirmation that the building and the entombed vehicle both still exist, pending a planning application for development of the site.

Postscript The article in the online version of the *Evening Mail* generated a number of readers' comments, one of them saying that: "This is nothing new. There are several on the site just up from Bank Farm, Arley, and I know who built them." So, who knows whether any such relics have survived there too ? Would any of our members living nearby care to investigate ?

AUTUMN 2014 RUNNING DAYS

European Weekend, 20-21 September

Dave Chick

This was the fifth year that European Trolleybus Day had been celebrated by operators across Europe and the second year that the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft joined the celebrations. As was the case in 2013 this was a joint venture between the BTS and the Museum.

European Trolleybus Day is held on the first Saturday of European Mobility Week to raise awareness of the trolleybus as an important part of sustainable urban mobility in European cities. Typically, this is achieved by operators holding depot open days with live music, food and drink stalls and competitions, and at Sandtoft this year the element of fun was provided by the appearance of dance company Moxie Brawl, whilst the educational aspect was delivered through a presentation about modern trolleybuses. The event brought valuable publicity in the form of local press coverage and a live interview on BBC Radio Humberside about the event and the Museum.

The Moxies caught an early train from London on Saturday morning and did their warm-ups and practice while the weekend's operating trolleybuses were being tested, which gave the Museum quite a different feel. At 12.30 the trolleybus service was temporarily halted and the members of Moxie Brawl travelled round

A highly energetic display by Moxie Brawl (*left to right: Jenny Reeves, Kimberley Harvey, Sarah Blanc and Lucy Starkey*) on the platform of London 1348. *Photo: Jason Bowers*



the site on London 1348, which was driven by Richard Jackson and conducted by Mike Johnson. 1348 came to a halt, the Moxies alighted and we were treated to a performance of *Sit Back*, transporting us back to 1942 to watch four London Transport trolleybus clippies having their lunch break between shifts.

The piece has been developed considerably since I saw it performed as part of Shoreditch Festival last year. This is partly following the dancers being trained by Mike Johnson as trolleybus conductors when they visited Sandtoft in May: the piece now includes a dewirement (!) and it has also changed in other ways. Overall the effect is still joyful, thanks to the period music and the exuberance of the performers, but now we also see something of the darker side of the clippies' wartime lives when poor Kimberley is bereft at receiving potentially bad news. This is a real lump-in-the-throat moment. However, we're soon lifted again, but before long lunch is over as the clippies put on their serious faces and get back to work. Moxie Brawl boarded 1348 and departed to cheers and applause. Several members of the audience waited for them at the trolleybus stop to chat and take photos.

Adding a touch of authenticity to the wartime scene, ARP Warden Bob Ashton joins the Moxies in a moment of relaxation

Photo: Dave Chick



There was a second performance at 2.30 pm. During both the shows, the BTS's London Q1 no.1812 (specially returned to the main site from storage in Whites' shed) circled the site slowly using the outer circuit. Although 1812 was built after the end of the War it was displaying the correct blinds (601) for the occasion. Bob Ashton was present dressed as an Air Raid Warden, adding to the atmosphere. Moxie Brawl's performances generated a lot of enthusiasm and many of the Museum's visitors came specially to see them. They were still a major topic of conversation the following day ! The group's members also told us how much they had enjoyed themselves, describing it as "a magical day for us", and that they would like to come back. Choreographer Sarah Blanc has also suggested the possibility of creating something special for us. We would love to welcome them back, so watch out for announcements !

Of course, we were also operating trolleybuses from other parts of Europe:

Athens 5088 (on loan from the LTPS), Limoges 5 and Marseilles 202. London 1348 was also in service and Edmonton 189 (despite being non-European) was demonstrating a trolleybus with a more modern appearance, although it is actually seven years older than 5088.



A contrasting set of front-end styles in the Sunday line-up of Marseille 202, Edmonton 189, Limoges 5 and Athens 5088

A crop of electrical problems has plagued Athens 5088 during its recent outings. Ian Metcalfe investigates the cause of the trouble.

Photos: David Hanchett



The following day was another European Trolleyday, but there was no *Sit Back* and unfortunately 5088 was out of action following an electrical failure. At 12.30 and 2.30 there were line-ups of the overseas vehicles, but because of 5088's indisposition these were arranged at the north end of the site instead of the usual location in Sandtoft Square. I also delivered a presentation on modern trolleybuses which I had updated from last year's European Weekend, with almost all new photos taken during the last 12 months. In addition the "Trolley Movie" was shown again.

Visitor numbers for the weekend were well up on last year, continuing the upward trend of the previous few months.

Go to www.sandtoft.org/members to read the local press articles.

St Leger Rally and Isle of Axholme Running Day, 5 October

Ian Jones et al.

As usual, the event was organised by the Doncaster Omnibus and Light Railway Society, and included the traditional “road run” of historic vehicles from Doncaster to Sandtoft. The weather was good and the rally was well attended by vehicle entries.

Starting out from the AeroVenture Museum, the vehicle cavalcade through the town certainly raised some eyebrows, as a procession of cars and lorries, some of which hadn't been seen in Doncaster for many years, made their way down Hallgate. The star attraction was ultimately the Sentinel steam lorry which amused everybody with much hissing and billowing of steam and smoke as it stood at the traffic lights by the Danum Hotel. When the lights changed, the driver gave a brief toot on the whistle before moving off down Silver Street.

Meanwhile, back at the Museum, the day's trolleybus services were provided by Rotherham 37, Huddersfield 631, Bradford 746 and London 1348. Also out and about was Doncaster 375, giving demonstration runs and providing local interest for those visitors from Doncaster. Everyone had an opportunity to admire progress on 375, whose restoration has moved steadily nearer to completion during the past year.

