

Sandtoft Scene

July 2015
No. 98



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



Sandtoft Transport Centre Limited
 The Trolleybus Museum, Belton Road, Sandtoft,
 Doncaster, North Lincolnshire, DN8 5SX.
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Membership Secretary: If you change your address, please advise David Needham membership@sandtoft.org to ensure that your next *Sandtoft Scene* is mailed correctly

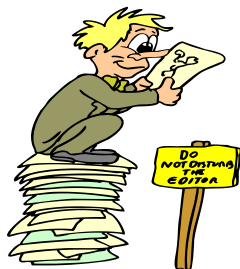
FRONT COVER: Wartime vehicles congregate in Sandtoft Square during the VE Day commemorations: Derby utility 172 with US Army Jeeps *Photo: David Hanchett*

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



Whilst this year's running season has got off to a very encouraging start and a splendid new exhibit has arrived in the form of Notts and Derby 353, these positive events have been clouded by the disappointment of further delays to the process of acquiring the additional land needed to expand the Museum. The current situation is explained on page 4 by Graham Bilbé, and whilst an optimistic approach is essential, it is becoming obvious that getting the purchase successfully to completion in a reasonable timeframe is by no means 100%-guaranteed. Particularly frustrating for the Museum and the BTS is the fact that both organisations have been working steadily towards this goal for over three years and that very substantial funds remain unused. This is a complex and delicate situation for all parties to the transaction, and clearly the Board and the BTS Committee face a difficult challenge with determining the best way forward - they need everyone's support and we are relying on them continuing to be both positive and pragmatic.

Meanwhile, we have enjoyed a very successful series of open days, especially the Big City Weekend (see page 17) which attracted crowds of visitors. It is always encouraging when they leave good feedback: something that we have been seeing even more of on *Facebook* and *Trip Advisor*, and our volunteers were especially touched to receive the complimentary review (reproduced on page 30) from *Support for disabled children and their families in Scunthorpe*.

This year's 'Gathering on 25-26 July is approaching rapidly, and we are issuing our regular call for volunteers to prepare for and staff our biggest event of the year. Because car parking arrangements are very different this year, we need several more volunteers than in recent years. If you can help in any way with preparations on Thursday and Friday, during the long day on Saturday or 'Gathering Day' itself (even 2 or 3 hours would be good), please let Tony Ferris know and he will find you a job. The success of 'Gathering is the result of team effort: your support as a helper is definitely needed and will be much appreciated.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mr D J Astill (West Bridgford) | Mr Ian Morrish (Doncaster) |
| Mr P Baggett (Thatcham) | Ms Marita Osborne (Nottingham) |
| Pat Cox (Worksop) | Mr Colin Read (Croydon) |
| Mr A Fleckney (Kingston upon Thames) | Mr P R Sharp (York) |
| Mr Keith Franklin (Scampton) | Mr I S Smith (Stalybridge) |
| Ms Louise Gilham (Doncaster) | Ms Elaine Softly (Scampton) |
| Mr Robert Horton (Doncaster) | Mrs Margaret Talbot (Kettering) |
| Mr Adam Keating (Nottingham) | Mr Andrew Warnes (Doncaster) |
| Mr David Lane (Worksop) | Mr C P Williams (Pontefract) |

Please note: News deadline for the next *Sandtoft Scene* is 25 August 2015

THE LONG-AWAITED LAND PURCHASE

An update from the Chairman

Graham Bilbé

Members will be aware of the long drawn-out negotiations which have been taking place to buy an adjacent plot of land, to further extend our site and ultimately provide a new road access into our public car parking area, together with many other benefits. The project is a joint one with our partners, the British Trolleybus Society, and, as they would be purchasing the larger proportion of the plot, it was agreed that the BTS would front the deal.

Efforts have progressed steadily over the past three years, but with many frustrating pauses and unexpected complications. These continue to occur, but despite rumours to the contrary, I am pleased to report that negotiations with TA White and Sons (the vendor) are continuing, with Francis Whitehead (representing the Museum) and Dave Chick (for BTS) having had a useful discussion with Nick White as recently as 5 June. However, because uncertainty remains over the final outcome and its timescale, we have started looking at possible alternative plans for meeting the Museum's urgent needs for more land and buildings.

It is also evident that much of Whites' land that we have had free use of for many years for our major events will not be available for the foreseeable future due to commercial pressures on them. We are therefore having to look at alternative car parking arrangements, possibly similar to those used at last year's St Leger Rally. This does mean that additional marshals will be needed on 'Gathering Day (26 July), Blues and Twos Weekend (August Bank Holiday) and for the Isle of Axholme Running Day and Rally (18 October), so if you can possibly come along and help it would be really appreciated, even just for an hour or two. Please contact Tony Ferris (details on page 2) if you could assist - thanks !

The present logistical problems for larger events emphasise even more the need for us to have more space of our own, so the Board and BTS will be trying hard to conclude the land purchase at the earliest opportunity. Both we and BTS have money in the bank ready to "do the deal", but of course much more will be needed to develop the site once we have it. We are currently being offered two extremely historic trolleybuses from "official" sources, which we could only accept once we have some new and better-quality indoor display space. I can't publish details just yet, but be assured that these are unique items that we really should have, so any further contributions to our development fund will help this to become a reality.

STOP PRESS

ACCREDITATION SUCCESSFUL !

Just before going to press, we learned that Arts Council England has renewed our status as an Accredited Museum for a further three years.

We have retained "Full Accreditation" without the need for any follow-up visits or inspections. This is a massive success and meeting the standard means that as a volunteer organisation we are well placed when compared with commercial and public sector museums. The criteria were more challenging than previously and the task of preparing our submission involved substantial efforts from a number of people, to whom we are very grateful. More details at www.sandtoft.org/news and in the next 'Scene'.

MEXBOROUGH AND SWINTON REMEMBERED

Mike Johnson et al. and with acknowledgements to Laurie Johnson

"One and two halves to the Woodman Inn, please !"

"I'd like to visit Auntie Eve tomorrow !" After such an introduction, the day always involved four "trackless" journeys between our home in Wickersley and my aunt's in Swinton. Two of these lengthy trips were usually on "foreign" green and shorter vehicles, with seemingly fewer wheels than we were used to in Rotherham. With huge anticipation, we always reached Frederick Street in Rotherham and boarded one of a number of what were usually Mexborough & Swinton (M&S) trolleybuses. These displayed "A" for Mexborough (Adwick Road), "B" for Conisbrough (Brook Square) - known as "Low", or "C" for Conisbrough (Welfare Avenue) - known as "High" by all the locals and traffic crews. Only the M&S trolleybuses went up to "Conisbrough High" and everyone knew this, as the Rotherham Corporation Transport (RCT) trolleybuses were too long to negotiate the hairpin bend near Conisbrough Castle.

Upon leaving Frederick Street in Rotherham, our M&S "green garden-shed" ran through the heavy industrial area of Parkgate, past the M&S depot at Dale Road (now belonging to Stagecoach), then sped along Warren Vale Road and onto Swinton (Woodman Inn), where we alighted. From here, trolleybuses descended into Swinton, onto Mexborough and then Conisbrough. My last trip on a green Sunbeam would have been in about 1961, after the installation of the new roundabout at Swinton, where I was "crushed" to the bulkhead by lots of teenagers, shoppers and workers, as we powered relentlessly towards Rawmarsh.



