

Sandtoft Scene

October 2015

No. 99



**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 PICTURE: On loan to the Museum for a little longer, Athens 5088 joins resident vehicles on display in the rally field at the 2015 'Gathering' *Photo: John Stainforth*

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.

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FROM THE EDITOR



The changes to the parking arrangements created quite a logistical challenge for this year's 'Gathering, but the event was nonetheless a very successful one, with a substantial number of visiting vehicles and - despite the weather forecast - a most encouraging turnout of visiting people. As explained in our report on page 14, more volunteers than usual were required to make it all happen and more responded by signing-up to assist. Because so many people were involved, we are not mentioning anyone by name, but sincerely

thank everyone who contributed their time and energy. Exceptionally, however, a special tribute is due to our member Chris Morley for making his nearby land freely available for the parking of around 400 cars for the event.

Our selection of photographs captures some of the 'Gathering highlights and a video on YouTube (see www.sandtoft.org/members for a link) records seven trolleybuses and several motorbuses in action in a variety of weather conditions, with umbrellas featuring in some of the sequences.

Also in this issue (page 27) we are reflecting on the trolleybus system in Rotherham, which came to an end 50 years ago, with personal recollections from RCT driver Laurie Johnson and documentation of the final tours in October 1965.

Whilst putting together *Sandtoft Scene* I am always pleased to have a generous selection of photographs to choose from, but in order to maintain the content of the magazine we do need a good supply of articles as well. Please keep them coming, and, if you are able to submit a report of one of our running weekends, that will be even better, as it helps to spread the load amongst a wider group of contributors and makes for more varied reading. We have returned to 36 pages in this edition and we can keep to that size in the future if enough members send something for these pages.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to:

Mr David Bicknell (London)
Mr Richard Coates (Bradford)
Ms Christine Campbell (Portpatrick)
Mr John Clarkson (York)
Mrs Mary Copson (Matlock)
Mr Douglas Croft (Edenthorpe)
Mr Andrew Elshaw (Wolverton)
Mr Bob Fowler (Brigg)

Mr Chris Gojka (Stoke on Trent)
Mrs Karen Gojka (Stoke on Trent)
Mrs Debbie Knights (Market Rasen)
Andrew Lindley (Doncaster)
Mr Andrew Miles (Flimwell Wadhurst)
Mr Robert Purcell (Sale)
Mr Michael Sutton (Uxbridge)

Please note: News deadline for the next *Sandtoft Scene* is 5 December 2015

RECENT RUNNING DAYS

Trolleydays and Coach Rally: 6-7 June

David Hanchett

or "Vintage coaches came to show the trolleybuses what they could do"

On 7 June, the Trolleybus Museum held its first ever coach rally. The romantic concept was that coaches would set off from their bases during their heyday, intending to go to the National Coach Rally in Brighton, but on the way, they would get caught in a "time warp", and end up at the Trolleybus Museum instead. After a bit of quick thinking, the Museum staff would make them feel at home as much as possible, even if they could not conjure-up the sea and Madeira Drive - Brighton's pebble-side promenade and traditional home of the rally. The Museum's beautifully-green central lawn would stand in for the blue of the sea ! (Yes, it would have to, and it had rained recently).

Seven vehicles arrived on the day, two of which were genuinely a surprise, as it was not known that they were coming until the last minute. Two others, sadly, were unable to make it on the day, but perhaps their particular "time warp" will deposit them at next year's event !

The weather was excellent for photography, so the visitors posed several times for the cameras. As we had ex-Maidstone and District no.CO252 (OKP980) at hand, Maidstone trolleybus no.72 was able to be snapped at a stop, with her cousin passing "on tour". Thanks to the owner, Thornes Coaches, for that ! One favourite with our visitors and staff alike, a surprise visitor, was the



Maidstones reunited: Alongside the Corporation's No.72 stands the unusual 1952 Maidstone & District Beadle/ Leyland TD4 rebuild owned by Thornes *Photo: David Hanchett*

AEC Regal single-deck half-cab ex-Lisbon no.104 with an automatic gearbox. Another was David Gamble's 1947 Chesterfield Corporation Transport no.48, a Leyland Tiger PS1, glistening in the sunlight. Thornes Coaches also brought their AEC Reliance/ Duple "Britannia" SHO800, which had the cameras clicking.

Your correspondent was particularly pleased to see two Bedfords proudly representing their builder. One was Bedford VAS/ Plaxton USS 416L, formerly operated by Ian Glass Coaches of East Lothian. The other was KLP 1D, the former Royal Household Bedford J2 with its petrol engine and space at the rear for the corgis ! Bedfords were one of the un-sung lightweight work-horses of the



Doncaster 22 joins some of the visiting coaches for a display in Sandtoft Square

Photo:
David Hanchett

British coach industry for a very long time, and were known for their own little peculiarities. For example, many had a very loud buzzer which sounded when the engine revs were low, or the driver accidentally stalled it - just what you wanted when you had passengers aboard, or were taking your driving test !

Two of our resident vehicles, dual purpose motor buses, joined the visitors on display: Felix 41 and Doncaster 22. The latter, sporting a new exhaust system, and still smelling of hot exhaust pipe sealing paste, joined "Primrose", Hornsby Travel's Dennis Lancet/ Thurgood touring coach, to provide the two departures of the Isle of Axholme tour.

After a chance to sample a *Tea Trolley Café* lunch, or a seaside (sorry, grass-side) ice-cream, we organised a little driving demonstration for our visitors: intrepid drivers were challenged to drive around a course of obstacles, first forwards, and then in reverse (all without power steering, and only tiny mirrors in most cases). It was good to see such brave people, ready for a challenge ! One participant was heard to say "Next year, I think the motor coaches should throw down the gauntlet to a trolleybus, so they can show that they can do it too !"

A varied and pleasing display of visiting and resident single-deckers on the central grass area

Photo: Dave Chick



Thanks are due by the bucket-load to our visiting vehicle owners for coming to share the day with us. We really hope to see them again, and our other visitors of course, very soon !



Limoges 5,
Edmonton 189
and Athens 5088
were in service
during the
Worldwide
Weekend

Photo:

John Stainforth

Worldwide Weekend: 20-21 June

David Hanchett

Once again, this was our yearly excuse to give our increasingly large foreign fleet an airing and an opportunity to give our visitors a broader range of trolleybus experiences.

As always on this weekend, our conductors had far fewer stairs to climb than normal, as there was only one double-decker running. Glasgow TB78 was representing one of our neighbouring countries - Scotland, of course ! The Sheffield Atlantean, no.1357, ran the Isle of Axholme tour to represent England. Athens 5088, the visiting Russian-built trolleybus, ran all weekend without any problems, after a little "t.l.c." from the engineering department before the event. This remarkable vehicle is normally based at the East Anglia Transport Museum, and its period of loan to us has been extended for a few months. "Vera" (alias Limoges no. 5) was another favourite as always. Edmonton 189 and Marseille 202 both ran, the latter demonstrating its hybrid ability by running under diesel generator power as well as using the overhead supply (and it is just a little noisy at the back of the saloon when it does this).

Our foreign vehicles are very different to drive, as control labels are often in a language other than English and the accelerator and brake operations can be in a wide manner of methods, often the reverse or double reverse of British-built trolleybuses. For this reason, only the most experienced of the Museum's staff are permitted to drive them.

