

Sandtoft Scene

June 2020

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NEWS & VIEWS FROM
The Trolleybus Museum
AT SANDTOFT



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Front Cover Picture

Remembering the 50th Anniversary weekend when the sun shone brightly over Sandtoft. The busy scene in the Square on Sunday 25 August 2019 was captured by Andrew Waddington. Trolleybuses from London, South Shields, Reading and Nottingham plus a motor bus from Porto are in service. Half an hour later and the trolleybuses were changed over for different ones. It was a weekend for us all to be proud of. Photo courtesy of Andrew and www.britishtramsonline.co.uk. More photos of the day can be found at: <http://www.britishtramsonline.co.uk/gallery874.html>

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Contents

- 3 News from the Boardroom**
Updates on activity and work undertaken
- 5 Sandtoft 2030**
The Joint Working Group's work continues
- 6 The Sandtoft Organisation**
Details of roles and responsibilities at TM@S
- 8 Return of the Wednesday Gang**
A feature by Bob Ashton
- 10 On & Off My Trolley**
Tales of yesteryear from Bob Young
- 12 Vehicle Preservation Reports**
Vehicle maintenance news and updates

Due to the current situation this is a special short edition of Sandtoft Scene. Thank you for your continued support of the Museum and its work. The Editors.

A Letter to the Editors

Dear Editors,

I much enjoyed the latest edition of Sandtoft Scene, and in particular the item on John Ayrey. I saw a lot of John during the years up to the Bradford closure, but not much after as he based himself more at the Manchester shop.

Not strictly relevant to the theme of the story is that after John Ayrey sold 425 to Stan Legard, it then passed to John Moxon, the Secretary of WRTS, who sold it to me in the early 1970s. I must have been the owner for about ten years, before finding I could not do the work on it that was necessary.



The photo was taken on Huddersfield 606 during a tour held on September 26th, 1965. John Ayrey is seated nearest to the camera on the left. I am sitting on the long seat on the left nearest the rear bulkhead. It was taken by David Pack.

David Beach

News from the Boardroom

Contributions from Jason Spencer and Chas Allen



Covid-19

Due to the Covid19 lockdown the 2020 season has certainly not turned out the way we envisaged when the last edition of Sandtoft Scene was published. In light of the emergency the Board has met more frequently than usual, using Zoom to hold virtual meetings. One of the unintended consequences of this approach is that meetings are now much shorter than they used to be!

As most of you will know, because of the lockdown, the Board had to make the difficult decision to postpone the start of the 2020 Season and restrict access to the Museum site. This is such a shame because we had a great programme lined up and preventing access to volunteers has held up a lot of planned work. In May, with the easing of the lockdown restrictions, we were able to allow limited access to volunteers to the site and the Board doesn't feel we can safely re-open before August Bank Holiday at the earliest. Even then, some events may have to be scaled back.

All this is, of course, subject to the Government's advice at the time and the availability of volunteers, but we do have workable plans in place that allow us to open to members of the public and still maintain social distancing restrictions to provide a safe environment for volunteers and visitors. If we do open Stewart will be in touch with our regular open day volunteers to check availability. Please remember that if you have any concerns about returning to the Museum it is fine to say no.

In terms of finance the enforced closure has obviously had an impact on the Museum's projected income targets. However, subject to the receipt of a business support grant from North Lincolnshire Council, prudent spending and the continued support of our members the Board is confident that the Museum can withstand this storm. It does mean that the Board has had to reconsider some of the key projects and reprioritise them. Our Finance Director John Francis is actively exploring a number of avenues to establish whether we can tap into any of the other various grants available.

Unfortunately, we have also had to cancel the Trolleybus Driving Experience Days arranged for this year. Thankfully all the participants have been really understanding and agreed to defer their bookings until the crisis is over. We have also had to cancel a few private visits but the organisers have also kindly agreed to visit us next year instead.

The Board would like to thank all its volunteers and members for their continued support and encouragement during the current extraordinary situation.

Site Security

One of the biggest challenges at the start of the lockdown was to make sure that the Museum and its exhibits were kept safe and secure while volunteers are not on site as much as usual. This was not helped by a local power outage for 5 days in March. To this end the Board has appointed a Security Company to make frequent visits to the Museum and the Burntwood site during this period. This service does not come cheap but the Board decided that it was essential. We have also used the opportunity to get our CCTV and Fire Alarms systems serviced.