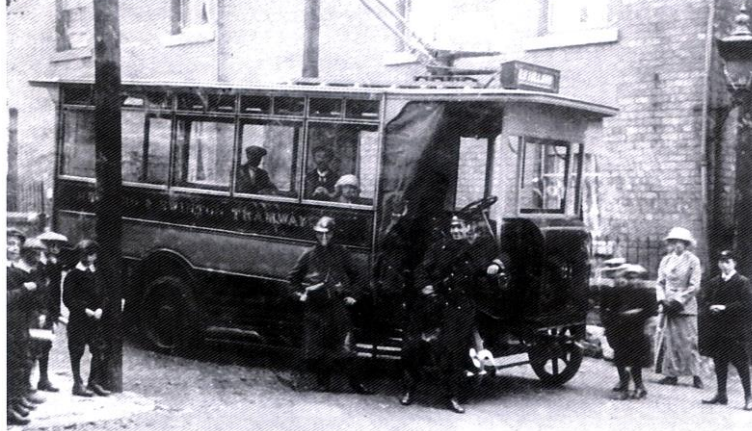
A typical scene with a Corporation Daimler and a M&S Sunbeam waiting to depart from the Frederick Street terminus in Rotherham. The date is c.1960

*Photo: RTG collection
(photographer unknown)*

A brief history

In 1915, the Mexborough & Swinton Tramways Company became the first company in the UK to operate trolleybuses: the initial system consisted of two unlinked routes, from Denaby to Conisbrough and from Mexborough to Manvers Main Colliery. Following the First World War, tramway conversion and new development gradually took place, and in 1928 the two initial routes were linked

In the early days, no.21 (one of the original Daimler tracklesses that opened the system) at the original Conisbrough reverser terminus at the junction of Elm Green Lane and Station Road
Photo: P Tuffrey collection (courtesy Laurie Johnson)



and soon ran through to Rotherham. In addition to the expansion there were many changes to the routes and termini in Rotherham. At one time there were plans to connect RCT's terminus at Thrybergh with the terminus at Conisbrough Low and then with the Doncaster terminus at Balby. Sadly these plans never materialised. The Mexborough trolleybus routes were bedevilled by low bridges and consequently single-deckers were required with services of a high frequency. Despite this restriction, the operator did experiment with a double-decker trolleybus, as recorded on the DVD jointly produced by the Rotherham Trolleybus Group and Online Video *Remember the Trackless* (available from the *Trolleyshop* and our online shop at www.sandtoft.org/shop).

Agreements were in place for the sections jointly operated with RCT where the overhead wiring was shared: joint services were operated on the long route from Rotherham to Conisbrough Low and on the branch to Adwick Road in Mexborough. On the route out of Rotherham towards Mexborough, the wiring for which M&S was responsible began just over the Great Central Railway bridge, a short distance beyond Rotherham's Rawmarsh Road depot. Thus, the vast majority of the jointly-used overhead was owned and maintained by M&S.

Although M&S vehicles never ventured beyond the centre of Rotherham on their regular routes, on Rotherham Football Club match days they ran from Rawmarsh through to the football ground at Millmoor and then turned just beyond Coronation Bridge and the LMS station at Masborough. The wiring loop was still in evidence long after M&S system closed, being used by RCT vehicles turning at Ferham until about 1963.

From 1928 Garretts, and subsequently Sunbeams, formed the basis of the fleet, supplemented by some Guys acquired from Hastings and a few English Electrics from Notts and Derbys. Prior to World War II, the livery was dark red/ brown with cream window frames and a dark roof. After a period of wartime grey, a green and cream livery was adopted, and three batches of Sunbeams arrived - 18 in 1947, then 12 in 1947/8 and, finally, 3 in 1950. Although some minor new wiring was introduced, the system declined as housing estates and motor buses developed, finally closing in March 1961. Unusually, Sunbeam no.29 was specially adapted for the final ceremonial procession, with its rear half cut down to an "open-topper" to accommodate the Rawmarsh Prize Band.

After the M&S system closed, Bradford City Transport bought 12 of the post-war Sunbeams to help extend the life of that system: 7 of the 12 were re-bodied as double-deckers, entering service in 1962/3 as nos.841-847, and after withdrawal in 1972, no fewer than five of them were preserved, with a sixth being acquired by a restoration team for spare parts. Those surviving today are no.844 (formerly M&S no.30), a resident at Keighley Bus Museum which ran at Sandtoft during 2011 on loan to us, and nos.845, 846 and 847, which are all owned by our Museum and are in store awaiting restoration. Very fittingly for this M&S centenary year, the restoration of 1928 M&S Garrett "O" no.34 has become the BTS's next restoration project, as described in the April edition of *Sandtoft Scene*.



In its second life, a re-bodied Mexborough & Swinton no.30 had the distinction of becoming Britain's last trolleybus, when, as Bradford no.844, it ceremonially closed that system in March 1972. Seen here at Sandtoft, it participated in the trolleybus centenary celebrations of 2011

Photo: John Stainforth

Some interesting memorabilia

Whilst preparing this article, I received a valuable piece of trolleybus history in the form of a Mexborough & Swinton timetable for December 1949, kindly sent by Philip and Jean Thornton. The extract for Service B (reproduced overleaf) illustrates exactly how timetables are historical documents reflecting the social times, with patterns of shift work, shopping habits, more going out and a more responsive and responsible public transport system of a much better quality than today ! In their covering letter, Philip and Jean wrote: "The service frequencies reflect the times. Monday, Friday and Saturday were (and still are) Mexborough market days and show increased frequencies, with a trolleybus every 10 minutes (instead of 15) during the afternoons. In those days the market was more important than it is now".

Further pages are reproduced on the Rotherham Trolleybus Group website, www.rotherhamtrolleybus.org.uk/mexborough-swinton/, and the extract for Service C (Manvers Main - Conanby) illustrates another social trend: services started very early in the morning, and between 4:30am and 6:30am the frequency was every 10 minutes, followed by a 20-minute service between 6:30am and 9:40am. Clearly, many more people travelled to work before 6:30am than afterwards - probably reflecting the shifts at the local collieries and steelworks.

MONDAY AND FRIDAY

	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
ROTHERHAM ...	—	4.30	—	5.0	12.0	7.0	10.15	—	—	—	—
HOLLY BUSH ...	—	4.38	—	5.8	and 12.8	and 7.8	and 10.23	—	—	—	—
ROSEHILL PARK ...	4.30	4.45	5.0	5.15	every 12.15	every 7.15	every 10.30	—	—	—	—
WOODMAN INN ...	4.35	4.50	5.5	5.20	15 12.20	10 7.20	15 10.35	—	—	—	—
SWINTON STN. ...	4.40	4.55	5.10	5.25	mins. 12.25	mins. 7.25	mins. 10.40	—	—	—	—
MONTAGU ...	4.47	5.2	5.17	5.30	until 12.30	until 7.30	until 10.45	—	—	—	—
OLD TOLL BAR ...	4.52	5.7	5.22	5.25	12.35	7.35	10.50	—	—	—	—
CONISBRO' (B. SQ.)...	5.5	5.20	5.35	5.49	12.49	7.49	11.4	—	—	—	—
CONISBRO' (B. SQ.)...	—	—	5.8	12.53	7.23	9.53	10.8	10.23	10.38	10.53	11.8
OLD TOLL BAR ...	—	—	5.22	and 1.7	and 7.37	and 10.7	10.22	10.37	10.52	11.7	11.22
MONTAGU ...	—	—	5.27	every 1.12	every 7.42	every 10.12	10.27	10.42	10.57	11.12	11.27
SWINTON STN. ...	—	—	5.32	15 1.17	10 7.47	15 10.17	10.32	10.47	11.2	11.17	11.32
WOODMAN INN ...	—	—	5.39	mins. 1.24	mins. 7.54	mins. 10.24	10.39	10.54	11.9	11.24	11.39
ROSEHILL PARK ...	—	—	5.43	until 1.28	until 7.58	until 10.28	10.43	10.58	11.13	11.28	11.43
HOLLY BUSH ...	4.50	5.5	5.50	1.35	8.5	10.35	—	—	—	—	—
ROTHERHAM ...	5.0	5.15	6.0	1.45	8.15	10.45	—	—	—	—	—

TUES., WED. AND THURS.