Glasgow TB78,
Marseille 202 and
Limoges 5 awaiting
passengers in the
loading bay

Photo: John Stainforth





Still with its Portuguese registration, this 1948 AEC Regal ran as Lisbon 104 and was on display at the British Commercial Vehicle Museum at Leyland before spending ten years in Scotland as part of the Beith Transport Collection. It is now resident in Lincolnshire

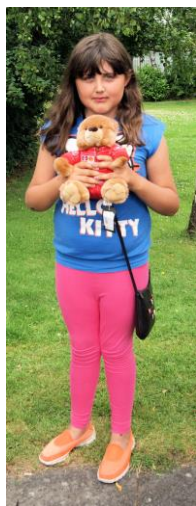
Photo: John Stainforth

On Saturday our visitor numbers were a little low, as nearby Epworth had a music festival scheduled on the same day - fortunately not on the scale of Glastonbury, however ! On the Sunday, there was an appropriate second visit to the Museum by ex-Lisbon 104. This unusual left-hand drive AEC Regal half-cab created quite a bit of interest again, with one young visitor being heard to comment: "Oh look, Daddy, there's a mirror bus over there !"

We were very pleased to welcome several people visiting from around the world, during the weekend. The comment was made that we truly have a large number of trolleybuses, and when one visitor asked "How many full time staff do you have ?" there was a look of amazement when the answer "none" came back.

Weekend Trolleydays and Teddy Bears' Picnic: 4-5 July

With this annual event specially aimed at youngsters (and the young-at-heart), everyone enjoyed a good weekend, especially those on Sunday who brought their bears - and other animal friends - to join in the fun. Paul Colegate photographed the prizewinners:





THE ROUTE TO SANDTOFT

BLACK ROD KNOCKS ON THE DOORS - OF SANDTOFT !

“Black Rod”

PART 14: Action

As 1965 turned into 1966 all seemed to be going well for the Nottingham Trolleybus Group (NTG) - at least that is what many of the newer members believed. With 6 vehicles at their Plumtree site - including 5 trolleybuses, with negotiations on-going for number 7 (Nottingham 578) and thoughts of a Derby Park Royal bodied utility (175) - what could possibly be amiss ? Well the “Hon Sec” of the NTG - named by Steve Collins in his articles as one “Black Rod”, i.e. your writer - was not a happy camper. Why ? Well, the NTG could not afford to pay for the vehicles or the site !

The Plumtree Station site was undergoing a considerable rent increase and there were other costs to pay back loans for some of the various vehicles. There had been changes in the “modus operandi” of the NTG with former policies as shown in the Minute Book seemingly viewed with total disregard and, sadly, contempt. Nottingham City Transport (NCT) had hinted (not promised !) that we might receive a Nottingham 8-foot wide BUT 9641T at an extremely favourable cost. No.518 had been chosen due to its late overhaul and consequent good condition. However, one was not sufficient, so our Chairman was aiding and abetting the Teacher to purchase 578, a 7ft.6ins-wide model. Unfortunately, this had been already sold for scrap, but undaunted, the purchase went ahead and 578 joined the merry throng of vehicles at Plumtree. It was also agreed at a semi-secret meeting that Derby 175 should be purchased.

Amongst other items being discussed was the construction of a depot, making Plumtree the national trolleybus museum centre, and encouraging all manner of other vehicles for preservation at the site. Finance seemed not to be a consideration. The Chairman continued to weave fantastic stories of the future, but, alas, it was becoming clearer that they would remain figments of a fertile imagination. Somebody had to do something ! At this time I still remained officially as “Hon Sec” but clearly this could not continue. The Chairman and The Teacher now held ideas in direct opposition to previous policies and I could no longer support them.

Since the NTA/ NTG “split”, tours organised by the latter were resumed, again with the idea of raising much-needed revenue to purchase vehicles and pay the rent at Plumtree. It had been encouraging to go on the NTG tour of Ashton using no.62 on 24 October 1965. Incidentally, this tour is illustrated in the Super Prestige book *Ashton & Manchester's Trolleybuses* by Bob Rowe. On page 99 (top photo) the caption reads that the trolleybus is “probably on a tour”. I can confirm that it is the NTG tour on 62 ! I had again met with Howard Piltz of the Omnibus Select Society (OSS). Howard and I had similar views regarding trolleybus preservation with various societies co-operating to form a national museum. I also met several other enthusiasts on the tour including Carl Isgar. Their ideas also corresponded with mine and also aligned to those previously discussed with Mike Dare.



Ashton 62 on tour on 24 October 1965 at Chancellor Lane on Manchester wiring not generally used by Ashton trolleybuses. Ashton 62 was a Sunbeam W re-bodied by Roe in 1958. It was formerly fitted with the ubiquitous Park Royal utility body. Unusually (possibly uniquely) upon re-bodying, Ashton trolleybuses were also equipped with traction batteries and low-voltage lighting. Despite this expenditure, 62 was withdrawn within two months of this tour, ending-up at Autospares of Bingley

Photo: Black Rod

Of course, John Wake, NCT's General Manager, had found out about the price paid for 578 and - as Steve succinctly termed it - "the days of concession were over". I had (genuinely !) pleaded poverty in negotiating for trolleybuses and had agreed to try and limit the approaches made to NCT by enthusiasts. The Teacher's negotiations with Autospares had shown that enthusiasts might be capable of raising more money than had previously been stated !

My other concern, as previously mentioned, was the Chairman's wife and family. In addition to the letter from Mr Wake advising of the increased price for no.518, there was a letter from British Railways regarding late payment of rent. The Chairman's house was used as collateral security for loans and I had no wish to see him or his family lose their home. Steve mentioned the meeting where I resigned. He thought that my remarks were spoken out of a hatred for The Teacher; however this was not so. I needed to make an impact - something that would hopefully jolt members from their expensive dreams - to make them think before they took on any further expenditure. Hopefully, it would enable The Chairman to see sense before any loan company foreclosed on him with drastic consequences for his family. So my resignation speech was somewhat "orchestrated" for maximum attention. Did it work ? Not really ! Negotiations with Derby continued with Steve having volunteered to collect the money to pay off the requisite loan. However, Steve, along with several other members, was becoming uncomfortable with the emerging situation.

6 January 1966: Nottingham 578 is shown on this dark winter day on the back of Barton's tow truck 41 arriving at Plumtree Station. Previous arrival Rotherham 37 is seen in the background together with the station building that included the station master's house. Although I do not recall him being a keen horticulturist, as is clearly illustrated, the preserved vehicles were perhaps starting to encroach on his garden !

Photo: Black Rod



Another "Nottingham Trolleybus Group !"

By March 1966, things, financially, were unsurprisingly bleak within the NTG. I stated previously that in his articles, Steve rather "underplayed" his rôle during this period. I have already mentioned the Bradford tour using no.758 on 27 February 1966. This was organised by Howard and again made a small profit. Steve and I spent some time together on this tour and his concerns were very apparent.



Bradford 758 on the last NTG tour organised on a "non-Nottingham" system. 758 is shown negotiating the unusual (again - possibly unique) driver training circuit at Bowling Yard situated off the Wakefield Road trolleybus routes. Upon closure of these services on 1 April 1967, wired access was maintained to Bowling Yard until 5 December. When this was also dismantled, the training facility was retained with driver trainer 060 (ex-fleet no.745) out-stationed here until 13 February 1968. 758 itself remained in service until 31 July 1971, becoming the last trolleybus with an open rear platform to operate in service in the UK. Luckily, 758 survives - normally resident at Sandtoft but currently undergoing restoration at Keighley Bus Museum

Photo: Black Rod

Talks at Plumtree were still of the "fairy tale" type with plans for a depot being pursued. As a consequence of the disaffection now being felt by some members of the NTG, a meeting was held on 2 March 1966 to discuss the financial crisis now predictably looming at Plumtree. It was reported that the NTG had run up debts of £300 in 2 months - a lot of money at that time. Minutes were taken and it was established that vehicles over which participants had majority shareholdings were Ashton 80, Rotherham 37, Nottingham 493 and Derby 175. No action was taken, but it was agreed to arrange a further meeting. Initially it was hoped a "watching brief" could be established with some purposeful dialogue with the NTG committee. Incidentally, one of the participants of this meeting was a certain Mr Steve Collins ! By this time, Steve was finding it difficult to raise the money from many NTG members to start and service the loan for 175. In Part 4 of his series, Steve expressed surprise that I should help out with payments for 175 given my opposition to its purchase. He puts it down to showing my "complex character". No, Steve, the explanation is simpler than that ! Howard and I had finished paying for Ashton 80 in January 1966 - I was thus able to help. My opposition in the first place had been purely financial. According to my records, 175 arrived at Plumtree on Sunday 27 March 1966. Further problems immediately beset the Plumtree vehicles and, in particular, new arrival 175.