Archives Update

Before the lockdown, as the Company's Archivist, Steven Oliver had undertaken the unenviable task of clearing and sorting the archive room in the Pelham Building. He has installed new shelving to improve the way our archives are stored and recorded.

Site Improvement Works

Tony Ferris and his team have continued to look after the Museum site. Since the last Sandtoft Scene dangerous trees have been pruned or removed, repairs made to rotten wood, new signage put up around the site and a soft play area added to the Skegness building. The flooring in the kitchen area in the Café has been replaced as the previous floor covering had become dangerous.



Regal Cinema

Dave Hall has been appointed to the role of Cinema Manager. In this role he intends to make improvements to the Cinema itself and make sure that regular film shows and presentations are available on open days. The Board would like to thank Dave for all taking on this role which will greatly enhance the experience of our visitors.

Website, Email Contacts and GDPR

As mentioned elsewhere, despite the lockdown and the enforced closure of the Museum there's been a lot of activity behind the scenes. Since Bradley O'Connor has been appointed Webmaster, one area in particular that's been receiving attention is the overhaul of the Museum's email system and all Directors now have new email addresses. These take the format of firstname initial followed by surname@sandtoft.org - for example Tony Ferris' is tferris@sandtoft.org The old accounts will continue in tandem for a transition period and the next stage is to create accounts for our other departments and postholders.

Any digital system is open to abuse by those who are accessing it with or without permission, so we're introducing an IT Policy which will contain information and guidelines on the permitted uses of our digital platforms. In future all new users will be required to sign and return a copy of this Policy before access is granted; existing users will also have to sign it for continued access to our systems.

The Museum has two key email rings – one for Members and one for Volunteers. In particular we know there have been problems for some time with the Members ring which Brad is working to fix. If you haven't been receiving our email bulletins from either ring but would like to, please contact Brad at webmaster@sandtoft.org

We suspect we may not have GDPR consents for all existing members and are looking at ways of ensuring completeness; this may involve asking everyone to confirm their consent again. We apologise if you've already given this information, but we do need to make sure we are complying with our legal obligations!

Planning for future seasons

Finally, work has already started on planning events for the 2021 and 2022 seasons. The opening dates are set and apart from our annual events like the 'Gathering themes that will be included, and preparations started on, are for events marking the 110th anniversary of the start of trolleybus operation in the UK (2021) and the 50th anniversary of the last British trolleybuses in 2022, the 60th anniversary of the closure of the London system (also in 2022), and the 60th anniversary of the BTS next year. However this is your Museum so I'd be delighted to receive your suggestions for other weekends in both seasons – please email me at callen@sandtoft.org

Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP)



In the last edition of Sandtoft Scene we reported that the Board was looking at purchasing a MEWP to replace our life-expired cherry picker. We are pleased to confirm that we have now found and purchased exactly what we were looking for at a good price and the equipment has been delivered to our site. The Board will now make sure that all volunteers who are likely to need to use the equipment are fully trained by an accredited trainer. Work on inspecting the overhead and replacing poles has been delayed due to the lockdown but a full overhead inspection is planned before any Trolleybuses are operated for the public. The company we have approached to replace the time expired traction poles has been closed during the lock down. Hopefully they will soon be resuming operations, but until this work has been completed there will be a reduced speed limit in place for trolleybuses along the "back straight".

Amazon Smile

Thank you to those of you have already signed up to supporting the Museum through Amazon Smile.

For those of you who do not currently use it, Amazon Smile is a simple and automatic way for you to support the Museum every time you shop with Amazon, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.co.uk, you'll find the same products and prices as amazon.co.uk but with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your selected charity. The amounts raised are not huge but if you are shopping at Amazon anyway every penny counts!

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.co.uk from the web browser on your computer or mobile device and select the Museum as the recipient of your donation. Once it is set up just remember to use smile.amazon.co.uk every time you shop with Amazon.

Sandtoft 2030

The Joint Working Group's planning work has continued during the lockdown with meetings having been held using Zoom video conferencing.

One focus of attention has been the building which will house the Cedes replica together with a permanent exhibition about very early trolleybus technology. The Group proposes calling this "The Birth of the Trolleybus" as it will tell the story of the trolleybus from the original idea and experiments in the 19th century through the first successful designs in the early years of the 20th century and the non-standard current collection systems used by some of the UK's earliest systems.