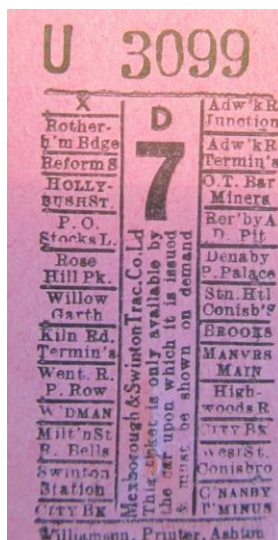
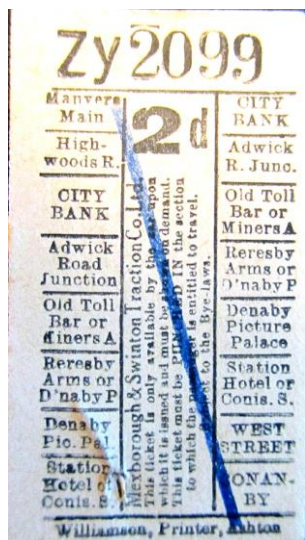
	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
ROTHERHAM ...	—	4.30	—	5.0	4.0	7.0	10.15	10.23
HOLLY BUSH ...	—	4.38	—	5.8	and 4.8	and 7.8	and 10.23	10.35
ROSEHILL PARK ...	4.30	4.45	5.0	5.15	every 4.15	every 7.15	every 10.30	10.45
WOODMAN INN ...	4.35	4.50	5.5	5.20	15 4.20	10 7.20	15 10.35	10.50
SWINTON STN. ...	4.40	4.55	5.10	5.25	mins. 4.25	mins. 7.25	mins. 10.40	10.55
MONTAGU ...	4.45	5.0	5.15	5.30	until 4.30	until 7.30	until 10.45	10.60
OLD TOLL BAR ...	4.50	5.5	5.20	5.35	4.35	7.35	10.50	11.05
CONISBRO' (B. SQ.)...	5.4	5.19	5.34	5.49	4.49	7.49	11.4	12.0
CONISBRO' (B. SQ.)...	—	—	5.8	12.53	7.23	9.53	10.8	11.3
OLD TOLL BAR ...	—	—	5.22	and 1.7	and 7.37	and 10.7	10.22	10.37
MONTAGU ...	—	—	5.27	every 1.12	every 7.42	every 10.12	10.27	10.42
SWINTON STN. ...	—	—	5.32	15 1.17	10 7.47	15 10.17	10.32	10.47
WOODMAN INN ...	—	—	5.39	mins. 1.24	mins. 7.54	mins. 10.24	10.39	10.54
ROSEHILL PARK ...	—	—	5.43	until 1.28	until 7.58	until 10.28	10.43	10.58
HOLLY BUSH ...	4.50	5.5	5.50	1.35	8.5	10.35	—	—
ROTHERHAM ...	5.0	5.15	6.0	1.45	8.15	10.45	—	—

SATURDAY

	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
ROTHERHAM ...	5.0	—	10.0	8.0	10.15	10.23	10.35
HOLLY BUSH ...	As 5.8	and 10.8	and 8.8	and 10.7	then 10.12	10.17	10.35
ROSEHILL PARK ...	5.15	every 10.15	every 8.15	every 10.30	10.45	10.50	11.4
WOODMAN INN ...	Monday 5.20	15 10.20	10 8.20	15 10.35	10.40	10.45	10.50
SWINTON STN. ...	until 5.25	mins. 10.25	mins. 8.25	mins. 10.40	10.45	10.50	11.4
MONTAGU ...	5.30	until 10.30	until 8.30	until 10.45	10.50	11.4	—
OLD TOLL BAR ...	5.35	10.35	8.35	10.50	11.4	—	—
CONISBRO' (B. SQ.)...	5.49	10.49	8.49	11.4	—	—	—
CONISBRO' (B. SQ.)...	5.8	10.53	8.23	9.53	10.7	10.12	10.35
OLD TOLL BAR ...	As 5.22	and 11.7	and 8.37	and 10.7	then 10.12	10.17	10.35
MONTAGU ...	5.27	every 11.12	every 8.42	every 10.12	10.17	10.35	10.50
SWINTON STN. ...	Monday 5.32	15 11.17	10 8.47	15 10.17	as 10.24	10.28	10.43
WOODMAN INN ...	5.39	mins. 11.24	mins. 8.54	mins. 10.24	10.28	10.43	10.58
ROSEHILL PARK ...	until 5.43	until 11.28	until 8.58	until 10.28	10.43	10.58	11.13
HOLLY BUSH ...	5.50	11.35	9.5	10.35	10.45	10.50	11.4
ROTHERHAM ...	6.0	11.45	9.15	10.45	10.50	11.4	—

Whilst this booklet shows the routes as they operated in 1949, M&S did make changes during the 1950s, an example being the introduction of through journeys from Conisbrough High into Rotherham, in addition to the service to Manvers. Also in enthusiasts' collections are a variety of tickets from the Mexborough & Swinton system, which apparently used Bell Punch tickets until late in its days.

Quite when these “geographic stage” examples became obsolete is not known. These showed the principal fare stages along the routes and were punched to indicate how far the passenger was entitled to travel. The 2d example was specific to Service C between Manvers Main and Conanby, whilst the 7d ticket appears to cover the entire network.



This “Setright” ticket comes from rolls specially printed to mark the closure of the M&S system in June 1961. At first glance this suggests a fare of 2s-6d, but closer inspection reveals that it is actually a ticket for 8d, showing 2d for RCT plus 6d for M&S. Partitioning of

the revenue between the two operators apparently dates from an agreement made in May 1954, under which the Corporation took all the receipts from passengers in its area, whilst paying the Company 2.2d per mile for its operating costs in Corporation territory (Ref: *Rotherham and District Transport* by Charles C. Hall and Rotherham Borough Council - recommended for further study and more detailed reading).

Further, former Rotherham trolleybus driver Laurie Johnson writes: “The Setright machine registered the Rotherham 2d on the ticket. Rotherham used “Ultimate” machines but M&S could not because they didn't produce tickets that showed the two fares separately. Previously, the M&S conductors had to use the old Bell Punch with two sets of tickets. When setting off from Rotherham, they had to issue a RCT twopenny ticket and make up the fare with another ticket. Once you crossed the border at Stone Row, only M&S tickets were used. This was all to do with revenue sharing as RCT and M&S could never agree how much each should get.”

NOTTS & DERBY 353 HAS ARRIVED

Francis Whitehead's article "Introducing Notts and Derby 353" in the previous edition of *Sandtoft Scene* recorded the Museum's recent acquisition of this trolleybus from the West of England Transport Collection. We are delighted to report that 353 has now arrived at Sandtoft, being delivered on Saturday 25 April. It looks in good shape and we are looking forward to the day when we'll be able to run it in service. The photograph below records 353's arrival, and the others capture earlier stages in its life, which began in 1949 in the East Midlands where it ran for just four years - as illustrated on the front cover of *'Scene no.97*.



Left: No.353 has safely reached Sandtoft at the end of a very long (but uneventful) journey from Winkleigh in North Devon.

Externally, 353 is in very good condition, thanks to the restoration work done whilst in the care of the Bournemouth Passenger Transport Association

Photo: Stewart David

Below Left: When Notts & Derby abandoned their trolleybus system in 1953, Bradford purchased the entire fleet of 32 vehicles. Some were re-bodied, but many were not, including no.353, which became Bradford no.770 and is seen in the city centre in Hall Ings. It served in Bradford for 14 years and was purchased for preservation by the NTA in 1967.

Photo: Tony Belton

Below Right: Looking immaculate following extensive bodywork restoration by the Bournemouth Passenger Transport Association and an exterior repaint, Bradford 770 has been transformed back to its original identity, including the application of the Notts & Derby logo. 353 is seen behind a towing vehicle at Mallard Road Depot, Bournemouth, in May 1993

Photo: Robin Symons



The mass of “bits” that was stored inside, and which came with no.353 have been sorted through and we have started to assess the work required to make 353 operational - something that we expect to be quite a major project, considering that this vehicle has not moved under power since 1971.

As expected, six new tyres will be required and the seats need to be re-trimmed. A considerable amount of work was undertaken in its days with the Bournemouth Passenger Transport Association to restore the saloon interiors, but much still has to be done, including repairing the floors, fitting new linoleum, fitting seat anchors, renovating several of the opening windows and a host of other jobs. The cab requires considerable work and the main cabling needs to be replaced. We understand the low voltage wiring has been replaced, but this will all need to be checked. The brake pipes also need to be repaired/ replaced and, no doubt, there will be other mechanical work to be done. Despite all this, we believe no.353 is, in the main, sound and a fine addition to our collection.

We are keen to be able to make inroads into getting no.353 operational and therefore urgently need funds to enable this to happen. Our initial estimate is that we will need at least £25,000 to see this important project (including the seating re-trim) through, so please can you help ? As a start, we already have 10% of that target in donations received to date (thank you to those generous members). We will be preparing a project plan shortly in order that we can structure and properly manage the work required, so please come forward and send your donations to Francis Whitehead (contact details on page 2) - or make a donation direct into our bank (sort code 40-19-20, account no.92457016); ongoing monthly donations via standing order are also welcome.