Earlier in the day, before the trolleybuses began running, there was a unique photo opportunity bringing together Bradford 746 with two visiting Jowett cars. The Bradford connection is a strong one, Jowetts having been manufactured there between 1906 and 1953. Member Keith Wear brought his 1952 Jowett Javelin and the trio was completed by an immaculate 1937 Jowett 8hp saloon owned by Geoff Handford. These were just two of an impressive range of classic cars, commercials and buses taking part in the rally and on display later at the Museum.

Throughout the afternoon, a selection of “regular” and visiting motorbuses provided frequent services round the Isle of Axholme, linking Sandtoft, Belton and Epworth with trips every 15 minutes. An additional feature this year was a new “circular” Service 20, with hourly journeys connecting Epworth, Haxey, Graizelound and Westwoodside. The passengers enjoyed free rides on all these routes, travelling on Doncaster 22, Sheffield 1357 and visiting East Yorkshire Bristol Lodekka no.645.

This year, the organisers faced an additional challenge because our usual car parks were not available. Fortunately we were able to make use of land on the opposite side of Belton Road, using part of what had been the RAF Sandtoft airfield during the 1940s. With everyone pulling together both the parking and the event as a whole worked very successfully. Once again, the efforts of Jason and Brenda Bowers distributing rally entry forms at events earlier in the season helped to ensure a good turnout of visiting vehicles. Next year, this event will be branded as “The Isle of Axholme Running Day”, developing further the theme of providing a set of timetabled service operations in the locality.

For local news coverage see the link to *The Star* at www.sandtoft.org/members, with views at AeroVenture and shots of the Sentinel steam lorry on the move.



1



2

St Leger Historic Vehicle Rally and



3

1 Chesterfield Corporation Leyland Tiger no.48 of 1947

2 US Army lorry

3 Bradford 746 with two Bradford-built Jowetts

4 Austin FX3 London Taxi owned by member Mike Hirst

5 John Colwill's 1935 Sentinel S4 steam wagon

Photos:

1,2,4 Andy Thornton

3 Keith Wear

5 Jason Bowers



4



5



6



7

Isle of Axholme Running Day 2014

- 6 An upper-deck view of Doncaster 22 on the road
- 7 East Yorkshire Bristol Lodekka 645 returning from Epworth on Service 18
- 8 Huddersfield 631, Rotherham 37 and London 1348
- 9 1957 Ford Thames Fordson E83W "furniture van"
- 10 Doncaster 375's trolley booms being transferred

Photos:

- 6 Jason Bowers
- 7, 9 Jim Sambrooks
- 8 John Zebedee
- 10 Bob Ashton



8



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Twilight Trolleydays, 25-26 October David Hanchett and Dave Chick

Sandtoft seems to be a place where many different things happen! On Twilight Saturday, everything was predictable until an old gentleman who does not appear on the Museum membership list turned up. He was obviously in his “twilight years” and appeared resplendent in an old inspector’s uniform. His name was Len Champion, but he had an uncanny resemblance to our esteemed chairman Graham Bilbé with a northern accent! It turned out he was there to take our guests on a “trackless trail” through the years, right up to the present day. He ran through his life history whilst they travelled on various vehicles.

He had been born in Bradford in the early 1900s where he was surrounded by trams and later tracklesses. He started as a boy employee and continued working with them as he moved around the country, to London, then Derby and finally back to Bradford, ending up as an instructor.

As he led us through his life, he illustrated his experience with trolleybuses back in 1914 using our exhibition in the Pelham building. To help him tell his stories from the Second World War, Derby 172 - with its wartime blackout features - had been “dusted off” for the occasion and was brought out for a special run, accompanied by dimmed lights and the sound of bombing and air raid sirens. Then, whilst everyone was travelling on 172, there was a loud “kerboom” as the power went off and all the lights went out when a bomb made a direct hit on the depot.



Visitors follow Len Champion’s story through its 1914-1918 wartime years

Photo: Bob Ashton

Twilight and after-dark services were provided by Derby 172, along with (right) Bradford 792 and London 1348. Also running was Athens 5088 (left), but once again electrical problems intervened - Tim Stubbs (seen at ground level) is investigating.

Photo: Bob Ashton





After the tour, the guests were treated to a fish and chips supper, with truly wonderful home-made desserts courtesy of *The Tea Trolley* café. Two hours of superb live music were provided by Alexandra Parker, a former "Britain's Got Talent" contestant. This ranged from classical, through jazz to rock-and-roll, all nimbly played on an electric violin. We also learned that Alexandra had been Doncaster's first licensed busker.

A great deal of preparation had gone into making this such a successful event, and the Skegness building was turned into a very presentable venue for a special occasion - thanks especially to Linda and Chris Proctor for all their work.



Photos: Bob Ashton

On Sunday, the Museum was invaded by a party of London gangsters, who looked suspiciously similar to the Cold War spies who were sneaking around last year. Entering *The Tea Trolley* café they demanded protection money, threatening that non-payment would result in some "terribly tragic accidents". It seems that the money paid over was fake, so the gang added jelly (sorry, gelnignite) to the café's dwindling collection of cakes for sale. One of our customers asked for a teacake, but what went on the plate did not require butter. He was asked by one of the gang members posing as an assistant whether he wanted it toasted. The café would have emptied rapidly if he had said yes! Despite their best attempts to wreak havoc, Ma and her gang of spivs were sent packing ... but they've threatened that they'll be back !