Nottingham 578 leads the Plumtree trolleybus fleet in March 1966. Other trolleybuses in view are Rotherham 37, Ashton 80, Nottingham 493, Nottingham 466 and Manchester 1250. Barton motorbus 816 does not feature in this line-up having been moved to accommodate Derby 175 *Photo: Black Rod*

Again referring to Steve's article, he mentions a character who he named "The Pain". He had joined the NTG at the 578 tour and "The Pain" was an appropriate description since, for reasons beyond obscurity, this personage immediately busied himself in removing "bits and pieces" from 175. If it could be unscrewed, then The Pain unscrewed it, leaving both the item and its screws behind on the floor. Alas, none of the NTG hierarchy seemed disposed to stop him.

Derby 175 attached to Barton's towing vehicle 41 arriving at Plumtree on 21 March 1966. The line-up to the right consists of the trolleybuses shown above. On 5 May it was relocated to a site near Lincoln, and subsequently moved back to Plumtree, where standing in the open (plus a certain amount of "enthusiasts' vandalism") did nothing to help the utility bodywork. 175 remains in the Sandtoft collection but requires considerable restoration work

Photo: Black Rod



Further meetings of concerned NTG members took place during March and April. These were also minuted and your writer retains this particular Minute Book. A new committee was elected with a chairman and an honorary secretary. The treasurer - well, dear reader, it was a certain Mr Steve Collins ! The new group predictably continued the policies of the former NTG, particularly regarding co-

operation with other groups. Meetings were held with other societies including the Reading Transport Society (RTS). Mike Dare again re-affirmed his belief that a national trolleybus museum could only be achieved by co-ordinating activities of several interested enthusiast groups. At this time, of course, the RTS was amassing a serious number of preserved vehicles and storage was starting to become a consideration.

A most interesting development occurred when a name was sought for this new "Group". Participants wished to adopt the name "Nottingham Trolleybus Group"! The reason was simple - they believed that the original NTG had taken undemocratic decisions and that, quoting from the Minute Book, it had become a "self-appointed faction"! Enquiries from a solicitor in Long Eaton revealed that "the party who broke the constitution of the Minute Book forfeited the use of the society name". We thus became the "Nottingham Trolleybus Group". For the sake of simplicity I will refer to the new group as "NTG2". However, it must still be remembered that NTG2 members were still contributing to purchasing some of the vehicles at Plumtree and a sizable portion of the rent. Nothing was done that might jeopardise the future of the vehicles but a "safety net" was being constructed for the eventuality that things would go wrong.

Some meetings were held with both The Chairman and The Teacher, but to no avail. They remained resolute in the plans to erect a depot at Plumtree and fill the site with all kinds of nefarious vehicles. We learned at one stage that there might have been plans for 6 (yes, six !) Nottingham BUT 9641T trolleybuses to be preserved ! Under the banner of "Nottingham Trolleybus Preservation Group" the NTG (yes, the original one) issued a Newsletter dated April 1966 (could it have been April 1st ?). My copy states "During the recent months, the Nottingham Group has suffered a great upheaval: all is now on an even keel". Of great concern was the reference to "In the near future it is hoped to obtain all the Plumtree Station property and by stages to erect a large shed capable of giving accommodation for 24 vehicles". Equally disturbing to me was the committee line up. The NTG Treasurer (whom I have called "The Librarian") had obviously stood down from this position and was listed as - you've guessed it - the group librarian. He had always been commendably loyal to the Chairman but had often been a "brake" on some of the more outlandish plans and was always a voice of reason. His change of rôle was particularly worrying.

I tried to arrange another "reconciliation meeting" with The Chairman. However, only The Teacher turned up. His news was disturbing to me. They were continuing with the depot proposal and had obtained a quote for an "Atcost" building. He did not mention the cost (subsequently revealed many years later as £3,000). Although this cost was not known at the time, clearly it was realised that the sum would be greater than could possibly be afforded. Almost as a passing point, the Teacher also revealed that a letter had been received from British Railways regarding non-payment of rent. According to him, if payment was not made then assets (i.e. vehicles) would be towed away with their value used to defer costs. I was horrified and asked what actions were being taken. He airily

replied that they hoped to arrange a quick loan. Our meeting broke up extremely acrimoniously.

With vehicles now severely at risk - some of which we were still paying for - the NTG2 "safety net" had to be activated. A site had been secured under cover at the Bracebridge Heath Depot of Lincolnshire Road Car for one shilling (5p) per week. Bartons had been approached and quoted £28 for a tow from Plumtree to Lincoln. The NTG2 committee elected that 175 would be the Lincoln candidate. The Pain was continuing his pseudo-vandalism on the vehicle and it was felt that its utility construction would be better protected under cover. At the NTG2 meeting on 6 May 1966, Steve Collins was able to report that 175 had been safely despatched to Lincoln. Another reconciliation meeting was scheduled for 20 May 1966 - again only The Teacher arrived. This was a more bad-tempered affair than the previous meeting and he unbelievably reaffirmed that the rent had still not been paid and the "Atcost" was still planned. During the interim and following consultation with Howard Piltz (the joint "custodian" of Rotherham 37), I had contacted the Manchester Trolleybus Preservation Fund (MTPF). They were associated with the Sheffield Omnibus Enthusiasts' Society run by Mr Dennis Vickers. You will recall his previous interest in the vehicle ! The MTPF agreed to take on responsibility for 37 and, to Mr Vickers' lasting credit, 37 was moved to Sheffield on 21 May 1966. Following further discussions with Howard, it was agreed that Ashton 80 (of which we were also joint owners) should also be removed from Plumtree. This was a difficult decision since neither of us wished 80 to be split from sister Crossley trolleybus Manchester 1250. However we believed that this was preferable to having Messrs Autospares turn up on behalf of British Railways and claiming 80 as "rent".

Then, at the beginning of June 1966.... out of the blue.... I had a call from The Teacher asking for another meeting. It was important.... but what could he want ? Find out in the next (penultimate) instalment !

To be continued

OBITUARY

We are sorry to record the death on 26 July of our member Revd. John Peter Senior. He was 91 and lived in Almondbury, near Huddersfield. Before being ordained as a priest in 1966 he had worked in many jobs in the bus industry, including a number of years after the war with Huddersfield Corporation Transport where he enjoyed the trolleybus system. He later became General Manager in Burnley and after that took up a post with Ribble Motor Services. During his later years, Revd. Senior was still very active as a member of the ministry team in the church at Almondbury.

He always had a strong interest in trolleybuses: he was a significant contributor to *The Trolleybuses of Huddersfield* by Roy Brook and his photographs have appeared in several trolleybus publications. We extend our sympathy to Revd. Senior's family and are grateful to them for donating to the Museum his personal trolleybus archives, which include a large number of Acts of Parliament relating to trolleybuses from 1930 to 1965.

SANDTOFT GATHERING 2015

25-26 July 2015

David Hanchett, Stewart David, Ian Wilson et al.

"....when the rain was late by half an hour !"

Being the biggest and busiest event of the Museum's calendar, the amount of organisation and preparation that goes into making the 'Gathering happen is enormous, and the demands on our volunteer force - both before and during the weekend - are very challenging indeed. The contents of the *'Gathering Programme* (itself a significant project to create) serve as a reminder of the complexity involved, some elements being special for the occasion (like the visiting vehicles and the sales stalls) and others being on a much larger scale than normal (like the bus and trolleybus services, running *The Trolleyshop* and all the catering arrangements). And reminding us of the effort required to staff all this is the "Gathering Roster" - a massive spreadsheet allocating volunteers to duties in shifts stretching between 7:00am and 7:00pm. This year's roster listed around 55 people and quite a few "extras" were helping at various times during the day.