NEWS ROUND-UP

Publicity: We are fortunate to have established good links with the Thorne Conservation Group, who have kindly publicised the Museum’s events calendar on their website (See “Best of Thorne” at www.thorneconservationgroup.co.uk/). We have also been boosting awareness of the Museum locally with an advertisement listing our open days in the *Thorne and District Gazette*, which is delivered free to 16,000 addresses.

On the Radio: Activities at Sandtoft were mentioned on the radio on 1 June, when Bruce Lake was interviewed on BBC Radio Leeds in connection with a news item about the introduction of low-emission buses. Bruce left the reporter in no doubt that trolleybuses provided an even greener solution, as recognised in the many cities worldwide currently running them.

Natural Paving: We were delighted to receive a practical donation in the form of a ton of granite paving blocks from our neighbours, Natural Paving, whose site is very close to the Museum. The intention is to use them in a display feature that includes a short section of tramline and one of our Sheffield tram-bodies.

Site work continues with maintenance and improvements on many fronts: particularly noticeable is the work on repainting another batch of traction poles this season.

RECENT RUNNING DAYS

Easter Weekend: 4-6 April

Richard Jackson

The 2015 season got off to good start at our first operating weekend, with plenty of visitors and a good turnout of staff to assist with all the duties. The weather was certainly in our favour with gloriously sunny skies encouraging the public to visit. For the traffic department, all ran smoothly, with Rotherham 37, Huddersfield 631, and Bradfords 746 and 834 providing the service. In total over the weekend we carried approximately 1,200 passengers on over 100 service runs, with Sunday proving to be our busiest day on the trolleybuses.

The one noticeable change this weekend was *The Tea Trolley Café*. With a new team of staff behind the counter: they seemed to cope extremely well with the constant stream of visitors rushing to try Joanna's home-made cakes. As this was their first weekend, and with a very high standard set by their predecessors, all credit needs to be given for their efforts. We look forward to seeing the café develop throughout the year.

Over the closed season, ground works were carried out and the new kerb and the Lichfield bus shelter (the latter still under construction), provided the staff with a new designated parking position for trolleybus loading. Apart from once parking a front-loading trolleybus in the wrong place, all seemed easy enough. Our Traffic Manager was, of course, inspecting everyone's parking with military precision (we know he's been practising all



Bradford 746 loading passengers at the main boarding point with its newly-widened footway – a great improvement, especially at busy times
Photo: Jason Bowers

winter!). The grand plan with our new loading bay is to develop the area so that there is an off-side pavement area for the safe embarking and disembarking of passengers from our worldwide vehicles. This will help to prevent the public alighting and stepping into the path of an oncoming trolleybus.

A lot of work has continued behind the scenes. Gill Ferris has swapped her "Trolley Dolly" apron for some gardening gloves and spent much time smartening up the central lawn area and flower beds. We can definitely pride ourselves on having a very well-maintained museum. All these jobs get completed without praise, but they are vital to our success.

The Isle of Axholme tours are always a popular aspect of our museum and this weekend was no exception. With tours departing throughout each of the

Another view of the remodelled loading bay, with Bradfords 834 and 746 followed by Rotherham 37. Springtime bulbs add a touch of natural beauty to the scene

*Photo:
Richard Jackson*



three days and nearly-full buses every time, we clearly have a valuable service there. Of course, it might also have something to do with Steve Gill and David Hanchett's "double act" during the guided tour.....

There was only one mechanical issue on the trolleybuses which required attention during the weekend. The brake pedal on Rotherham 37 was not returning fully once pressed, therefore it kept isolating the power pedal. This did cause the drivers to work overtime needing to use one foot to pull the brake fully up, whilst the left foot applied power. Luckily I had the RTG's treasurer as my conductor when the fault arose, so with both a driver and conductor being RTG members, we were keen to resolve the fault. So 37 was temporarily removed from service whilst Ian Metcalfe fitted a new return spring. Thanks go to both Ian



On board Rotherham 37, Robin Symons issues a ticket in exchange for the penny fare
Photo: Jason Bowers

and Andy Thornton for their help in getting this resolved and returning 37 back into public service.

We sometimes receive positive feedback from our visitors, and on 3 April a family with a disabled youngster was kind enough to post a detailed appreciation on Facebook of the service they received and the willingness of our staff to assist. Their message on page 30 is a credit to everyone involved.

Weekend Trolleydays 18-19 April

A very pleasant weekend with moderate visitor numbers provided those volunteers on duty with an occasional opportunity to relax and enjoy the experience themselves.

A temporary lull in passenger loadings provides Patrick Wilkinson with a leisurely break from conducting duties

Photo: John Stainforth



Bradford 792 dwarfed by an impressive display of daffodils, primroses and tulips – rewarding the efforts of our dedicated garden volunteers

Photo: Jason Bowers

Mayday Bank Holiday Weekend 2-4 May

David Hanchett

VE Day+70, or "There'll be blue birds over the white skies of Sandtoft"

Weather is a key factor in the life of an open air museum, and is just as important as having sufficient volunteers on the day ! At this event we had the full range of both. A quiet Saturday and Sunday were experienced, due to dull weather; indeed it was very wet at the start of the second day. This lack of a constant shining globe in the sky seemed to put visitors off a little, so we did not see too many guests. Some that we did see told us how much they liked the tranquillity, but the sun on the third day brought out the crowds !

Saturday and Sunday challenged the Museum, as one or two key departments were short of staff, which underlines just how important our volunteers are. An adage was proved at the same time: people are not often appreciated until they are not there ! It is a strength of our museum that when such a situation happens, we have flexible staff who can fill a gap, so that the public do not see the difference.

Right: With colourful costumes almost matching the trolleybuses, the Three Shires Ladies Clog Dancers prepare for their showpiece display. Their repertoire included traditional North-west Morris clog and garland dances collected from the mill towns of Lancashire, mimicking the movements made by the cotton-making machinery



Traditional dancing at the Museum on Sunday 3 May

Left: The musicians of the Harthill Morris Men tuning-up in front of Reading 181 and Doncaster 22



Below: The Harthill Morris Men in action. Despite hailing from the most southerly village in Yorkshire, their dances re-create the traditional Cotswold style

Photos: Jason Bowers



On the Sunday we were entertained by the Harthill Morris Men and the Three Shires Ladies Clog Dancers - and what a professional set of displays they provided. The sun even came out temporarily at exactly the right time for the great highlight of the day. For me, the back-drop of Doncaster's AEC no. 22 was a splendid setting ! The wartime theme was given credence by our rolling-stock: Derby 172 gave much pleasure despite inflicting a few sore "derrières", and 1943-built Limoges 5 (alias "Vera") cheerfully held the French resistance flag high ! Also operating were South Shields 204 and London 1348, both of which ran in service during wartime years. Post-war vehicles running during the weekend were Bradford 746 and Huddersfield 631 - which sneaked into a war-time line-up, just to show how lovely she is !

For the first time this season we had visiting vehicles of a wartime variety: an interesting selection of American army Jeeps and trucks, providing two splendid photo opportunities on the Monday, witnessed by lots of visitors. The Museum was really busy and *The Tea Trolley Café* served our guests with aplomb.



However, if it gets busier still later in the year, those with the teapots and home-made cake stands at the ready would really appreciate some more help ! And not just in eating the carrot cake !

Lots of thanks to go our performing visitors, who created the atmosphere so well, and of course to our flexible friends, our volunteers !

US Army vehicles with wartime utility
Derby trolleybus 172 completing the
period scene

Photo: David Hanchett

1940s Trolleyday - 10 May

Stewart David

Back in January I attended a meeting of the Thorne Conservation Group (TCG) who were busy planning their 1940s themed event to be held in Thorne centre over the weekend of 9-10 May. The TCG were very keen for our museum to play a part and indeed Sandtoft resident Doncaster 22 had visited their 2014 event. It was proposed that we would include an extra open day into our 2015 schedule on Sunday 10 May and provide a shuttle bus service from Thorne North Station to the Museum, enabling visitors to attend both events.

In a wider initiative to build effective working relationships with local interest groups, a small party from TCG visited the Museum on Saturday 14 March and were given a brief tour of the site. They met several Board members and other members of the team and were given a trolleybus ride on Derby 172.

On the day itself the shuttle bus service was well patronised with around 180 passenger journeys being made on Doncaster 55 and East London RN100.