KRAYS' CHUMS DISTURB THE PEACE OF AXHOLME



- 1 Demanding money with menaces, black-hatted villain Richard Trick wields his cash whilst Sam Marett reluctantly empties the cash till. Hysterical with fear, Cherryll Crowther looks on helplessly
- 2 No mercy for any passengers on London 1348 resisting demands from this mean-minded pair: Major Courtney (alias David Hemsley) and Mr Harvey (alias Mark Cudworth)

- 3 Between them, Blackhat and Ma, the gang leader (Kirstin Ramskir), sort out the proceeds of a busy afternoon of crime
- 4 Their disguises might look convincing, but what have the four imposters done with our regular Trolley Dollies and their day's takings ?
- 5 A lighter moment with Lorna Pedley and Ellie Tarrant on board the platform of 1348
- 6 The stolen money turned out to be fake, but when it came to the explosives, nobody was taking any chances

Photos: 1, 4 & 6: David Hanchett, 2: Robert Woodhead, 3 & 5: Mark Cudworth

VEHICLE REPORTS

Compiled from notes supplied by Bob Ashton, Jim Sambrooks, Andy Thornton, and Francis Whitehead

Cleethorpes 54: During visits from their home in Hungary, Andy Fieldsend and Nora have applied more intercoat to the exterior panels. *Photo below (left):*



Photo: Andy Thornton



Photo: Stewart David

Doncaster 375: Most of the seat frames for the lower deck have now been rubbed down, primed and repainted. *Photo (right), showing Bob Ashton at work.*

Nottingham 367: Rebuilding of the upper deck framework has continued, with more rotten timber being identified and extracted, then new pieces machined and fitted. Pictures show a set of newly-made brackets after painting. These have since been installed to provide rigidity to the frame structure and flooring.



Photos: Andy Thornton

Bradford 758: The restoration work being carried out at Keighley Bus Museum is now well underway - more news and a set of photographs in 'Scene no.97.

Doncaster 33: A piece of water-damaged wood has been removed from the body frame and a new piece is being engineered. New mud flaps have been fitted to the rear wheel arches, which should provide better protection to the spare wheel. Work is now well underway on rubbing-down all the paintwork in preparation for a complete repaint for 2015.

Doncaster 112: The roofsticks mentioned in 'Scene no.93 have been encased in aluminium, giving much needed strength. Mike Hirst, who is leading the restoration team, is trying to source insulating material to go between inner and outer roof skins. Meanwhile, attention has turned to the lower deck with the offside rear wheelarch being rebuilt, polished wood and lamp fittings refitted and the whole lower deck given its first thorough clean in many years. The nearside front wing is away being repaired by Steve Lyne of the LVVS. Most of the wiring and internal electrical fittings have been tested and were found to be in remarkably good condition with only a few minor issues highlighted.

Johannesburg 589: In late 2013, a survey was made of 589's "electrics" and several electrical components were removed to be refurbished, this work taking place during the early part of 2014. A number of brackets, fabricated some time ago, that will hold timber framework to the main body structure on the offside have now been welded onto the body pillars. The body structure to the rear is to be the next section to be tackled: this will involve also taking out and renewing the severely-corroded main body bearer under the rear bulkhead. Also on the agenda for the coming months is the refurbishment of the complete driver's cab area and running new HT cabling throughout the vehicle. This will then allow the aforementioned electrical equipment to be refitted. Looking further forward, negotiations are well advanced for a well-respected and able contractor to take 589 through to completion.

NEWS FROM OTHER MUSEUMS

East Kent Trolleybus Group: Jeff White reports: "Progress on Bradford 704 is moving steadily forward and our trolleybus looks much better than it did on arrival on site. Last summer the last of the old Bradford paint was removed and the lower front panel has been primed. The nearside windscreen has now been re-glazed and re-fitted and the headlights fitted. We are removing the body panels one at a time, then replacing any rotten timber and giving the surviving metal a coat of Hammerite. The front of 704 has now been repainted and slow progress is being made with stripping and repainting the offside. Work has also begun on constructing a shelter for 704 from items donated by the Port of Dover. We are making a frame out of steel tubing and will have an industrial tarpaulin over the top and sides."

West of England Transport Collection: We understand that Bradford 712 has passed to a new owner but we do not have any details. Meanwhile, Notts.and Derbys.353 (which became Bradford 770) has again been offered for sale by the Collection, but apparently without success.

THE 2014 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Museum's AGM took place on 15 November 2014 with around 35 members attending. In his opening remarks, Chairman Graham Bilbé highlighted a series of very successful open days and the launch of the First World War exhibition. New ventures had been embarked on this year, with the Museum truly "embracing the arts" through its presentations of the Moxie Brawl dancers and the Twilight event with violinist Alex Parker. Progress had continued on several vehicles, especially Wellington 82, whilst Athens 5088 has been adding to the variety of operational trolleybuses during its period of loan to the Museum. Graham thanked the many people (too numerous to list here) who have kept the Museum running very well with their contributions both visible and behind the scenes. However, the year has also brought its frustrations, particularly the protracted land purchase delays, the complications in getting Walsall 872 back into service and the unforeseen large amount of work required on Douglas 52. On the positive side, several poles have been painted and the new CCTV and fire alarm systems are now operational; the supporting societies have also made significant contributions during 2014.

Reporting on the financial results for the year ending 31 January 2014, Francis Whitehead presented the formally-audited accounts, which were duly approved by the meeting. This year, the accounts had been posted on the members' web page in October, enabling members to review them well before the AGM - an improvement made in response to concerns expressed in previous years. The accounts were backed up by a summary of income and expenditure with comparison figures for the previous financial year and a set of accompanying charts tracking progress over several years.