We were very pleased with the response to our appeal for additional people to assist with the marshalling of cars: this year the parking and reception arrangements were very different from usual, because we were unable to use the land normally available to us for parking. However, we were extremely fortunate to receive an offer from our member Chris Morley, allowing us to use the fields behind his house in Belton Road directly opposite the Museum. This offer was gratefully accepted and on the day everything worked remarkably well, including the improvised reception facilities using the Museum's pedestrian gate in Belton Road and a pair of gazebos behind the *1950s Prefab* to admit our visitors. Meanwhile, a second admission desk was in operation in our usual reception building to deal with visitors arriving on the Doncaster free bus service and those entering from the disabled car park located in a fenced-off section of the rally field.

During the four days prior to the 'Gathering, many of our trolleybuses and motor buses were extracted from the depot building for display on the rear grass area. A large amount of trolleybus testing was carried out during that week to enable us to operate an impressive selection from our collection. On Friday, a small team undertook the final washing and cleaning of service vehicles.



Newly restored and looking immaculate for would-be passengers, Doncaster 33 joins East London RN100 awaiting for service duties on Preview Saturday

Photo: John Stainforth



PREPARATIONS FOR 'GATHERING 2015



- 1 Andy Feather spruces-up Bradford Tower Wagon 032
- 2 Graham Bilbé completes the process of applying new transfers to Huddersfield 631
- 3 Andy Thornton attaches the first of the roof brackets to the refurbished shelter
- 4 Ian Metcalfe fixes some additional lighting into place
- 5 Dave Brown and Mark Keenan with their polishing cloths ensure that Doncaster 33 is spotless for the occasion

Photos:

- 1 - 4 John Stainforth
- 5 Bob Ashton



Preview Saturday: Weather as it should be !

When the weekend volunteers arrived on Saturday morning and dutifully signed in, they were greeted by an impressive queue of trolleybuses waiting to be earth leakage tested. All except Glasgow TB78 successfully passed their test and were operated in batches of three over the course of the day. TB78 subsequently passed and joined the other service vehicles. Earth leakage testing is an important safety measure, which we perform to a stricter standard than applied when our trolleybuses were running with their original operators. Passengers in those days - notably in Bradford - sometimes recalled receiving a minor shock when climbing onto the platform in wet weather. So, as we were all expecting heavy rain on 'Gathering Day, the test was particularly important this year !



The beer tent and the barbecue provided welcome refreshments for visitors and volunteers during Saturday evening

Bradford 792 and South Shields 204 continued to provide regular passenger runs throughout the evening

Photos: Bob Ashton



Soon after the Museum opened on Saturday, a gentle stream of guests started to arrive and visitor numbers picked up quite significantly throughout the day. The opening hours on Preview Saturday are the longest of all our open days, and it was noticeable that trade at Reception and in *The Tea Trolley Café* was steady all day, with no real peaks. Overall, this made for a more relaxed atmosphere and, with several 'Gathering entrants arriving during the course of the day, it was good to be able to greet them in a more civilised way than is possible during the

busy rush of 'Gathering Day itself. Many people had a relatively quiet opportunity to enjoy the produce purveyed by the food outlets, and, indeed, the beer tent. What a wonderful selection of beers there was - all kept at the correct temperature by adding or removing packs of ice ! The trolleybuses ran until 10:00pm, and members of the local CAMRA club came over for the evening to savour some twilight riding and twilight drinking ... and twilight barbecue eating ! The evening operation was well received by a good turnout of visitors, and after it had finished, all the service trolleybuses were parked-up in their respective running order ready for Sunday.

'Gathering Sunday: A missed opportunity for umbrella sales ?

Everyone woke with one thought on their mind: when would the rain, firmly predicted by the Met Office, actually arrive ? The BBC said 12:00. Guests and vehicles arrived in a steady stream, and overall there was an impressive number of people visiting, but thankfully, once again, without any sudden peaks. This gave the new parking and admissions arrangements a gentler breaking-in process than expected. A great deal of thought had been put into organising signs on the main road to maximise the safety of both pedestrians and traffic, and temporary safety barriers were put in place to guide pedestrians to a single crossing-point. These all seemed to achieve their desired effects and the control of the traffic in and out of the car park and Museum entrances also appeared very successful. A short section of the Museum's garden wall and railings had been carefully demolished to provide direct access for the incoming visitors between the pedestrian gate and the reception gazebos, and temporary fencing was erected to guide them through. This worked well and very few of the guests had to queue for more than a few minutes.

Waiting for them was a remarkable variety of visiting vehicles, both private and commercial. Around a hundred rally entries were accommodated, and this year the total number had to be rationed because of the limitations of available display space. The classic cars were located in the central grass area whilst the visiting buses and commercials were on display in the larger part of the rally field. These included a large line-up of Doncaster vehicles, some of which disappeared from time to time to perform passenger carrying duties. Prominent amongst them was DO&LRS's newly-repainted Doncaster Leyland Tiger Cub, no.33 - very much the "star of the show", having arrived back at Sandtoft from the paintshop only three days before the 'Gathering.

As usual, there was an intensive service of trolleybuses, with many of them fully-loaded as the day progressed. Because of the demands of the parking arrangements and the need to man two reception areas, several of the traffic staff were time-sharing with these duties. Instead of the normal shift pattern of 'Gathering operation, a total of seven trolleybuses were in use this year rather than nine. These were Bradfords 746 and 792, Glasgow TB78, Huddersfield 631, London 1348, Manchester 1344 and South Shields 204, most of which had been running the day before.

The Museum's motor buses were also very well patronised, with a half-hourly service to and from Doncaster and an Isle of Axholme tour every 30 minutes.



1



2

SANDTOFT



3

- 1 Very pleasant surroundings for the car parking
- 2 One of many stalls in the depot
- 3 A varied line of trolleybuses awaiting service
- 4 London 1348 and Glasgow TB78
- 5 Bicycles on show by the recently-restored fuel pump
- 6 Sheffield 1357 and a contrasting Stagecoach single-decker



4



5

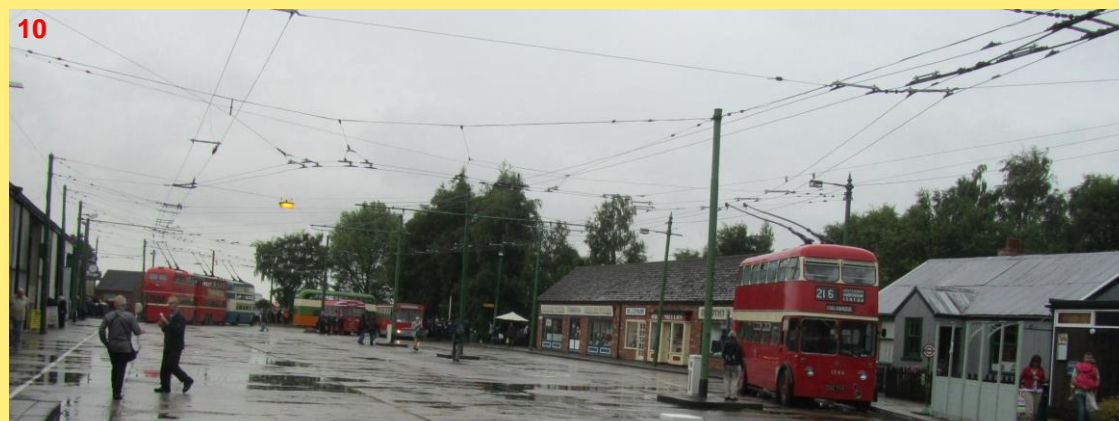


6



GATHERING 2015

- 7 Jazzmen playing through the sunshine and the rain
 - 8 Bex Proctor selling light refreshments
 - 9 A delightful show in the vegetable and flower garden
 - 10 and when the rain came down most of our visitors took shelter - or took a trolleybus ride
- Photos:*
1-6, 8 & 9 Bob Ashton
7 Jason Bowers
10 John Stainforth