Services commenced at 11:30 and departed the Museum every hour throughout the day. The trolleybus service was provided by wartime utility Derby 172, London 1348 and South Shields 204, with some 220 passenger journeys being undertaken. Both the TCG and the Museum regard the event as being successful and we look forward greatly to interacting with this enthusiastic local group in the future.



VE Day re-created with 1940s costumes on the shuttle service between Thorne and Sandtoft - under the supervision of ARP Warden Bob Ashton

Photo: David Hanchett

Spring Bank Holiday Weekend 23-25 May

Dave Chick

The "Big City Weekend" is a new concept for our Spring Bank Holiday and it provides a very flexible theme. Our service vehicles for the weekend were Athens 5088, Bradford 746, Glasgow TB78, London 1348, Manchester 1344 and Nottingham 506. The variety of systems represented proved popular with our visitors whilst for the enthusiast there was a variety of body designs, each vehicle body having been produced by a different manufacturer. Although four were BUTs each had a different chassis type - 9611T (746), 9612T (1344), 9613T (TB78) and 9641T (506). The others were the oldest of the group (1348, Leyland K2 with Leyland body, built in 1939) and the newest (5088, ZiU-9, built in 1989). We had also hoped to have Cardiff 203 running but unfortunately that did not prove possible.

It was also a very successful weekend in terms of visitor numbers. Saturday was much busier than Saturdays are usually, and although the numbers were lower

Now running well after motor-generator repairs, Athens 5088 awaiting service together with London 1348, Nottingham 506 and Manchester 1344

Photo: Dave Chick

on Sunday we had a very good turnout on Bank Holiday Monday. In fact that day was the busiest so far this season with almost 600 passenger journeys being made on our service trolleybuses. The new arrangements are working well in *The Tea Trolley Café*. We are still receiving very complimentary





Four big cities well represented by Glasgow TB78, Bradford 746, London 1348 and Manchester 1344
Photo: Dave Chick

comments about the café and about the home-made cakes. It reflects well on all concerned that there has been such a smooth transition. We were very pleased to welcome back the retired Trolley Dollies who now volunteering in other ways.

The appearance of the site continues to improve with progress having been made with the painting of traction poles and lamp posts. The effort that goes into the presentation of the site, including the gardening, grass cutting and paving, is well worthwhile, because it makes a very good first impression when our visitors walk out of Reception and see a well cared-for museum.

Another success for the team, then, and an event that could usefully be repeated in future years.

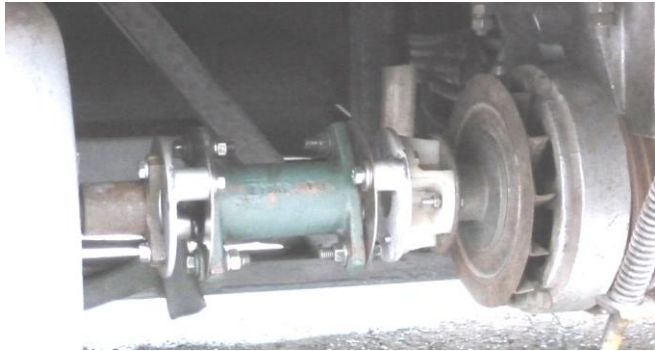
COUPLING THE ZIU

Tim Stubbs

In the article about the working week in March, your editor referred to the nice weather. I admit I was only there for one day but I have to say that I don't remember that bit ! However, be that as it may, my task was to sort out the motor-generator set coupling on Athens 5088, the 1989 Russian-built ZiU-9 currently located at Sandtoft. This vehicle was built for and operated in Athens until withdrawn, whereupon it was saved for preservation, given a complete overhaul and brought to the UK. It could be said that it is untypical of the other trolleybuses in the Museum, even the other foreign ones, but as the ZiU factory built over 45,000 of these in a 20-year period, it represents the world's most prolific trolleybus. No museum collection should be without one ! To put this into context, the total number of trolleybuses operating in the UK between 1911 and 1972 - all operators, all makes, comes to less than 10,000.

So to the task in hand. Preserved vehicles all have their idiosyncrasies and the ZiU is more than usually challenging: we are faced with drawings in Russian and the cab desk in Greek. And a "modern" trolleybus such as the ZiU-9 has a

number of relatively sophisticated features when compared with the traditional British types. These include a 19-notch camshaft used to control both power and braking, power doors (3 sets), independent air suspension and power steering. These gadgets require quite a bit of auxiliary power, which is derived from a 28-volt nickel-alkali battery. The battery is kept charged by a motor-generator (MG) set which takes its supply from the 575v overhead line, and whacks a healthy 40 amps into the battery when on charge. This is just as well, as the power steering pump alone draws 30 amps in normal operation.



The new motor-generator set coupling installed

Photo: Tim Stubbs

Sadly, the Achilles heel of the vehicle is the coupling between the motor and the generator of the MG set. The flexible coupling normally used has been a bit of a problem and so the plan was to install a better, more permanent solution. Luckily, the designers left a bit of space behind the generator set and

upon examination it was found possible to move the item along the frame, creating enough space for a well-designed flexible coupling to be installed. This was fabricated using parts from a scrap fuel pump drive from a Volvo B10, and with some adaption, the coupling was successfully installed. In this use, the working environment for the coupling is less harsh than on the B10 engine, there being less torsional oscillation, and hopefully a long coupling life will ensue. With the work completed and following a test run, 5088 has been put back into service. With confidence, come along and see 5088 working and take a trip on this superb smooth-riding trolleybus !

5088 on a test run after installing the new coupling

Photo: Tim Stubbs





THE ROUTE TO SANDTOFT

BLACK ROD KNOCKS ON THE DOORS

- OF SANDTOFT !

“Black Rod”

PART 13: Betrayal and an admission

As anybody gallant enough to keep pace with these articles will be aware, they were penned in response to a previous series penned by Steve Collins under the heading *The Route To Sandtoft*. Steve's personal involvement started in October 1965 and obviously his reporting of previous years was understandably based on conversations of the time and correspondence now in his possession. Your present writer has therefore concentrated on previous years and events leading up to this time. I have already conveyed my congratulations to Steve on his series that recounted events with a high degree of accuracy. However, from reading his account, one does rather gain the impression that at this time, being a naive “newcomer”, he was somewhat at the periphery of the Nottingham Trolleybus Group (NTG). Somebody a little on the sidelines, perhaps.... a bit of an observer maybe... was this really the case? We shall see !

There is little doubt, so far as the NTG were concerned, that it had proved a successful few months. Our character known as “The Chairman” was Chairman of the NTG (if you get my drift !), yours truly was “Hon. Sec” and our Treasurer I have named “The Librarian”. There were also a couple of other committee members and overall it was quite a democratically run operation. Members could and did sit in at committee meetings, decisions were made, recorded appropriately in minute books and action(s) taken accordingly. Although this sounds extremely business-like, in fact the set-up was rather more informal - enthusiastic amateurs rather than a professional organisation. Nevertheless, this “system” had worked for five years. The NTG had a site at Plumtree that was costing £1 per week and there were now 6 vehicles. Nottingham 466 (the debt for which had been paid off), Nottingham 493 (funded by “yours truly” who now had an incredibly depleted bank balance), Manchester 1250 (paid for by The Librarian, to be paid back by the membership - I do not think that this had yet been accomplished), Ashton 80 (being paid in instalments to Ashton Corporation by Howard Piltz, secretary of the Omnibus Select Society-OSS), Rotherham 37 (a remarkable and generous “gift” from Rotherham Corporation) and Barton motorbus 816 (ostensibly bought as a towing vehicle by The Chairman - almost certainly via a loan from a bank/ finance company that had not yet been paid back).

During a chance meeting with John Wake, General Manager of Nottingham City Transport (NCT), it had been insinuated (definitely not promised!) that Nottingham 518 - judged to be in the best condition of the remaining Nottingham BUT 9641Ts - would be offered to the NTG on extremely advantageous terms. We were also in correspondence with Bradford and had received a letter from the General Manager, Mr Deakin, that an ex-Notts & Derbys trolleybus would be reserved for us. There was also a plan to preserve a Nottingham tram, no.67.