***Editor's note:** As Francis explained, our annual income tends to be heavily influenced by large donations and reclaimed Gift Aid, both of which vary significantly from year to year. For the year 2013-14 these contributions were very substantial. The "regular" stream of income from open days also fluctuates year-on-year and, overall, both the "sporadic" and "regular" income have contributed to a further healthy increase in the Museum's accumulated funds.*

Moving on from the financial year ending in January 2014, Francis then presented some up-to-date statistics for the end of the 2014 running season. Overall visitor numbers were up 19% on 2013, totalling around 6,000 (approximately 5,000 in 2013). Membership trends continue upwards, totalling 522 in November 2014 - up from 495 a year previously and 462 in November 2012. These statistics are very encouraging, although they will not be reflected in the formal published accounts until late-2015.

The meeting then confirmed the re-election without a ballot of three directors, retiring by rotation and unopposed: Bruce Lake as Company Secretary and Tony Ferris and Chris Proctor as Ordinary Directors. They were thanked by the members present and the re-appointment of Stephen Kerry as Company Auditor was also approved by a very large majority.

With the formalities over and after a break for refreshments, the rest of the

afternoon was devoted to the usual forum for general discussions. Francis Whitehead began with the museum development plan, concentrating on the problems that were causing further delays with acquiring the additional land. An opportunity had arisen early in 2014 to consider purchasing a significantly larger plot than originally offered, and this had been very much welcomed by both the BTS and the Museum. However, the landowner's business plans for the remainder of his available land continued to evolve during the following months, and this no longer appears to be an available option. The uncertainty is compounded by issues surrounding a new access road to that land, which, if constructed, would reduce the flexibility for positioning a new entrance to the Museum in Belton Road. An alternative proposal is currently being pursued, for which detailed drawings with accurate boundary measurements have now been prepared. The outlook for reaching a formal agreement is now March/ April 2015. Meanwhile, the Museum's updated 5-year plan - submitted as part of the Accreditation renewal - does assume that one day we will successfully acquire an additional 2 - 3 acres of land!

Several other topics of interest were covered in the forum discussion, including:

- ❖ **Extension of The Tea Trolley Café:** A year ago, a strong case had been made for extending the café seating area, and since then the Board had considered various ways of achieving this. More recently, however, most of the current café team have retired, and it is unclear what type of café provision will be possible in future. With this in mind, the Board has decided to put the extension on hold pending a reassessment of the long-term demand and respecting the need to involve the new team in the planning process.
- ❖ **Events for 2015:** The theme and content of some of the 2015 open days was still being worked on, and will include a VE Day commemoration at the Spring Bank Holiday. Also possible are more events involving classic car rallies and a 1940s weekend. Pat Ashton was keen to encourage local charities to bring their stalls to our open days, and this would also make good use of the central grass area. A dedicated volunteer would be needed to coordinate this, as well as coordinating with the car clubs – something that Tony Ferris and Nick Broxholme are temporarily handling themselves. Jason Bowers reported that there had been promising feedback from car clubs that he and Brenda have encountered during their outreach activities. Another possibility is a coach rally, bringing together classic and heritage coaches.
- ❖ **2015 AGM and Twilight event:** The Twilight event is being scheduled after BST ends, so that it will be darker earlier, and the possibility of having a later start and finish time was also discussed. That weekend will coincide with Hallowe'en this year. Our company constitution ("Mem and Arts") requires the AGM has to take place in November, which comes after the running season has ended and when the weather is usually unpleasant. Despite that, some members would appreciate the opportunity for trolleybus riding, so some private running during that weekend is being considered
- ❖ **Depot tours:** Andy Payling put in a plea for more volunteers to act as guides on the open days, as the depot tours have often been missing recently. Ideally this duty should be included in the roster sheet.



THE ROUTE TO SANDTOFT **BLACK ROD KNOCKS ON THE DOORS** **- OF SANDTOFT !**

“Black Rod”

PART 11: Cynical ending of a chapter and the green shoots of recovery

This series of articles, in response to the excellent previous series by Steve Collins, has latterly been dominated by the relationship between Nottingham-based enthusiasts and the National Trolleybus Association (NTA). Though still officially regarded as “National Trolleybus Association (Nottingham Group)” (NTG), there had unfortunately been a severe deterioration in this relationship between, after all, members of the same society ! Apparently the site at Plumtree was regarded by the NTA as one of their storage sites despite the fact that they were not contributing towards the rent. As late as February 1965, in Newsletter no.12, there was an appeal stating: “The Committee is quite naturally disturbed by the fact that but a small number of members visit Plumtree and Hedgesford regularly, and feels that more practical support should be forthcoming”. Nothing was said about financial support. At that time Plumtree contained Nottingham 466, Huddersfield 541 and Manchester 1250.

In 1965, Nottingham City Transport (NCT) had withdrawn two trolleybuses that the NTG considered worthy of preservation. First was no.460, a 1945 Karrier W with Roe utility body which, with sister trolleybus 461, were the last of the once-ubiquitous Roe-bodied utility trolleybuses in the UK. Second was 493, a BUT 9611T with Roe body that had been exhibited at the 1948 Commercial Vehicle Show. So, what was the problem ? Basically, whilst 460 appeared in the “Cromwell Report”, 493 did not. This report had been drawn up by Mr Richard S. Cromwell as a list of trolleybuses worthy, in his opinion, of preservation. The NTA had adopted this report, seemingly as “set in stone” with little or no discussion amongst its members - certainly the Nottingham enthusiasts were not consulted.