SOME OF THE VISITORS



- 1 Motorbuses and photographers on the rally field
- 2 A remarkably well-presented 1920 Albion chain-driven lorry
- 3 1972 MG "B" tourer
- 4 2000 4-litre Jaguar Sovereign with miniature tool kit under the bonnet
- 5 Mike Hirst's 1956 Austin London taxi

Photos:
1 Bob Ashton
2 Jason Bowers
3 & 5 David Hanchett
4 Janet Stainforth





AT THE 'GATHERING

6 1948 Sheffield
AEC gritting lorry
converted from a
double decker

7 1958 Austin
Metropolitan and
a converted Mini
pick-up

8 Morecambe and
Heysham AEC
Regent No.69 of
1950

9 1995 Rolls Royce
Silver Spur

10 1943 US Navy
Jeep with 1969
VW "Beetle"

Photos:
6, 9 & 10

Janet Stainforth
7 & 8 *Bob Ashton*



Two of these tours were made using Dennis Vickers' Chesterfield 225 (225 LRB), a Leyland Titan PD2/30 with 62-seat Weymann bodywork, which was visiting for the event. Isle Coaches and Stagecoach (Lincolnshire) kindly lent us buses to use on the Doncaster service, and we covered all remaining trips with resident vehicles: Doncaster 22, 33 & 55, London RN100 and Sheffield 1357. The stalwart of the day was Sheffield 1357, which put in the most mileage and never missed a beat.

The rain arrived at 12:35 - a little late, but nobody complained about its time-keeping ! For the most part, it was a steady drizzle but came on heavier at times, sending people into the depot to look at the sales stands. The beer tent was full for much of the time, not just with drinkers. Despite the afternoon's weather, the Gaslight Jazz Band played on and, encouragingly, a veritable procession of people kept arriving, long after the rain had started. However it is also true to say that the weather did encourage people to set off for home a little earlier than they might otherwise have done.

In conclusion ...

Despite Sunday's quite persistent and occasionally heavy rainfall, our service trolleybuses carried some impressive passenger loadings, with almost 2,000 passenger journeys made, marginally down on last year's total. Vehicle-wise, very few problems were encountered and no dewirements occurred over the entire weekend; a great credit to all concerned. As several of the usual 'Gathering procedures had had to be modified this year, the Museum owed a great debt of gratitude to its volunteers who showed considerable flexibility in responding to the many pressures of the day.

Francis Whitehead, Financial & Development Director, adds:

On behalf of the Board, a very big THANK YOU to all of you who volunteered and staffed Sandtoft Gathering 2015 - including the hard work put in to prepare everything beforehand and then to tidy up afterwards and put equipment and vehicles away.

This year, planning for the event was particularly challenging, so it was gratifying that so many members rose to the challenge and so willingly helped make the day work almost flawlessly (discounting, that is, the rain in the afternoon !). It was also good to welcome a number of new volunteers - thank you for joining in when we needed you; hopefully, you enjoyed helping and maybe we will be seeing you again as part of our team for future open days. I consider extra thanks are due to those of you that spent long periods - or even all day - manning the car parks, gates and pay points and maybe saw very little of the event itself.

Finally, we did produce a '*Gathering 2015 Programme*: it sold out (at £2.00 a time) before lunch time and quite probably many of you did not get a chance to buy (or even see) one. I have since printed a few more copies for staff to have - a donation to cover the production cost would be welcomed. If all goes well, these should be available from the *Trolleyshop* during coming open days. If you want one but cannot collect it, then please let me know and I will arrange for one to be slipped into the envelope with your next *Sandtoft Scene*.

VOLUNTEERS' PAGE

Traffic Department Qualifications

David Hanchett and Robin Symons have recently passed their trolleybus driving tests and are now qualified for driving duties. Ian Brown has successfully passed-out as a conductor, having previously undertaken the Trolleybus Driving Experience earlier this season. Congratulations to all three on their successes.



Robin, Ian and David pictured in front of Huddersfield 631, on board which each of them qualified. Accompanying them is Ian's partner Helen Cross, another welcome recruit to our volunteer staff. Helen has been training for duties in *The Tea Trolley Café* and in Reception

Photo: Stewart David

Personal News

Many congratulations to Tim Stubbs and Susie Powell on the occasion of their marriage, which took place in Torquay on 7 August. We wish them all the best for their future together, and hope that - despite 73's destination - their future worries are very few indeed.

Friends and relatives joined Tim and Susie to celebrate their wedding the following weekend. Among them were four other members of the restoration team, seen here in front of Rotherham 73 - this time without their overalls.

Left-to-right: Peter Swift, Mike Johnson, Tim and Susie, Nigel Tilly and Clive Walker

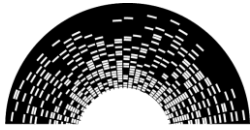
Photo: John Stainforth



ACCREDITATION SUCCESSFUL

Bruce Lake

Just before going to press with *Sandtoft Scene* no.98, we learned that Arts Council England (ACE) had renewed our Accredited Museum status for a further three years. This was achieved following several months of activity behind the scenes to meet higher standards than have been required before. The ACE Accreditation Scheme sets nationally-agreed standards for museums in the UK and there are currently around 1,800 museums participating in the scheme.



ACCREDITED
MUSEUM

Being an Accredited Museum sets us on an equal footing with the UK's major museums and galleries and demonstrates that we have satisfied ACE about how we are run and our ability and commitment to effectively manage our collection of trolleybuses and other artefacts for the benefit and enjoyment of our visitors. It also inspires confidence by other museums and various authorities that we manage our collection in a professional manner for the benefit of society and appropriately manage funds resulting from successful grant applications.

The accreditation means that our operation of the Museum has achieved or exceeded the required criteria in the key areas examined, which include organisation health, governance, management, staffing, finance, collection policies and conservation, legal compliance, access, visitor facilities, visitor satisfaction, emergency planning, forward planning and documentation. As is usual with these reviews, they encourage continuous improvement, and the assessor made recommendations concerning loan agreements and museum access policy.

Several people contributed to the task of preparing the Museum's submission, which involved completing dozens of forms and checklists, and collating the documentation covering our operations, collections, plans, policies and procedures. Specific credit is due to Adrian Dennison (who pulled together the required templates and documents about the collection), to Francis Whitehead (who led the task of updating our five-year plan) and to David Lovegrove (whose detailed records of volunteers' hours were another essential component). Also important were Linda Proctor's initiatives on volunteering policies and putting into practice the guidance we had received from a specialist consultant in this area. Finally, we must mention Susan Hopkinson, our professional mentor, for encouraging us to pursue the application when we were having doubts about whether the result would be worth the many man-hours needed. We are glad that we took her advice and appreciated the guidance she provided whilst we were preparing the submission.

We are confident that the Museum has been assessed to be in good order and that we are doing most things right. Naturally there is always room for improvement and we will strive, as always, to provide the best visitor experience that we can.

In notifying us of our success, the ACE assessor said "Please allow me to compliment you on the thoroughness and quality of the Museum's application. The application demonstrated the scale of the museum's achievement and the hard work of the volunteers involved."

The editor adds: Bruce's own contribution to this achievement should not be understated: he co-ordinated the whole process to meet the deadline last October, interfacing with the ACE assessor, allocating the individual pieces of work to be done and completing the return.