The lockdown prevented the Sandtoft members' open weekend at the Ise Valley Railway from taking place, which was a great shame because for most of the people who had booked it would have been the only opportunity to see the railway before it closed.

Almost all the track has now been lifted and Francis Terry has provided an inventory to Graham Bilbé to help with planning and laying down the Sandtoft District Railway, as it will become. The Museum Board is supportive of the approximate line of route proposed for the railway.

At the time of writing it is expected that the lockdown will have been eased sufficiently to make it possible to transfer to Sandtoft the railway and the sectional garage which will be rebuilt as the loco shed. In fact, by the time you read this, it may already have happened!



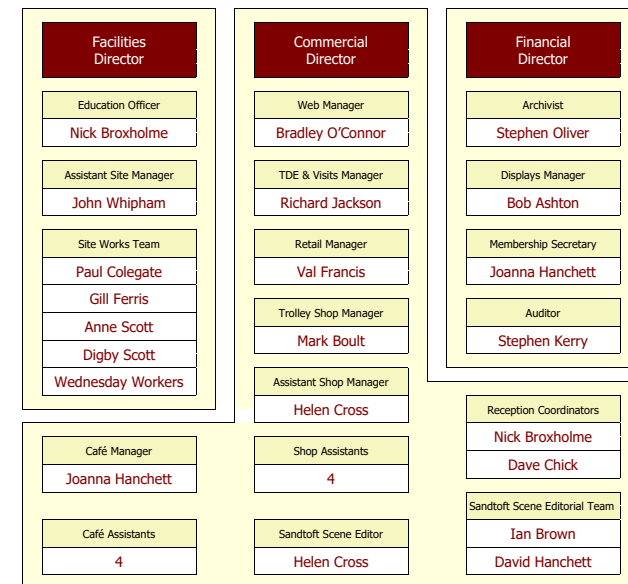
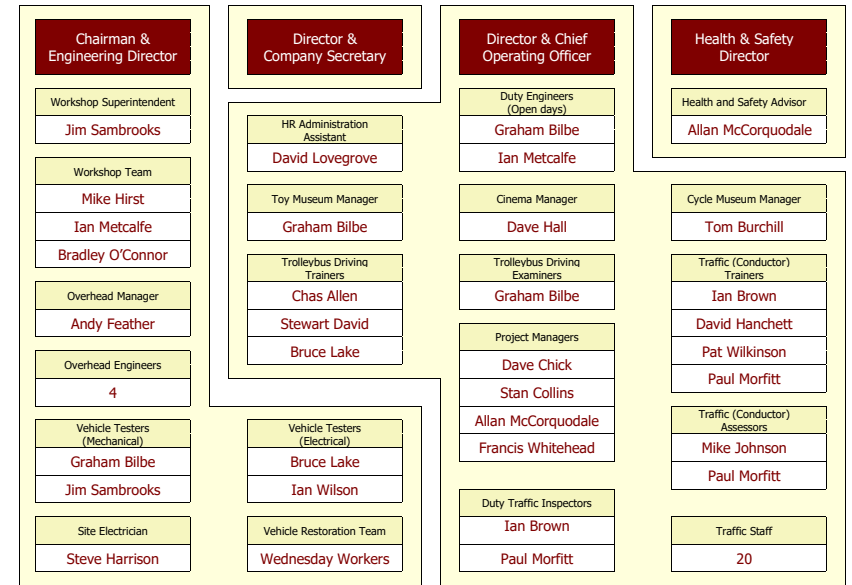
Since the AGM in December last year the Board has reviewed its structure and where responsibilities lie. In light of this the Board has also looked at the supporting volunteer structure and appointed people to a number of key roles to fill in the gaps. The Board would like to thank all those who responded to the recent appeals for volunteers.

Please note that the chart is not intended to be a hierarchical depiction of the structure or provide a complete picture of all the valuable work carried out by our volunteers, but to provide clarity on where key responsibilities lie.