Nottingham nos.460 and 461 on 30 April 1965 in Manvers Street yard, an annexe of Nottingham’s Parliament Street Depot. Both had been withdrawn one month earlier and at this time it was hoped that 460 would be preserved since it was considered to be in the better condition. The NTG understood that the NTA had placed a bid to save 460 and hopes were kept high when both of these trolleybuses remained in Manvers Street. Sadly, both were dragged away on 18 August and broken up in a Nottingham scrap yard.

Photo: “Black Rod”

I, as newly-appointed secretary of the local group (for the second time), had contacted NCT and negotiated a price of £50 each for the two trolleybuses, down from the scrap price of £97, with John Wake, the General Manager. I considered this to be a good deal but, according to the Chairman, there was still intransigence from the NTA. The breaking point was probably when a letter - from memory probably best described as "a little high-handed" - was received from NTA "HQ" informing the Nottingham members that whilst 460 could be regarded as a candidate for their fleet, we should *scrap* no.466. If we would agree to this, then we should be allowed to preserve no.493. They did not want too many preserved Nottingham trolleybuses. Having just managed to pay off the debt for 466 and this being the very last Brush-bodied utility trolleybus in existence, this "deal" was unlikely to be welcome in Nottingham. It was appreciated that there would be two Nottingham utilities preserved - but so what? The offer, that I am sure must have been intended as conciliatory, was remade. Even looking back after all these years, it still beggars belief that a preservation body with (supposedly) a regard for trolleybuses should even contemplate destruction of an already-preserved vehicle. I'm sure a suitably-worded reply was sent back !

It was shortly after this that 541 did its "disappearing act". The NTA towed it away without any warning or notice to their local membership. I must correct Steve Collins' comments in Part 3 of his series (*Sandtoft Scene* no.61) where he states: "Most people were glad to see the back of it". This was not the case: NTG members had been paying the rent for 541 and it was a popular trolleybus. Cleaning work was regularly carried out and I actually have a picture of my "better half" polishing the lower saloon windows shortly before it "vanished".

With official "communication" being received from the NTA, we carried on as before - although it was obvious that we were now "on our own". The NTG implemented "Plan B", previously drawn up as a policy should negotiations with the NTA fail irrevocably. The only change was that the proposal to save Nottingham 478 (a Park Royal-bodied utility) was dropped. We would wait and try to purchase an equivalent Derby vehicle. It was hoped that their later withdrawal date would allow our finances to recover. The Chairman again started to talk about adopting the Plumtree site as permanent. He thought that we should involve other types of vehicle owners and that (for example) vintage cars, traction engines and steam rollers could be included on the site to defray costs. Whilst understanding his thinking, most members were "trolleybus men" and still wished to create a working museum for trolleybuses.

The prospects of purchasing 460 and 493 locally appeared good and in any event, we were paying for the rent at Plumtree ourselves. I had just received a "bonus" from work from which I was willing to contribute £50, i.e. the price of one trolleybus. I felt convinced that the other members would be willing and able to raise the other amount. I then received a letter from John Wake. Steve obviously has a copy of the letter and quotes from it. I will therefore not repeat it in its entirety, but suffice to say that the NTA in Wolverhampton had advised him that: (a) they had dispensed with the Nottingham (Plumtree) site, (b) the Nottingham

Group was no longer a part of the Association and (c) the NTA had no interest in 493 but did wish to purchase 460. Mr Wake was understandably confused ! A hurried NTG committee meeting was arranged to discuss our actions and the results rather surprised and disappointed me. Clearly, we were back to being the "Nottingham Trolleybus Group" again. I had anticipated support in the purchase of both 460 and 493, but it was not forthcoming. Obviously, my offer to pay outright for one trolleybus was welcomed. There was a strange reticence regarding raising the other £50 - not the usual "£1 per week, lads !" cries. Eventually, the Librarian (our treasurer), looking a little sheepish, said that we should only try and purchase just one of the trolleybuses. It was reasoned that since the NTA was clearly making a bid for 460, and that we already had a utility trolleybus with 466, the NTG should try for 493. This was agreed, but the usually ebullient Chairman was uncharacteristically quiet.

I arranged an appointment with John Wake and we discussed contents of the NTA's letter to NCT. I accept that the letter might have merely been an attempt to clarify the situation, and certainly Mr Wake was too professional to allow me sight of it. However, it must have been phrased in a way that he believed that Plumtree was finished and so was the Nottingham Group. Knowing that we in Nottingham had the intention to save 460 and 493, their reference to the latter might well have jeopardised its future. Without the courtesy of a copy of the NTA's letter to NCT, one tends to conclude that it was a cynical attempt to thwart any progress of the Nottingham enthusiasts. Whilst acceptable to write some strongly-worded correspondence between each other, I believe that it was totally out of order to involve a transport undertaking when attempts were being made to secure the future of vehicles in their fleet. There should have been no "airing the dirty washing in public". I offered Mr Wake £50 for 493 and suggested that he should visit Plumtree ! He did not (unsurprisingly !) do that, but we were later told that a "management official" had visited the site to check if vehicles were still there !

Expansion of the fleet at Plumtree

In fact, three vehicles were there. Following the departure of 541, the Chairman had decided to buy a motorbus. Once again, I regret that the NTG minute books are not available, because I do not recall any discussion regarding the purchase until after the "deed had been done". It appeared to be a unilateral decision on the part of the Chairman, although hindsight again leads to the conclusion that other members were involved and this possibly explains the Librarian's uncomfortable looks at the previous meeting. Barton 816, a Leyland TD4 arrived at Plumtree and allegedly cost £100. Presumably this was paid for by a loan, which is why the Chairman was not his usual "gung-ho self" regarding the purchase of both 460 and 493. The Chairman explained that the vehicle was a necessity since it would be fitted with a towing bar, enabling trolleybuses to be moved without the cost of an expensive outside contractor. It would save us money in the longer term. The logic was irrefutable but, in your writer's opinion, the timing was awful.