Autospares, Hill Top Works, Bingley near Bradford - a visit here was a salutary lesson to those interested in preservation ! Sandwiched between Manchester motorbuses on 11 July 1965 are Nottingham 532, to the right 533 and 573 with 2-axle 489 at the rear. Curiously, despite being amongst the first to be brought here, and other than surviving examples (466 & 493), 489 became the last of the Nottingham 2-axle fleet to be broken up

Photo: Black Rod

Contrary to most reports, at this time the Plumtree fleet was kept well cleaned and swept out, although there was a shortage of skills to make any attempts at repairing bodywork - required for 466 and 80 - or electrical work. The vehicles, of course, were in the open and there were no tools to try any mechanical jobs. Tours were still being organised with a trip to Ashton/ Manchester scheduled for 24 October 1965 and Bradford (organised by Howard Piltz) for February 1966. It was NTG policy to co-operate with other groups to try and create a national trolleybus museum, and, although a split from the National Trolleybus Association (NTA) had been acrimonious, relationships with many other societies remained cordial.



Reading 171 and 144 in Broad Street on 11 August 1965, almost a year before the abandonment of the system was announced. Indeed, there was the prospect of further expansion with the proposed link between existing Whitley Wood and Northumberland Avenue termini. It was also some three years before 144 was withdrawn, having become Reading's last trolleybus, and then saved for preservation by Mike Dare, chairman of the RTS. 144, of course, subsequently became a regular service stalwart at Sandtoft.

Photo: Black Rod



Although this series has concentrated on trolleybuses preserved at Plumtree, it would be wrong to ignore efforts being made by others at this time. Cardiff 203 was a comparatively early preservation candidate that had a brief stay in London before being moved to Smiths Coaches premises in Reading. Visible in the photo is the rear of Derby 172 which, at this time, was the youngest trolleybus in the RTS collection. 203 was recently restored to streamlined livery and is in the operating fleet at Sandtoft



Also pictured on 12 August 1965, London 260 at Smiths Coaches in Reading. This vehicle had been a fortunate "escapee" having been selected for preservation by London Transport and then rejected. Condemned to the scrap merchant, a last-minute rescue by Tony Belton and Fred Ivey fortunately saved the day with 260 being stored at Reading for some years. Thankfully, this trolleybus is now operational and is at the East Anglia Transport Museum

Photos: Black Rod

Nottingham suddenly announced an early conversion of services 39, 40 and 47. Service 39 had previously been scheduled to be the last trolleybus route in the city. These closures would decimate the remaining network, giving rise to the belief that the system would be closed by the end of 1965. Service 39 closed on 30 September 1965 with services 40 and 47 following on 9 October. A "farewell" tour was hurriedly arranged for 10 October, with NCT kindly permitting us to use wiring from these services post-closure. Again, with a high degree of co-operation from NCT, we would also be allowed to travel to Trent Bridge on wiring not used by service trolleybuses for many months. Additionally, since the remaining fleet would be "standardised" on BUT 9641T 8-foot wide trolleybuses, the NTG would be allowed to hire a 7ft 6ins-wide model, the final use of the type. 578 was selected as the tour vehicle. It had had the benefit of a late overhaul/repaint and although not the last to be so treated, it was arguably the "cleanest" of the remaining "narrow" series. It was planned to be a memorable tour, being the very last trolleybus on the services mentioned plus many city centre sections including Nottingham's Old Market Square - surely the "heart" of the city. To highlight the plight of the dying trolleybus network for the conclusion of the tour I arranged for 578 to reverse on batteries into the unwired Pennyfoot Street Yard. This was the location from which withdrawn trolleybuses were collected by their respective scrap merchants. Giving further hope to the possibility of 518 being

preserved, this trolleybus was taken out of service on 9 October 1965 (with two others) and “stored” unlike the other unfortunates that were promptly sold for scrap. It will not have escaped your attention that most of the foregoing, so far as the NTG was concerned is all positive ! Overall, everything seemed good - although obviously the finances remained extremely tight. What could possibly go wrong ?

A letter arrived “out of the blue” from British Railways advising that the rent at Plumtree was about to be increased. I seem to recall that the actual amount was not mentioned at this stage. The £1 per week was to park one vehicle, so it was reasoned that 6 vehicles could cost £6 per week. This would seriously affect finance. In fact, with the monies already owed, it probably could no longer have been afforded. Obviously financial prudence needed to be exercised.

My admission mentioned in the heading of this chapter ? I would refer to Part 2 of the articles by Steve Collins. He writes that he had five “memorable encounters” during the 578 tour. These were: (1) “the young chap who told me about the trolleybus tour”, (3) “Black Rod”, (4) “The Teacher” and (5) Tom Bowden. As Steve mentioned, who, you may be thinking, was the second ? Well, (2) was 578! What then is my admission ? On my way to the tour on 578, I called in at Pennyfoot Street Yard to see the “casualties” from the previous night. There were two young gentlemen (both be-spectacled, I seem to remember) looking at the trolleybuses in the yard. Whilst I had not previously seen them, I obviously thought that they would be tour participants. I’m sure that you are now getting the picture ! Now you might think that I might be making this up - but I have photographic evidence ! Yes, Steve - I am both numbers 1 and 3 in your list of “memorable encounters !”

There were a number of unfamiliar faces on the tour - plus a familiar one. The Teacher, absent for several years, was standing by the trolleybus alongside The Chairman. Somewhat shamefaced, The Chairman informed me that The Teacher wished to make an appeal during the tour - for 578. I reminded them that our policy was to save 518 and indeed this was what NCT were expecting. There was an attempt to persuade me that it would be a good idea to preserve



Nottingham 578 on tour on 10 October 1965, at Long Row West at the entrance to Old Market Square. Hired by the NTG, this tour closed many sections of the Nottingham network, including much of the central area wiring, part of which was the section where 578 is standing. This overhead had not been used since 30 July 1965. At the conclusion of this tour a “whip-round” was organised to secure 578’s future. Formerly operated at Sandtoft and seen at the Black Country circuit some years ago, 578 is currently stored at Boughton but has not carried passengers for many years

Photo: Black Rod

both. When the subject of finance was mentioned, the usual £1 per week monologue ensued. On the day it was presented to me that this was to be an impromptu “whip-round”, based solely on The Teacher seeing the good condition of 578. I merely felt betrayed. However, I was aware that 578 had already been sold to Autospares. We simply could not afford to pay the full scrap value for any vehicle. With the impending rent “hike” I also thought that common sense would have to prevail. I do not propose to dwell on The Teacher’s subsequent appeal - Steve has adequately reported the contents of this memorable “speech”. There is one point on which I must vary from Steve’s assessment that it was all “tripe”. This was the little bit that The Teacher made regarding bringing 578, 466 and 493 back to Nottingham for last day proceedings. Certainly not all three - but one of them, well, might have returned.....

Bad to worse !

The next few meetings at The Chairman’s house were, to me, “enlightening”. It soon became clear that the “whip-round” for 578 had been anything other than impromptu. Indeed, The Teacher had actually been on the scene (or rather behind the scenes !) for several months. There had obviously been a “hidden agenda”. While “good old Black Rod” was working away carrying out what I believed to be the collective wishes of the membership, a very different way forward was being sought. Firstly, the policy of co-operation with other societies to create a working trolleybus museum would continue..... provided that the national site was Plumtree ! Aided and abetted by The Teacher, The Chairman started to spout off about steam buses, steam rollers, traction engines - you name it and it would be going to Plumtree. The only topic not strictly discussed was money. I still did not believe that 578 could be afforded - but, as history proves, it was ! I do not know how £200 (or, as Steve revealed, £190) was raised - I suppose by another loan. A few months before, you might recall that I had purchased 493 outright - nobody had got money to help. Nobody had money to help with the purchase of Ashton 80. When £100 would have saved both 493 and 460, The Teacher was clearly already colluding with The Chairman. I stated in an earlier part of the story that I did not hold the NTA wholly responsible for the destruction of Britain’s last Roe-bodied utility trolleybus due to their derisory offer for 460. I also hold The Teacher and Chairman partly responsible. I believe that it was incumbent upon The Chairman to promote the agreed policy lines of the NTG and to discourage The Teacher from purchasing 578. I’m afraid that The Teacher merely encouraged The Chairman in his more expansive (some might say wilder !) schemes. If The Teacher really wanted an NCT BUT 9641T 7ft 6ins-wide vehicle, why was it not discussed openly ? It just might have been possible to negotiate £50 each for 460, 493, 578 and 518. We will never know.