Directors Responsibilities

<p>Chairman & Engineering Director</p> <p>Ian Wilson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Chairing Meetings ■ Public Relations ■ Liaison ■ Overhead Line ■ Electrical Installation ■ Vehicle Testing ■ Traffic Operations (<i>Motorbus</i>) ■ Museum-owned Vehicle Management ■ Depot Allocation ■ Worksop & Stores ■ Liaison with Vehicle Owners ■ Monitoring Vehicle Legislation 	<p>Director & Company Secretary</p> <p>Jason Spencer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Secretarial Duties ■ Charities Commission and Companies House Requirements ■ Signing Legal Agreements and documentation ■ Museum Status and Accreditation ■ Forward Planning ■ Policy & Procedures Documentation ■ Risk Management 	<p>Director & Chief Operating Officer</p> <p>Stewart David</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Co-ordination of Museum and Company Activities ■ Control of Open Days and Events ■ Traffic Operations (<i>Trolleybus</i>) ■ Platform Staff Training and Examination ■ Operating Staff Management and Training ■ Volunteers Training & Induction ■ Dispute Resolution ■ Open Day Staff Rostering ■ Customer Complaints 	
<p>Health & Safety Director</p> <p>David Hanchett</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Health and Safety Policy and Procedures ■ H & S Training ■ Vehicle Accident Reporting and Management ■ Personal Accident Reporting and Management ■ Safeguarding ■ Fire Safety Equipment 	<p>Facilities Director</p> <p>Tony Ferris</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Company Premises & Infrastructure (<i>not overhead line & electrical installation</i>) ■ Environment ■ Maintenance (<i>including Westgate</i>) ■ Minor Site Improvements ■ Security ■ Community Relations ■ Educational & School Activities ■ Office Admin 	<p>Commercial Director</p> <p>Chas Allen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Website & Email ■ Corporate Image ■ Programming ■ Marketing, Publicity & Press releases ■ Public Relations ■ Fundraising ■ TDE Courses ■ Private Party Bookings ■ Telephone Information Line ■ Customer Care ■ Retail ■ Sandtoft Scene 	<p>Financial Director</p> <p>John Francis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Financial Management ■ Cash Collection ■ Credit Card and PayPal Administration ■ Fundraising ■ Grant Applications ■ Membership ■ Insurance ■ Archiving ■ Exhibitions and Displays

Organisation Structure Chart



Return of the Wednesday Gang

During the lockdown I have been reading with concern about the difficulties faced by some UK Heritage Museums and Railways. Equally I have seen some positive example of volunteers still carrying out work on trams, railway tracks etc. So it was pleasing to receive an e-mail about our Board's decision to resume the Wednesday volunteer work again.

It was wonderful to pass through the museum's gates again at 10.30 on Wednesday 20 May and make my way to the Tram body to sign in. The last time I had signed in was on 18 March - realising

at the time this was to be my last visit for some months.

Fortunately for the museum a couple of volunteer staff members were able to attend to essential maintenance including security and keeping the grass cut. So it was pleasing for about 15 of the Wednesday Team to pick up from where we left off. Work was resumed on Doncaster 94, the RT, the Isle of Man bus and the Isle Coaches bus. Additional work was carried out to prepare for the departure of Bradford 847 and 845 to the Keighley Bus Museum.

Site work included the painting of the former railway shed's doors, sweeping up catkins from the Silver Birch trees and some urgent treatment to the weeds growing up through the paving slabs. So it was back to work for the members on one of the hottest days of the year so far, with bright blue skies it was wonderful to be back – with social distancing and hygiene measures in place of course. No problem all sorted.

“The Wednesday Gang” was the name first given to the members who got together to help with the restoration of Doncaster trolleybus 375. Some members diversified to other locations but new members were introduced and the work on 375 really took off. Other projects were picked up by the group and with a diverse wealth of skills, the number of jobs being tackled on the site has continued to expand.

New skills are continuing to be learned, for example through the 2450 team who have been working hard to get the Electroline moving again on both its generator and from the overhead wires. Early this year the traction motor received the attention of a firm at Bradford and should be back before the end of May. So some wonderful progress should now be resumed including yet more new working members being welcomed to what is a wonderful day at the museum.

I am pleased to be able to say I was there from day one at Sandtoft when we cleared the moss, debris, and hundreds of galvanised washers off the concrete service roads and helped to erect the traction poles. The museum of today is a credit to those first members and the continuing valuable contribution of the members of today.

Bob Ashton



Main Photograph

Preparations for Bradford 845 and 847 to leave the museum.

Top Right

A glorious day to get some of our buses out in the sun again

Bottom Right

We are still enjoying some avian visitors to the museum!



On and Off My Trolley

A trip down memory lane with Bob Young...