VEHICLE REPORTS

With acknowledgements to DO&LRS and the BTS

Doncaster 375: Work is continuing on Doncaster's last trolleybus with further painting of the staircase and new paint being applied both inside and out.

London 1812: The British Trolleybus Society has agreed for no.1812 to be displayed at the London Bus Museum (LBM), Brooklands (near Woking, Surrey) for the next five years, where it will help to educate visitors to this fascinating venue about the role of the trolleybus in London's transport history and its continuing importance in many cities overseas. It will also, of course, help to publicise the Trolleybus Museum - we hope that the people who see 1812 at Brooklands will want to come and ride on a trolleybus.

Both LBM and BTS see this loan as being mutually advantageous: LBM has not previously had a trolleybus displayed at its museum and warmly welcomed the prospect of no.1812 becoming part of its exhibition, whilst, for the BTS (and us), it puts a classic trolleybus, an ambassador of our Museum, in front of a large, new audience. It is anticipated that no.1812 will be moved south in mid-October.

Doncaster 33: The month of July saw an intensive period of activity to complete the restoration in time for 'Gathering 2015. After passing its MoT test, the final repairs were made to 33's bodywork with further filling and sanding, in preparation for repainting. Then 33 made the journey to the premises of the South Yorkshire Transport Trust where the painting was carried out. The result is very striking and 33 was back at Sandtoft on display and ready to participate in

the 'Gathering bus services. Great credit is due to Alex Proctor for leading the restoration project and for his determination to meet this important deadline.

Doncaster 33 after the finishing touches and refitting of the "Leyland Tiger Cub" front badge

Photo: Bob Ashton



NEWS ROUND-UP

London 1348 visits Crich: During the weekend of 13-14 June, the National Tramway Museum hosted its “Classic London” event, with a variety of visiting London vehicles in attendance. Amongst them was our Museum’s London 1348, which was on display in front of the tram depot.



London 1348 generated plenty of interest during its weekend at Crich Tramway Village. Here Francis Whitehead welcomes a young visitor taking a close look

Photo: Andy Thornton

Site work has continued throughout the running season and the gardens continue to develop, with much help from Gill Ferris and other volunteers. The long spell of dry weather this summer called for regular extra watering

Taking a short break from café duties, Joanna Hanchett is kept busy watering the tubs of vegetables in front of the Pelham building

Photo: David Hanchett



Less mobile visitors to our Museum will be able to use the newly acquired wheelchair, recently purchased for us by Terry and Margaret Diment. A big “Thank you” to them !

The wire trailer has been receiving attention lately with renovation work being carried out by John Whipham.



John Whipham busy working on the detached body of the wire trailer.

The trailer was originally constructed by Mexborough & Swinton before passing to Tees-side. Following Tees-side's closure, it was purchased by Francis Whitehead and has since been used on several overhead line installations, including the former trolleybus test track alongside Doncaster Racecourse and more recently, at Dudley

Photo: Bob Ashton

Bicycle donation: We were very pleased to receive an interesting addition to our collection in the *Sunbeam Cycle Shop*. This Viking Ian Steel cycle (*right*) was kindly donated by Bob Fearnley of Appleton Roebuck.

Photo: Paul Colegate



REMEMBERING ROTHERHAM'S TROLLEYBUSES

Some fifty years ago, the Rotherham trolleybus system closed, with the final services operating on Saturday 2 October and two commemorative tours on the following day. In an article originally published by the Rotherham Trolleybus Group (website: <http://rotherhamtrolleybus.org.uk/>), former driver Laurie Johnson recalls some of his experiences during his years working on the system. This is reproduced below with the RTG's permission, and two further items document the tours held on 3 October, during which no.44 provided a final tour for the NTA and no.30 was used by the Nottingham Trolleybus Group in collaboration with the Sheffield Omnibus Enthusiasts' Society. The latter tour was organised by Dennis Vickers, and from his description in the newspaper article reproduced below you can judge for yourself which of these two vehicles was actually Rotherham's last trolleybus.

Recollections of a Rotherham Trackless Driver

Laurie Johnson

My obsession with trams and trolleybuses began whilst I was a child, when I was taken down town from my home village of Whiston. I was mesmerised by the tram tracks in the streets and the cobweb of overhead wires above and I was fascinated by the trolleys on the wires. How did they know which way to go at crossings? And if a driver had a dewirement, I would stand there and watch in amazement as he fished out this long bamboo cane and re-attached the booms to the wires.

I was lucky enough to have been there when we had the services to Greasborough, Maltby, Worry Goose Lane, Dalton, Kimberworth, Mexborough and Swinton, so we had two different types of trolleybuses and also two different tram operators. Fantastic: for a little town it could hardly be better ! I loved the old tram lines and used to wonder about the ones no longer used down Main Street and West Gate and also up Frederick Street. I was always sad when they got tarmaced over. I used to love a trip up to Sheffield and see all the trams there - so many, all clean and smart, and tram lines everywhere.



The author in the cab of one of the Rotherham Daimlers at Silverwood in 1965

Photographer unknown

I never thought I would end up driving trolleybuses myself. However, by chance (not by design), in February 1959 aged 18, I had started as a conductor. Then, at the age of 21, I was put into the driving school for the trolleys. I loved it, but a lot of drivers hated them because they had trouble keeping the trolley on the wires. I was sorry about all the other routes I'd missed out on that were no more.

A trolleybus seemed silent as the noise it made was like a large milk float which you would only hear early mornings or late at

night when there was no other traffic to drown out the motor's whine. You would hear the clattering of the trolley head when you went under overhead crossings but once you got used to the wires they were brilliant. You could drive at normal speed and had to be careful, but they were so smooth with no jerky gear changes, very quick at acceleration and fantastic on hills.

You could race a diesel from scratch start on Kimberworth Hill and be at the top whilst the poor diesel bus struggled up in second gear. They would do about 40mph, which on a bus seemed fast. You had to really slow down under overhead crossings and where you joined other wires from other routes, or the trolleys would de-wire and this could have disastrous consequences - like the actual running wires being brought down. However, that was an extreme situation and it never happened to me. The more usual occurrence was that you just had to replace the trolley heads back on the wires, although occasionally the trolley head could get stuck between the wires at an overhead crossing. The bus would have to be shoved back a bit, so that you could release the trapped trolley head: that did happen to me but some helpful passengers got off and gave it a push.

Sometimes the head would come off the trolley boom. The heads were attached to the trolley boom with a rope to try and prevent them from flying off as that could be extremely dangerous. Some have gone through house roofs and others have been lost in gardens. Being quite a heavy object, it could have been fatal if a trolley head had hit a person. If a dewirement happened, you had to stop as quickly as safely



Driver Laurie Johnson re-attaches the booms of Rotherham 30 (FET339) at the junction of Park Lane and Hollings Lane, Thrybergh. It appears to have dewired at the frog which would have enabled it to go to Silverwood Colliery on route 49 - a branch off the main line Route 6 to Thryborough

Photographer unknown

possible so as not to damage the overhead wires. If it was raining that could be very annoying, as you were looking up and the rain splattering in your face could make it very difficult to see what you were doing. Also when the bamboo pole got wet there was a danger that electricity could travel down the pole, and I have felt slight tingling on more than one occasion. When the trolleybuses on route 49 to Silverwood started from the old Effingham Square and you were bringing a trolleybus from the depot to join that service, you had to manually change the trolleys onto the wires that came round from Norfolk Street. At that location I remember slight tingles from the bamboo pole when it was raining: a bit scary, as the amount of power in those wires was a lot more than the household 240 volts.

When driving you had to get to know where the dead places in the overhead were as you did not want to get stuck on those. So, whilst crawling in busy traffic you always had to leave yourself room to coast over those dead sections. These could be as long as about 3 feet and if you were stuck you would have to be physically pushed to pass the end of it. You had a buzzer box in the cab, and this would buzz in case of dewirement or if the power was lost for any reason.