At the end of December 1965, Derby withdrew its last utility trolleybuses. Since we had not secured a Nottingham Park Royal-bodied utility, it had been thought that one from Derby could be purchased instead. From where would we find an additional £70 on top of the money already required for 578 ? The NTG had attracted new members following the tour on 578, including Steve, but still insufficient to service outstanding loans and there was still a rent rise to find.

There was more to follow. There was talk of erecting a building to house the fleet. It would be an "Atcost" unit but, when issues such as cost and Town and Country Planning were mentioned, the conversation seemed to dry up. The last straw for me was at a meeting when The Chairman, egged on by The Teacher, gave a "vision" of Plumtree in the future. There would be World War II events, where utility vehicles would be operated and suitable planes flown overhead with mock bombing raids. It was wonderful stuff and had the younger members spellbound. I left with an older and wiser member who worked on the Barton motorbus at times. He just shook his head and simply said: "Looks like all the lunatics are out of the asylum". The Chairman was not remotely a lunatic, but he did possess a vivid imagination and always believed that things would "turn out right in the end." For some years, the excesses of his fertile mind had been kept in check but The Teacher had simply encouraged them.

There was no doubt that the NTG were heading for a financial disaster. The Chairman had a wife and young son. With the house used as security for loans their house would be in jeopardy if payments were not made. With plans under consideration, these payments would clearly not be anywhere within our means. However, it became apparent that The Chairman was determined that 175 would be purchased. Steve, in his article, expressed surprise that I did not want this vehicle to be preserved. This was not the case: I just did not see how it could be possibly afforded. What could be done to stop the proposed spending spree and consequent monetary catastrophe ? Who would stand against it.....? We shall see.

To be continued

VEHICLE REPORTS

Compiled from notes supplied by:

Bob Ashton, Mike Johnson, Jim Sambrooks and Francis Whitehead

Bradford 792: The hinged window frame at the nearside rear upstairs has been repaired and re-rubbered, following corrosion damage which had detached the bottom section many years ago.

Derby 172 required two windows re-glazing: this was done by a local firm and a few other "odd jobs" were completed prior to the 1940s events.

Doncaster 375: Bob Ashton has done more work on the staircase area, but progress has been limited owing to the poor lighting with 375 currently positioned at the back of the depot.

Johannesburg 589 has been receiving concerted attention recently: a replacement body bearer cross-member has been fabricated and awaits fitting under the rear bulkhead - a complex operation that will require the body to be jacked up off the chassis to allow the (remains of) the old member to be removed and the new one manoeuvred into place and secured. At the front, an extensive and thorough rebuild/ repair of the cab and front bulkhead is underway - frame members, stress panels, floor, internal wings, ceiling and driver's controls and switches etc. are all involved and when completed, will allow the main cabling to be run and the many refurbished electrical components to be fitted into place and connected.

Rotherham 44: The South Yorkshire Transport Museum is interested in displaying 44 at its premises in Aldwarke, near Rotherham, and on 2 April two SYTM representatives joined Ian Wilson, Mike Johnson and Stewart David on a visit to our storage location at Thorpe-in-Balne to assess its current condition. Whilst 44 is extremely grimy inside and out following many years at Thorpe, the bodywork and seating appears to be in a generally satisfactory state, although the cab door and some platform handrails are missing and attention to the tyres will be needed before 44 can be moved. The next step will be to tow 44 to Sandtoft for a thorough clean-up and minor repairs to make it presentable. Subject to agreement being reached, the intention is to have 44 on display at Aldwarke, initially for a 5-year loan period.

Wellington 82: The chassis has been cleaned and painted and the overhauled traction motor refitted. Inside, the floor has been prepared (and repaired in places with new timber) and the replacement linoleum fitted. Thanks to member Stephen Oliver, a replacement destination blind and route number blind have been sourced and brought back from Wellington.

Doncaster 22: A pre-inspection inspection found a few problems. The exhaust was blowing in three places and closer inspection revealed that the down and intermediate pipes were corroded and the flexible pipe broken - all these pipes were in use when DO&LRS acquired the bus 42 years ago. No.22 was taken to Custom Pipes at Carr Hill, Doncaster who made new down and intermediate pipes in stainless steel, whilst the flexible pipe was renewed from DOL&RS stock. For them to work under the bus we had to remove the lifeguard rails, one of which was found to be damaged. This was repaired and both were painted prior to refitting. The offside front wing had corroded badly round the edges, so this was removed and taken to Chris Morley whose land we had used for last year's St Leger Rally. Chris made a splendid repair and it is now refitted.

Doncaster 33: Much more preparation work has been carried out by the Proctor family with Alex leading the team. A roof vent has been repaired and refitted. Three new panels have been cut, shaped and fitted, some with new beading cut to width and length by Chris. Kieran has repaired the body frame above the nearside engine access panel and Bex has rubbed down some window pans. A pre-MoT inspection has been carried out along with servicing.

Doncaster 94's front brake servos have been repaired using new seals sourced by Miles Cartwright.

Doncaster 112: All the Jablite insulation is now attached to the roof and the ceiling panels and beading have been prepared for refitting. More work has been carried out in the platform area by Mike Hirst.

Model show at Crich Tramway Village

Our member John Huddleston has informed us of a model tram and railway exhibition to be held on 22 and 23 August 2015, 10am to 5pm both days at the National Tramway Museum, Crich Tramway Village, Crich, Derbyshire, DE4 5DP. An operating model trolleybus system will be on display. Normal museum entry charges apply.

AN ACCOLADE FOR JIM SAMBROOKS

On Easter Monday, the Museum's Workshop Superintendent, Jim Sambrooks, was presented with the Historic Commercial Vehicle Society's Literary Award by HCVS Trustee Alwin Harrison. This was in recognition of the many articles that Jim has written for the Society. Most recently, Jim's personal recollections have been serialised under the title "My life and the buses" in the past few editions of the Society's monthly magazine - they definitely make nostalgic and entertaining reading! Jim said afterwards that the award had come as a complete surprise.



Jim Sambrooks (left) receiving his trophy from HCVS Trustee Alwin Harrison (right). Graham Bilbé has temporarily swapped his overalls for a Harrod's pinafore, having taken a break from café duties to oversee proceedings

Photo: Dave Chick

CAFE TEAMS UNITED

The Tea Trolley Café's former staff of "Trolley Dollies" are still regular volunteers at the Museum, but are now seen working in other roles. Meanwhile the new café team is getting well-established in the job as "Pam's People", easily identified by their butchers'-style aprons. The spring bank holiday weekend provided an opportunity for both groups to get together - and to pose for a combined group photograph.

From left-to-right:
Terry Diment,
Pam Besser,
Cherryll Crowther,
Gill Ferris,
Judy Martindale,
Bernice Needham
and Joanna Hanchett

Photo: Dave Chick



VOLUNTEERS' PAGE

Badges and ties:

The new name badges produced for the 2015 season help to provide our volunteer staff with a more professional appearance - thanks go to Chris and Linda Proctor for organising their production. These were distributed on 18 March and a few remain to be collected from Linda. Traffic and some other key staff are also wearing their new "Trolleybus Museum" ties which provides a smart and up-to-date replacement for the old "STC" ties for drivers and conductors.

Volunteers' Handbooks:

Distribution of the two new handbooks is also well underway. These are individually earmarked for 93 active volunteers, all of whom will receive a *Handbook for Volunteers*, with many people also getting a copy of the *Vehicle Movement and Operations Guide*. The second booklet is aimed at everyone involved with traffic, engineering, vehicle cleaning and preparation, vehicle movement, maintenance and restoration work at the Museum. These handbooks contain important safety information and guidance about the care of visitors, together with a few "rules and regulations" to help ensure the smooth running of the Museum. Please take time to read them. If you have not yet received your handbook(s), please make a point of collecting your envelope from Linda Proctor next time you are at the Museum.

Volunteer Information Forms:

Many thanks to everyone who has already completed one of these forms: this is part of establishing a register of volunteers, and will help to provide a complete picture of the skills available in our team, new volunteers and long-standing ones included. Some of our regular workers have not yet returned a completed volunteer information form, so if you are among them, please ask Linda Proctor for one and complete it as soon as possible.

Please choose a quiet time if you are visiting Chris or Linda in the Trolleyshop about any of the above items, and most particularly, please avoid doing this whilst things are hectic on 'Gathering Day !

Personal news

Many congratulations to Aiden and Jenna Proctor on the birth in April of their daughter Darcey Anne.