At this time, despite our somewhat bruising experiences with the NTA, it was still committed NTG policy to locate and co-operate with other like-minded interested

enthusiasts, societies and groups. The weight of opinion within the NTG was still that it would be impracticable to create a national working trolleybus museum on our own. The Chairman was in full agreement with this declared policy but as time went on, it was becoming apparent that he was all in favour of a national site and it could be anywhere - so long as "anywhere" was Plumtree !

Barton 816, seen during an "inspection run" in Chilwell on 7 March 1965 using trade plates. The vehicle is a 1936 Leyland TD4 with ECW lowbridge body fitted in 1949. Intended to be a towing vehicle for trolleybuses, no conversion was ever undertaken. Following the Plumtree demise, the bus remained in preservation, eventually restored in its former livery as Cumberland 291, but your writer does not know if the vehicle is still extant.

Photo: "Black Rod"



One of the groups with whom we had kept contact was the Reading Transport Society (RTS). As mentioned in a previous "instalment" I do not wish to give the impression that Mike Dare and myself were "close buddies", but we did keep in touch on a semi-regular basis. When I next met him on a tour, he explained that as soon as amalgamating the different groups to form one "super group" had been discussed, he had considered that a breakdown would inevitably occur. His thoughts were that enthusiasts from different areas would have differing priorities regarding selection of trolleybuses for preservation. In his opinion this was fine as long as contact was maintained to avoid duplication of vehicle types. There were other reasons why the RTS had withdrawn from the NTA at an early stage. It is also fair to state that, unfettered by constraints such as the "Cromwell Report", the RTS was building up a splendid collection of preserved trolleybuses. Mike also stated that he also thought that, one day, enthusiast groups would need to co-operate in some measure to form a national working trolleybus museum.

We had also already encountered Mr Howard Piltz, secretary of the Omnibus Select Society (OSS) from Manchester, who had saved Ashton 80. Since our initial meeting at Plumtree, he had remained in communication with the NTG. I now received letters from Howard saying that he was concerned about vandalism to 80 at its current location, a garage in Rusholme, Manchester, where it had been parked since 11 March. More importantly, he was finding it difficult to maintain the payment schedule agreed with Ashton Corporation. I immediately

offered to make up the shortfall and, of course, also suggested Plumtree as an alternative site for 80. Vandalism had not proved a problem and the vehicle would be parked with 1250 offering the contrast in styles that had been originally intended by the NTG. Howard did receive a fair bit of correspondence from various factions advising him of the folly of joining forces with the NTG. Due to the payment agreement with Ashton Corporation, Howard also required a "guarantor" for 80.



Ashton 80 arriving at its original storage site post-preservation, at the rear of a garage in Rusholme, on 11 March 1965. This had been a "target" trolleybus for the NTG, being a 2-axle all-Crossley trolleybus and making an interesting comparison with 3-axle Manchester Crossley 1250 already at Plumtree. However, the NTG was "pipped at the post" when no.80 was acquired by Howard Piltz of the OSS.

Photo: Howard Piltz

On 5 May 1965 I wrote to Ashton Corporation explaining that the NTG had taken over responsibility for 80 and that the Chairman, who was over 21 and a house-owner, would act as guarantor. Howard and I continued to jointly pay for the trolleybus and after due consideration he decided that 80 would go to Plumtree. Being the secretary of the OSS, Howard also had contact with other societies in the north of England. Indeed, under the banner of "Northern Trolleybus Federation" a regular newsletter was being published. In accordance with the NTG policy of co-operation with other groups, by Newsletter 7 of July 1965 we were pleased to be "affiliated" to the OSS and the Huddersfield Trolleybus Preservation Fund (HTPF).

Other activities also resumed with (hopefully) money-making tours being a priority. Sadly for us, NCT had announced its next trolleybus service conversion - route 41, between Trent Bridge and Cinderhill on 30 April 1965. The previous conversion had not caused any normal wiring removal, although some little-used overhead equipment in the Trent Bridge area had been dismantled. The Cinderhill section was considered somewhat special, since it had formed part of the erstwhile Notts. & Derbys. service A1 to Ripley. It was decided that a farewell tour would be appropriate and NCT were contacted accordingly. Once again, due to the thoughtfulness of NCT, we were able to operate a tour on the first Sunday following conversion. Therefore, on 2 May 1965, the NTG were on tour again! Trolleybus 500 was selected, being the lowest numbered BUT 9641T and joint first to enter service (with 501) in 1949. A good turnout meant that, as I remember, a profit was recorded.

Nottingham 500 operated the first "pure" NTG tour for over two years and is depicted in Stockhill Lane on the Cinderhill service. On the left of 500 is Dark Lane, site of the only substantial length of tramway reservation on the system. The traction pole to the immediate left of 500 was still in situ at the time of writing, being one of only four left on the streets of the city.

Photo: "Black Rod"



Vehicle projects that had been put on hold during the interlude with the NTA were again followed up. A letter was sent to Bradford following an initial enquiry regarding an ex-Notts. & Derbys. trolleybus. Mr Deakin, the General Manager, responded with a comprehensive letter dated 14 June 1965, explaining that "whilst the vehicles themselves are redundant, I cannot contemplate disposing of the traction equipment fitted to them". He asked if we would be interested in purchasing a vehicle without electrics. We accepted and a further Bradford letter confirms that one had been "reserved" and we would be contacted when the vehicle became available.