Ice on the wires in winter was a nightmare as you would get the buzzer going in all kinds of unexpected places: you were never quite sure if the trolleys had dewired and you did not dare stop in case you got stuck on a dead section. I remember a driver at the Stag roundabout thought he was on ice but unfortunately he had dewired and brought down not only the telephone wires but also the Rediffusion radio and TV cables - happy days ! I was told by drivers that during the war they had night staff running round all the routes trying to keep the frost off the wires, as if too much ice accumulated the arcing would light up the streets and contravene the blackout regulations. They also had to fix covers over the overhead at crossings because you would get sparks showing up at night.

Fog was another nightmare: you dreaded a dewirement in the fog as you would have a real struggle to see the wires to reattach the trolleys, and I believe a driver was killed at Airmount on the Maltby section during the Wartime blackout. Fog was much more frequent in the days before the Clean Air Act. Coming down Kimberworth Road was particularly hazardous because where Midland Road branched off it was very wide and if you followed the kerb you ended up going down Midland Road and with your trolleys off the wires. In January 1963 we had about three weeks of freezing fog and we got a lot of ice on the trolley wires.

There were two switches above your head in the cab of your trolleybus and these would blow out in the case of an overload or a short circuit. If you forgot to take your foot off the power when going under the dead section of a crossing you could cause a sudden overload and the switches above your head would blow out with such a bang that you had ringing in your ears for a while. You could also blow these switches by starting to set off too fast, so starting off on Corporation Street going to Kimberworth with a full load was a delicate operation. Special care was necessary on an upward hill to avoid blowing the switches, but of course starting on a downward slope was a "doddle" as you just let it roll away. Corporation Street gave you both these experiences and on Effingham Street you got a level pull away.

You notched up one at a time until you felt the bus give a slight movement then you slowly released your hand brake and gradually pulled forward. When you had a line of traffic and you were trying to pull out it could be quite difficult but you soon got used to it. The trolley heads had a carbon rubbing block inserted to prevent excessive wear on the wires, and in the rain these blocks wore away very quickly. You could always tell as you got a real clattering as you ran under the overhead crossings so you had to phone for the depot overhead men to come and replace them.

Driving trolleybuses in summer could be warm work as the resistance box at your side would get so hot that it was untouchable, but in winter it was ice cold and since we had no heater or demister it was like sitting in a travelling fridge. During the bad winter of 1962/ 63, I wore a pair of jeans under my uniform trousers and a "donkey jacket" over my coat to keep warm. Ice on the wires was burnt off in spectacular form like having sparklers attached to the trolley heads and lighting up the streets. Kimberworth Road was still gas lit and, on the journey to Silverwood (which was along a country lane), the poor clippies were on the open platform and frozen stiff in winter. I remember a conductress actually fainted through being so cold on an early morning Silverwood trip. That was indeed a bad winter.

Laurie Johnson (left) and his wife talk to Driver George Early, as he takes 44 (FET618) on one of the very last journeys of a Rotherham trackless, on Sunday 3 October 1965, when hired by the National Trolleybus Association

Photo: Mike Johnson



The trolleybuses I remember best included no.30 (which was very smooth to drive) and no.31 which was "OK". No.32, however, had horrible screaming brakes which they couldn't seem to fix. No.36 had really heavy steering and a short lock, so you seemed to need more room to turn it round at the terminus. No.37 was my favourite - a lovely bus and very smooth - and 44 my second favourite. No.42 seemed to be missing a couple of starting notches so was a bit jerky at setting off, whilst 43 had really heavy brakes which you had to apply carefully. Now it is a pleasure to see my favourite one in service at Sandtoft, looking all spotless and new inside.

"Duel in Trolleys"

by Dennis Vickers - 50 years ago

Reprinted from an October 1965 issue of the Rotherham Advertiser

A sentimental occasion developed into a duel between two rival groups to operate the last trolley bus in Rotherham on Sunday. The story of the duel, which followed the closing down of the remaining trolley bus services in Rotherham last Saturday, was told to *The Advertiser* this week by the leader of one of the groups, Mr. D. E. Vickers, secretary of the Sheffield Omnibus Enthusiasts' Society. He stated:-

"On Saturday October 2nd, the last trolleybus in normal service ran from Thrybergh to the Corporation Depot just after 11 p.m. This was, however, not quite the end, for the following day the Corporation had agreed to hire two vehicles to enthusiasts' societies for final journeys.

"One was chartered by the National Trolley Bus Association, of Wolverhampton, who arranged to cover the system twice, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The other was run jointly by the more local Sheffield Omnibus Enthusiasts' Society, Omnibus Select Society (Stockport) and the Manchester Trolley Bus Preservation Society, to be run in two parts - a short afternoon tour 3 p.m. to 4.15 p.m. for photographs, and an evening tour 5.15 p.m. to 8 p.m., of the entire system, to ensure the final working.

"Having organised the latter tour, I arrived early at the depot to check arrangements. Being confident we had the final working, a large "LAST ROTHERHAM TROLLEY BUS" sign was affixed to the front of the vehicle, and subsequent signs added as the other societies arrived. The afternoon tour proved a wonderful experience, and reels of pictures were taken at our many stops. As we arrived late for tea, the vehicle was parked in Bridgegate for participants to use a nearby canteen.

"At 5.15 p.m, we returned to the depot to pick up members who had booked for the evening tour only. The National Trolley Bus Association tour had not, as yet, returned and, as a few people were to transfer from this, our vehicle was placed in the depot entrance to await their arrival. A little after 5.30 p.m. their trolley bus appeared, but we were surprised by the few people wishing to transfer. However, their vehicle was left empty and all signs removed and we, therefore, assumed we now had the very last Rotherham trolley bus to operate. However, there was a rumour from a member who had transferred that the N.T.A. were very annoyed over our final booking, and had a faint hope of yet running after ours.

"On the evening tour flash pictures were taken at each terminus as a record of

the last vehicle visiting these, and the vehicle returned to Rotherham centre on time at 8 p.m. Plans were arranged for the singing of “Auld Lang Syne” on entering the depot, and all were satisfied as we turned from Frederick Street into Effingham Street.

“Then rose the shout, ‘A trolley bus approaching!’ The bus stopped and all rushed to the windows as the N.T.A. trolley bus, now displaying a large “Last Trolley Bus” sign, passed swiftly - all interior lights out and only carrying a very few passengers. Feeling very downhearted and annoyed, our trolleybus returned sadly into the depot.

“Almost as all hope was lost, Driver Green, who had so patiently put up with us throughout the tours, offered a suggestion. Along with the society leaders he explained the situation to the depot inspector, who informed head office how over 40 local enthusiasts had been disappointed by, as it later proved, a last-minute arrangement, after their earlier tour, by a few N.T.A. members.

“Our plea was treated sympathetically, and a compromise was offered. Our trolley bus could return to town and await the arrival of the N.T.A. bus. Then, if their few members would transfer to ours, we could jointly run into the depot as the last running.

“Excited once again, the party entered our vehicle and once again we moved away from the depot, via Effingham Street, and parked in All Saints’ Square. For over 30 minutes we waited for the arrival of their vehicle, causing quite an attraction with passers-by, our ‘Last Trolley Bus’ sign still proudly displayed on the front. As it finally approached we removed our trolleys, and, without transferring passengers, their vehicle glided past, still without lights. Their driver had now been ordered to return to the depot.

“So, our trolleys were replaced, and, for the final time, a trolley bus used Effingham Street and entered the Corporation Depot. Almost immediately we stopped, the cab buzzer sounded - the power had been cut off and all wires were now dead. A few final photographs were taken, all signs removed, and the members left the depot, having ridden on the last Rotherham trolley bus.

“Thus, although the last visit to certain termini must be given to the N.T.A. (I have not been able to discover where their mystery tour went), the local societies were given their rightful privilege to operate the very last Rotherham trolley bus”.