NON-ARRIVAL OF SANDTOFT SCENE?

We normally follow a regular pattern for distributing *Sandtoft Scene* to our members, and we aim to deliver them to you by the middle of the months of April and July. The January mailing may be slightly later due to the Christmas break, and the October issue is usually sent earlier on in that month, as it contains the notification of the November AGM. So, as a general rule, if you have not received your copy of 'Scene by the end of any of those four months, something is amiss. In such circumstances, please contact us (scene@sandtoft.org), as it is likely to have gone adrift in the post. We will, of course, send you a replacement.

For reasons we don't understand, there was a specific problem with the delivery of 'Scene no.96 (the January 2015 issue). We have only just become aware of

this, but it appears that quite a few magazines that we definitely posted were never delivered. Even more unusual, the surnames of their addressees were very close together in the alphabetic sequence of the envelopes bundled-up for posting. Although this occurred some time ago now, if you were expecting a copy of that issue and never received it, do please let us know.

Very occasionally, you may not receive your magazine because your name has disappeared from our quarterly mailing list. This might be a consequence of a very belated membership renewal, or possibly a delay with subscriptions renewed in person at the Museum reaching our membership secretary. These instances are infrequent, but naturally we will correct things and despatch your missing copy as soon as you tell us that it has not arrived.

We have also had occasional reports of members not receiving their magazine following a change of address, therefore it is important that you promptly let our membership secretary David Needham (membership@sandtoft.org) know your new address if it changes. If your annual membership is renewed via one of the contributing societies, you should promptly notify your society's membership secretary, and if you inform David as well this will help to prevent any mailing problems whilst the two sets of records are being brought into step.

There have also been one or two instances of *Sandtoft Scene* arriving in poor condition in a badly-damaged envelope: something that seems more prone to happening with those envelopes that contain two or three magazines. We do use stronger envelopes and extra tape for these mailings, but if yours is damaged please contact us, and we will send any replacement copies needed. Also, don't be surprised if you receive two magazines in two separate envelopes, which surprisingly costs us 11p less in stamps than posting them together in one.

Since we moved to professional printing of *Sandtoft Scene* early last year, nobody has reported receiving an incorrectly-assembled or badly-printed copy. Whilst that reflects very well on the quality of the work done by our printers, it is important that you should let us know if by any chance you do receive one that has a printing problem. Again, we will promptly despatch a replacement copy.

If you suspect that your magazine should have arrived but hasn't, you can - if you have internet access - check the members' area of the website at www.sandtoft.org/members, where the latest *Sandtoft Scene* is usually made available at around the same time as it is mailed out to members.

- **For renewals and address changes:** contact membership@sandtoft.org
- **For delivery problems:** contact scene@sandtoft.org

DEAR 'SCENE

Dear 'Scene

It was with dismay that I read in the article "The Route to Sandtoft" in the April edition of *Sandtoft Scene*, harsh criticism of my actions surrounding the closure of the Rotherham trolleybus system in 1965. The first misunderstanding is caused by the author's use of anonymous "nicknames" for many of the characters of the time (a privilege I have not been granted), and I have always

assumed that "The Teacher" was the title given to Howard Piltz. It was only on reading this April article that I discovered that this was not the case, hence my confusion with names and who said what at the time. (I now have no idea who "The Teacher" is).

It must be remembered that, fifty years ago, I was a young teenager having only left school in July 1965, just four months prior to the Rotherham closure. I was proud to have organised the tour on which no.30 was the last trolleybus to enter the depot, which was a sentimental occasion. Howard Piltz had told us all, during the tour, that someone should preserve a Rotherham trolleybus and it was on a teenage impulse that I wrote to Rotherham Corporation a day or two after the tour, enquiring about the purchase of such a vehicle. It was a huge surprise when they replied offering a trolleybus free of charge, but a copy of this letter had been sent to the Nottingham Group. The outcome of the subsequent meeting to resolve the situation was obvious from the date of discovery of the Corporation's misunderstanding, for what could a young teenager say when faced with a party of older gentlemen who already had a trolleybus storage site. What is glossed-over in a couple of words in these critical notes is that, in subsequent years, my colleagues and I spent a great deal of time and money on the upkeep of 37, including a full professional repaint by Halifax Corporation, without which we may well be unable to enjoy riding on her today at Sandtoft.

I cannot believe that the "Susan incident" is still being discussed as it was merely a youthful prank. There were (and still are) many escapades amongst the younger participants on enthusiast tours which would all be forgotten a few days later, and I am sure no-one would take seriously any analysis of their actions some fifty years later. Sadly Susan's mental health deteriorated much further in later years and I have not heard of her for a very long time. The inference that I was romantically involved with Susan could not be further from the truth.

Having been a supporter at Sandtoft for a number of years it is sad to have been subjected to criticism in *Sandtoft Scene* over incidents fifty years previously, and would ask that my many friends and colleagues at the Museum now allow such bygone events to be part of trolleybus history without any future attempts to apportion blame.

Dennis E Vickers, Chesterfield

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Dear 'Scene

Today we've had a fun afternoon at the Trolleybus Museum. We arrived at 11am as it opened and parked in the disabled parking spaces which are located right next to the entrance. There is a "disabled and carer" concession price and under-5s go free. The price of the admission gets you access to all the museum as well as unlimited trolleybus rides on site and also a bus ride off site. There's lots to see and my one year old bus-obsessed son loved it, I would say there's a bit of something for everyone.

Although at first glance I thought we would struggle with access to some of the buildings, I was soon told by a member of staff that back entrances with ramps could be opened up for us and they did just that. Nothing was too much for

anyone: we were constantly asked if there was anything that we needed help with, and everyone had a smile too.

The trolleybuses themselves are not designed as wheelchair accessible as they were built in a bygone age where these things were not considered necessary. We carried my daughter onto them as she's a lightweight, but I came away with the feeling that if we had not been able to do this the staff would have found a way for her to access the rides. We did leave the wheelchair and pushchair at the bus stop; this was something that everybody else did too, and we just made sure that we had our more valuable items with us. Whilst there we visited the café which had sandwiches and some very yummy cake, as well as a bus for the kids to play in so you can enjoy a cuppa in relative peace. The food in the café cannot be guaranteed as allergen-free, so this does have to be borne in mind if you have food allergies. However, the staff were more than happy for my daughter (who has chewing and swallowing issues) to eat her own pack up.

As well as the café and the trolleybuses themselves, there is a small cinema showing a trolleybus film, an exhibition about the trolleybuses, a gift shop with items that were very reasonably priced, a small park (no wheelchair accessible equipment but there is a baby swing if your child is small enough), a prefab house dating from the 1950s and decorated in period style, an old style bike shop and an ice cream van, in very well-kept and maintained grounds. There is a standard disabled loo which my daughter isn't able to use, so we used the baby-change area which was quite sturdy but no use for bigger children who can't maintain a sitting balance. All in all a delightful day, and a pleasure to meet so many staff (who I think are all volunteers) who were eager to help. We will be going back.

*Posted to the Museum's Facebook page by Lorna Fillingham.
Support for disabled children and their families in Scunthorpe
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Dear 'Scene

I just had a marvellous day at Sandtoft, taking part in one of the driver experience days. I drove a couple of trolleybuses, had a go at conducting and learned a great deal about all aspects of them. This is something that I cannot recommend highly enough to anybody with an interest in these vehicles. Many thanks to all at Sandtoft for making this day so enjoyable, from the professional training (both driving and conducting) to the ladies who provided a wonderful lunch. Thank you all.

*Posted to the Museum's Facebook page by John Stafford, Goole
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Dear 'Scene


I'd just like to say how much I enjoyed my Trolleybus Driving Experience in April, and what a pleasant surprise to receive one year's free membership. I had driven buses, trams and steam locos before but never a trolleybus. Graham Bilbé and his team were very friendly and didn't embarrass us if we did something wrong (as I'm sure we did !). I may even return for a second dose !

Colin Read, Croydon

RUNNING DAYS IN 2015

(Open 11.00am - 5.00pm unless stated otherwise)

Weekend Trolleydays and Teddy Bears' Picnic	Saturday, 4 July  Sunday, 5 July Free Bus
'Gathering Saturday Trolleyday <i>A preview of 'Gathering Day itself: twilight trolleybus operation & real ale beer tent</i>	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