Nottingham 493 being towed out of Manvers Street yard on 9 July 1965. Thankfully, unlike all the other trolleybuses that had been stored here, 493 was taken to the automatic bus washing plant in Parliament Street Depot for a "wash and brush up". Later in the day the trolleybus was towed to Plumtree.

Photo: "Black Rod"

Of course, our immediate concern was 460 and 493. Within the NTG there seemed to be confidence that the NTA would be successful in their bid for 460. "After all", said the Chairman, "460 is listed in the Cromwell Report, so they will go all out to save it". This was true and, of course, they had the advantage of knowing a price that was likely to be accepted by NCT. However, it was a great relief for us to receive a letter from Mr Wake confirming acceptance of our £50

offer for 493. NCT replaced the crests and fleet numbers and on 9 July 1965, the trolleybus was collected from Parliament Street Depot and towed uneventfully to Plumtree. It seemed that the tide had turned - but had it ? And what was the future for 460 ? *To be continued*

OBITUARIES

Stan Ledgard died on 28 September 2014 aged 68. He had many activities in his life and, although he was not involved with Sandtoft, Stan will be remembered by the trolleybus community for three remarkable contributions. First, in 1965 - in the earlier days of preservation when trolleybus museums were non-existent - he and his friend John Ayrey embarked on an ambitious project to acquire a 1932 Liège trolleybus and bring it to England. This, of course, was Liège 425, now one of our Museum's most treasured exhibits. Secondly, he achieved a certain notoriety a few months after 425 arrived in Bradford, when he staged its operation under power by connecting it to the wiring in Wakefield Road. Bradford City Transport had refused permission for 425 to run on its system, so this was quite a daring exploit. However, it did little to endear trolleybus enthusiasts to BCT, especially as it was said to have damaged one of the rectifiers in a sub-station when the regenerative brakes were applied. For the next 30 years we heard little about him, and during that time 425 passed between several owners before arriving at Sandtoft, where its future became secure.

Thirdly, during Stan's earlier years in Bradford, he had been a very active photographer and built up a large collection of photographs, mainly of the Bradford system. Many of these are included in a series of six books he published between 2006 and 2010

covering Bradford's trolleybuses during their final decline. His books are a significant legacy and their narrative forms a unique piece of social history, containing reminiscences from his personal experience as a conductor. He also wrote a booklet about Liège 425 and his other albums cover visits to trolleybus systems elsewhere in Britain and overseas.

During his life, Stan developed a strong interest in psychic matters and he ran a shop in Haworth specialising in books on the subject. Sadly his death came after several years battling with cancer and our condolences go to his wife Shirley.

Ian Appleton



Ian at the Heart of the Pennines Rally, Piece Hall, Halifax in 1995 *Photo: Jim Sambrooks*

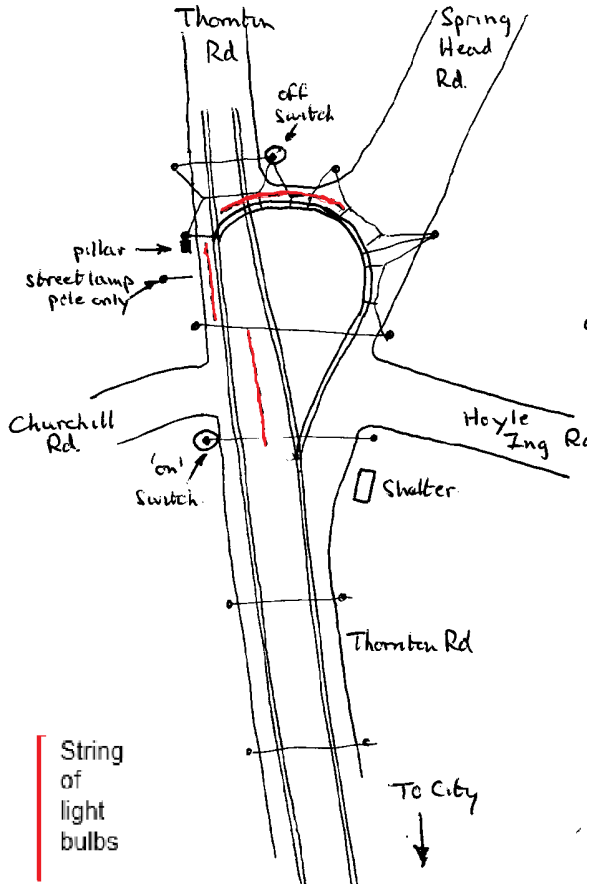
Ian was a member of DOLRS and the Museum, and died on 5 December 2014 aged 46. He was a keen supporter of our Museum and a regular contributor to rally events. Ian will be sadly missed at Sandtoft.

DEAR 'SCENE

Dear 'Scene

I noted your query on page 25 of *Sandtoft Scene* no.94 regarding turning circle "fairy lights" at Springhead Road on the Thornton route in Bradford. The lights themselves were 14-watt, 250-volt "pigmy" lamps at approximately 6-foot intervals, strung from an auxiliary wire on the overhead. The switch to switch "on" was on the pole opposite the shelter, and there was a notice attached to the pole indicating the method of operating it. The "off" switch was on the first pole on the circle proper (again with a notice). This pole also had a control box which took supply from the live street lighting wire, so that the "fairy lights" could be used even if the street lights were not "on".

The ground control box was in a cast iron street pillar at the side of the pull frog and there was a "swan neck" conduit for these wires. The string of lights actually changed sides on the approach to the pull frog to make sure that the driver did not start turning too early. The first span of lights was virtually in the middle of the road to help to guide a trolleybus descending from Thornton, as the road was so wide. The plan shows the layout of the installation.