The Itinerary of the Rotherham 44 Tour

Mike Johnson

In a letter published in *Sandtoft Scene* no.90 (July 2013), Rod Bramley wrote: “I do not have an itinerary for the tour on 44, but it was clearly the final trolleybus on some sections of the system and it would be interesting if any of your readers have further details”. Although the itinerary of their unscheduled evening tour remains a mystery, as one of the participants on the NTA’s afternoon tour I still have a copy of their notice advertising the event and detailing the itinerary. Unfortunately, the original has deteriorated and the accompanying map suffered various annotations, but it is all readable and I have made a transcript, reproduced below. Our driver for the day was Mr George Early. He provided a **perfect** day and 44 did not arrive in the depot until approaching 6:00pm.

National Trolleybus Association
Rotherham Farewell Trolleybus Tour
Sunday October 3rd 1965

General:

The remaining trolleybus services in Rotherham are due to cease operation after the last service journey on Saturday 2nd October 1965. By special arrangement with Rotherham Transport Department the Association will operate a tour to mark the end of 53 years of trolleybus operation in the town (3/10/1912 to 2/10/1965). All sections of wiring (except the disconnected Rawmarsh Road wiring) will be covered twice during the tour, thus giving all members a final opportunity to both ride and photograph the system. All remaining vehicles are of Daimler construction.

Times:

Depart Rawmarsh Road depot	13.00
Depart Corporation Street (westbound)	13.05
Finish Corporation Street (eastbound)	16.55 (approx)
Finish Rawmarsh Road depot	17.00 (approx)

(Please assemble at depot entrance 12.20)

Itinerary:

- 1 Rawmarsh Road depot - Effingham Street - Corporation Street
- 2 Corporation Street - Kimberworth (6)
- 3 Kimberworth - Corporation Street - Thrybergh (Park Lane) (6)
- 4 Thrybergh (Park Lane) - Pumping Station
- 5 Pumping Station - Silverwood Colliery (49 short)
- 6 Silverwood Colliery - Effingham Street - Corporation Street (49)
- 7 Corporation Street - Upper Millgate - Corporation Street
- 8 Corporation Street - Pumping Station (5)
- 9 Pumping Station - Herringthorpe Valley Road – Pumping Station
- 10 Pumping Station – Herringthorpe Valley Road - Thrybergh (Park Lane) (6)
- 11 Thrybergh (Park Lane) – Corporation Street – Kimberworth (6)
- 12 Kimberworth - Corporation Street
- 13 Corporation Street - Upper Millgate - Corporation Street
- 14 Corporation Street - Pumping Station (5)
- 15 Pumping Station - Corporation Street (5)
- 16 Corporation Street - Silverwood Colliery (49)
- 17 Silverwood Colliery - Corporation Street (49)
- 18 Corporation Street - Rawmarsh Road depot.

Fares:

Tickets are 12/6d each, only 10/- for members.

Advance booking:

There is little need to emphasise the special nature of this tour and if you wish to be absolutely sure of a seat, there is only one way to set about it. Make out a crossed cheque to the “National Trolleybus Association”.

NEWS FROM OTHER MUSEUMS

East Kent Trolleybus Group (from Jeff White) The offside upper deck of Bradford 704 is now resplendent in a coat of Bradford blue. The interior lights have now been rewired and the fittings are in the process of being refurbished. We have been given a set of indicators and should have these fitted and working soon. The front three offside upper deck windows are now in place, as are the two front ones. We hope to have the vehicle fully watertight by the winter and towards this end, we have found a fabricator to make two window pans in mild steel. Work has begun on the cab, with the refurbishing of the cab door area in order to refit the door itself. The cab interior has been painted blue and help is now sought with finding a front offside mudguard in order to put the whole assembly together. Recently the restoration team rubbed down and primed the lower deck ceiling in preparation for a repaint in cream, prior to the re-fitting of the newly refurbished saloon lights. Any help with identifying a supplier of 110v/120v light bulbs of the correct wattage will be very welcome ! If you can assist, please contact Jeff via the editor (scene@sandtoft.org).



Bradford 704 was a former Sandtoft resident and is now located at the premises of the East Kent Railway Trust at Shepherdswell in Kent. No.704's restoration has made good progress over the past two years, as can be seen from the photographs. The tubular steel framework is part of a weatherproof shelter still under construction

Photos: Dave Harris



DEAR 'SCENE

Dear 'Scene

As a new member, I have managed to visit Sandtoft on a recent Saturday. The free bus link at Epworth was appreciated. I think what has been achieved to be remarkable. I don't think in the time from arriving till the afternoon link back to Epworth I was able see all I wished to see. The downside is simply that by public transport from Southampton it is a long day.

Reading articles in the magazine introduce me to areas where I have had no knowledge. In the cinema the film being projected on the London trolleybuses in Spain was to me fascinating. I well remember the original intention of London Transport to keep them working in the Kingston area for a time after the rest of the London system had been closed, and felt the change of policy was unfortunate, but understandable when traffic pollution was ignored in those days.

I have two questions to ask, accepting that in "bygone days" they may have already been covered:

1. It seems to me that different operators had different standards for the length of booms (sweeps, poles, as some have called them). The London ones were always to my eye longer than those in Portsmouth or Reading, and the Manchester ones seemed (in c.1961) to be "in between". Were, and are, the booms of differing lengths for different vehicles or operators ?
2. I was told about double-ended trolleybuses, and in about 1960 was taken on a brief European tour to see electric street traction. I was curious, and though they were not in service, there were the double-ended trolleybuses "collected" in a disorderly gathering near Seraing, Liège (Belgium). It was a brief glimpse, and on the return journey I managed a very murky black-and-white photo of them. Any information about them, please ?

Anthony Robson, Southampton

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Dear 'Scene

I really enjoyed what was my sixth Trolleybus Driving Experience at Sandtoft, especially the new movements made to and from the loop by the toilet block ! It was pleasing to meet again with the "Trolley Dollies" plus the new one in the shape of Joanna Hanchett. Great to see Tony and Mike again, and to meet David Hanchett. The coffee and walnut cake made by Joanna was the best cake I have tasted for a long time. Carole, my wife, also commented on the cake - it is unusual for her to ask for another piece !

I am looking forward to my seventh TDE on 21 September and to repeating the experience, if possible, in future years.

Another fantastic day at Sandtoft and my special thank you to all who made it such an enjoyable day.

John Burgin, Worksop

AGM 2015 REMINDER

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held at the Museum on Saturday, 14 November at 1:30 pm. The agenda is enclosed with this issue. After the formal business meeting there will be an open forum for discussion of topics of interest to members.

ISLE OF AXHOLME RUNNING DAY & RALLY

Sunday 18 October (11:00 am – 5.00pm)

Your opportunity to explore the Isle of Axholme on free vintage bus services

- Belton, Epworth, Haxey, Low Burnham & Westwoodside

A collection of visiting vehicles both old and new on display

- including, courtesy of Stagecoach, the New Bus for London - the "Borismaster"

Connecting **Free Bus** service from Doncaster Interchange (adjacent to railway station) direct to the Museum departs Interchange, Bay C6, at 11.30am & 12.00noon. Return trips depart Museum at 4.00pm & 5.00pm. (journey time approximately 40 minutes)

ADMISSION: (Charges include Gift Aid donation)

Members FREE, Adult £9.00 Senior (61+) £7.50

Concession £6.00 Family (2 Adults+ up to 4 Concessions) £28.00

**A full programme
- all organised by**



- ◆ Vintage vehicle road run from Doncaster
- ◆ Sales stands

OTHER RUNNING DAYS IN 2015

(Open 11.00am - 5.00pm unless stated otherwise)

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 (see above)	Sunday, 18 October
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)

ADMISSION (but NOT Isle of Axholme Running Day & Rally – see above) - 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

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