I grew up in Wood Green, north London, during the 1950s and early 1960s. My family did not own a car, so, like millions of other Londoners, my brothers, friends and I used all the forms of public transport available to us – buses, tubes and the railway. My transport passion was, and remains, the railway (that is to say, the steam railway) but the buses were nearer and more ubiquitous, and cheaper too, so I used them a lot.

My nearest trolleybus routes were less than a quarter of a mile from home. From there I could take either a trolleybus or a single-decker RF diesel bus to Wood Green High Road, at which point my choice of bus routes simply burgeoned. From the High Road I regularly used trolleybus routes 621, 629, 641 and 643, northbound to see my Nan in Palmers Green and southbound into central London to go trainspotting. Now and again I would climb on a 625 and go east.

Wood Green had a sizeable bus garage that accommodated both trolleybuses and diesel buses. Its entrance and exits in both directions, together with the busy crossing where Green Lanes, the High Road and Lordship Lane all met made the centre of Wood Green a bus nerds' mecca. Here the sky was black with trolleybus wires and frogs, and the complexity of the wiring often made for entertainment. Why? Well, just before the crossroads where Green Lanes became the High Road lay Jolly Butchers' Hill, a steep descent where some drivers went too fast, presumably to get through the traffic lights before they changed (there was a lengthy wait otherwise). As they attempted to negotiate the many frogs in quick succession, the poles would fly off and flail about like demented stick insects! This was amusing enough if you were on the

pavement, but even more fun if you were upstairs on the bus and could hear the heavy clonks as the poles bounced around on the roof. It was invariably the poor conductor, not the errant driver, who then had to retrieve a long bamboo pole from under the bus and reconnect the poles.

I always liked the look of the trolleybuses. Their frontal appearance seemed somehow friendly. The placing of the headlamps, the trolleybus logo below, and the air inlet below that all lent them what we now call a smiley face, quite distinct from the angular, pugnacious radiator grilles of the RT family. The livery was lovely too: that huge expanse of London Transport red, tastefully contrasting with the red-brown oxide of the roof and wheels, the whole broken up by a broad cream stripe edged in black, and bejewelled with LONDON TRANSPORT in gold block letters along the flanks. The paint job must have been costly to apply, but what a result! Other municipalities ran trolleybuses, I know, but ours were Rolls-Royces to everybody else's Fords. In a photographic album I recently read that Wood Green depot was renowned for turning out all its buses in spick-and-span condition. I was not conscious of this at the time, but I do remember that I never saw a scruffy trolleybus.

At speed, London trolleybuses were an awesome sight; at rest, of course, they were uncannily silent – no clattering diesel or hunting governor to spoil their serenity. They set off with no more than a subdued whine, and their acceleration was smooth and rapid, free of jerks and surges. But they could sway a bit, and on longer journeys I sometimes felt travel-sick. Never mind: I would just ask the conductor if I could stand on the open rear platform and gulp in some (fairly) fresh air. I

was never refused, nor was I sick, nor did I fall off.

Recalling conductors reminds me that there were conductresses ("clippies") too, and unless memory deceives, there were proportionally more clippies on the trolleybuses than on other buses. While most wore trousers, some preferred heavy navy woollen skirts, which, sadly, to a hormonal teenager like me were sure-fire passion-killers, whatever they hid. And the hems ran below the knee, so nothing ever went on display up the rear staircase.

What else does memory dredge up? On hot summer days, the scrub of big tyres on tarmac as the four rear wheels propelled them round the tight ninety-degree turn from Redvers Road into Lordship Lane. And, on such days, there was what seemed to me to be the hot smell of electricity. Electricity doesn't smell, of course, but motors and wiring can, and whatever wafted up from below mixed with the dusty fragrance of the moquette-covered seats above: it was peculiar to trolleybuses, and not to be found on an RT.

.....
At the time, I foolishly thought that that era and the certainties that went with it would last forever. But no: the trolleybuses lasted no longer than, for example, the nation-wide grammar school system of which I was a beneficiary – just over thirty years. By the late 1950s the trolleybuses were already being withdrawn, and by 1962, when I went up to Oxford, the last of them had disappeared. And when I returned to Wood Green in 1965 there was no trace of their infrastructure left.

In so many ways I consider myself fortunate to have been a young man in the sixties – think of the Beatles, miniskirts, satire on the telly, Lady Chatterley and so on – but for me the loss of those majestic trolleybuses was unquestionably one of the downsides.

Trolleybus Memories Project

Chas Allen writes...