Derek M Coates, Bradford

Editor's note: Derek's detailed knowledge came from his former employment with the Yorkshire Electricity Board. In that role he was personally responsible for servicing and maintaining this very piece of BCT's electrical equipment !

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Dear 'Scene

In the *Archive Corner* section of 'Scene no.94, your editor asks about the "fairy lights" at Springhead Road turning circle in Bradford. Several undertakings used this method of trying to illuminate difficult corners and/ or termini, usually in foggy conditions. Some instances of their use were in Birmingham at Coventry Road at Arden Oak Road and Yardley terminus. Reading enthusiasts will remember "fairy lights" at Tilehurst Triangle, School Road, and the termini at Armour Hill and

Wokingham Road. There were, I'm sure, other instances of such installations at these and on other trolleybus networks.

There were definitely "fairy lights" at Springhead Road turning circle and I have photos of this location, but unfortunately not of sufficient quality for publication. However, in the series of books *Bradford and Trolleybuses* by Stan Ledgard (excellent publications and reasonably priced !) the *Early Turn* title on page 55 shows this turning circle and the "fairy lights" quite clearly. *Split Turn* in the same series on page 22 shows another Bradford example at Rooley Lane by the passing loop used for football special workings.

As far as I can recall and looking at photographic evidence, all these lights were controlled by a switch on a convenient traction pole and worked by crews and/ or inspectors when required. There were also "spotlights" at some termini such as Christchurch at Bournemouth or Longwood in Huddersfield where circumstances really demanded auxiliary lighting. Again, these were either turned on by crews or on a time-switch with the street lighting.

However, Rotherham was possibly unique in having lighting at termini operated by the trolleybuses themselves, being actuated and cancelled when the booms passed under "skates" in the overhead wiring. The lighting was therefore turned on and off throughout the day whether required by conditions or not. This was explained in 'Scene no.94 by former Rotherham trolleybus driver Laurie Johnson. Another location in Rotherham was Wickersley and the photograph below clearly shows auxiliary lighting whilst illuminated during daylight hours.



Rotherham no.6, seen at Wickersley turning circle during a Nottingham Trolleybus Group tour on 12 August 1962, having already activated the auxiliary lighting on the far-side pole at the left. The "skate" to turn off the lights can clearly be seen behind the trolleybus and in front of the telegraph post.

Photo: Rod Bramley


With the onset of clean-air acts and much improved street lighting during the latter days of trolleybus operation, many of the auxiliary lighting installations fell into disuse and often disrepair. However, I seem to remember that the "fairy lights" at Springhead Road in Bradford remained in place until the last day in 1972, although the turning circle itself was not regularly used after February 1971. Possibly other readers will have recollections of this small but interesting facet of trolleybus operation.

Rod Bramley, Barmouth

RUNNING DAYS IN 2015

(Open 11.00am - 5.00pm unless stated otherwise)

Easter Weekend Trolleydays <i>with an Easter egg hunt for the children</i>	Saturday, 4 April  Sunday, 5 April Monday, 6 April Free Bus
Weekend Trolleydays	Saturday, 18 April  Sunday, 19 April
May Day Bank Holiday Weekend Trolleydays VE Day+70 – a period weekend featuring our pre-war & wartime 'buses with visiting military vehicles and other attractions	Saturday, 2 May  Sunday, 3 May Monday, 4 May Free Bus
1940s Trolleyday with free bus link to nearby Thorne's 1940s day	Sunday, 10 May
Spring Bank Holiday Big City Weekend Trolleydays <i>featuring trolleybuses from Britain's big cities</i>	Saturday, 23 May  Sunday, 24 May Monday, 25 May Free Bus
Weekend Trolleydays & Vintage Coach Rally <i>with visiting vintage coaches (vintage coach trip bookings invited !)</i>	Saturday, 6 June  Sunday, 7 June Free Bus
Worldwide Weekend Trolleydays <i>featuring our trolleybuses from overseas</i>	Saturday, 20 June  Sunday, 21 June Free Bus
Weekend Trolleydays and Teddy Bears' Picnic	Saturday, 4 July  Sunday, 5 July Free Bus
'Gathering Saturday Trolleyday - a preview of 'Gathering Day itself: twilight trolleybus operation & real ale beer tent	Saturday, 25 July  (Open 11.00am - 10.00pm)
Sandtoft Gathering 2015 <i>with visiting historic vehicles, transport flea market, live music, real ale beer tent & lots for the family to see & do</i>	Sunday, 26 July Free Bus (Open 10.00am - 6.00pm)
Weekend Trolleydays	Saturday, 15 August  Sunday, 16 August
Blues & Twos Weekend & Trolleydays <i>late summer bank holiday weekend featuring dramatic emergency services displays and demonstrations</i>	Saturday, 29 August  Sunday, 30 August Monday, 31 August Free Bus
European Trolleybus Day & Weekend Trolleydays <i>celebrating modern trolleybus technology & operation</i>	Saturday 19 September  Sunday 20 September Free Bus
Weekend Trolleydays & Rotherham Trolleybus Memories <i>commemorating 50 years since Rotherham's trolleybus operations ended</i>	Saturday, 3 October  Sunday, 4 October
Isle of Axholme Running Day & Rally	Sunday, 18 October Free Bus
Twilight & After Dark Trolleyday (open 11am - 7pm) <i>with twilight & after-dark trolleybus operation</i>	Saturday, 31 October 
End of Season & Twilight Trolleyday (open 11am - 6pm)	Sunday, 1 November

 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