Bob tells me he had started writing these notes some time ago. When he borrowed a couple of my books on London's trolleybuses it inspired him to dig out and revise his recollections of the trolleybuses. Despite not being a bus "anorak" the trolleys obviously made a big impression!

As often happens in life, one thing leads to another. Two of the strategic objectives in the Museum's Forward Plan are:

- To create an enjoyable and accessible visitor experience that increases knowledge and understanding of the trolleybus and the period with which it is associated;
- To enable visitors of all ages to learn more about social and economic history of the period in which trolleybuses were used in the UK by maintaining and improving the 1940/ 50/ 60s aura of the Museum.

What better way of helping to meet these two objectives than to create a permanent record of our visitors' memories of trolleybuses in their home towns? These could be in print, like Bob's piece, audio or even video recordings; and given our remit, not necessarily confined to trolleybuses but about life in general in that era. Sometimes (and increasingly rarely these days, for obvious reasons) we even get former trolleybus drivers who must be able to contribute a fund of memories.

We have started this project with the idea that when we have enough material we can create an exhibition. It will also be a great asset for future generations and could eventually involve partnerships with other organisations. Dave Chick is managing this project, if you are able to participate please contact him via the museum.

Vehicle Preservation Reports

Compiled by **Jim Sambrooks**

Volunteers

We are pleased to welcome further new volunteers to the Wednesday working party: Geoff Croft from Owston Ferry, Guy Vickery from Belton and Tony Walsh from Braithwaite. All have proven very useful before and since the lock down. Following Government rules due to the Corona Virus all vehicle work stopped after 18 March and resumed again on 20th May.

Trolleybuses

SYPT 2450 The traction motor, after years of neglect, has been overhauled by our usual contractor, Bradford Armature Rewinds. Returned to site, it is being prepared for fitting by Dave Longstaff and team.

St Helens 387 This vehicle has recently been on loan to the North West Museum of Transport. Although the loan has now ended the Board has agreed with the NWMT that 387 will remain with them until stable covered accommodation is available at or near Sandtoft.

Bradford 845 & 847 On 27 May, Bradford 847 left the Museum under suspended tow. 845 followed similarly on 10 June. Both vehicles will be on a long-term loan to the Keighley Bus Museum Trust. They have joined sister vehicle 844 that has been at Keighley for some years. This example is now almost completely restored. This move means that both these vehicles will now be stored undercover. As it was decided that 50-year-old rear tyres should not be trusted for a road journey, a set of wheels was borrowed from Douglas 52. These were used for both trolleybus journeys, and have now been returned. More work has been expended on 847 since arrival at Keighley including painting of the roof and upper deck panels to make the vehicle more presentable as it is planned to put it on display soon. The Museum is very grateful to the many members who contributed towards making the vehicles towable, particularly Bradley O'Connor.



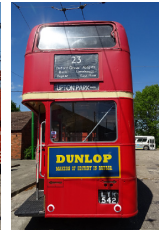
Bradford 847 before and during restoration at Keighley

Motor Buses

Bradford 558 Geoff Welburn reports that he will be able to do some work on parts of 558 at home. "The cab door frame is here along with the windscreen frame which has been re-chromed. Both items need re-assembling so I will have something to show when I return to Sandtoft after the lock-down!" Painting of the roof is continuing, the final undercoat is nearly completely applied.

Doncaster 22 The engine has been removed by Mike Hirst and his team using a fork lift kindly loaned by AE Wilson's and driven by our own Les Taylor, the same fork lift and driver later lifted the engine into a van hired by Brad O'Connor who took it to Fifield for warranty work.

Doncaster 94 Dave Stanfield and team have carried out more work in the upper deck and staircase. The electrical team, led by John Petch, has cured a long-standing problem on the vehicle's charging system after removing the control box for what is believed to be the first time since the bus was built in 1947! It is even believed that the box in situ survived the body change in 1963.



London Transport RT3323 The body panelling has been cut, shaped and fitted around the platform area and an air leak on the brakes has been cured with parts donated by David Grey of the LVVS. Needless to say, work on this vehicle stopped abruptly before the shutdown. The bus carries a 'Corona' advert on its off side panels so it was decided that as a precautionary measure the bus should be given a two-yard berth! With the risk slightly reduced, work around the platform area resumed in early June with Richard Barnes and his team making several missing panels and fittings, all members of the team have worn special protective clothing during this process.