

Blackpool Corporation **Tram 708**

Bogies:	English Electric
Motors:	4 English Electric EE305, each rated at 57hp
Bodywork:	English Electric H94C
Length:	42' 3"
Width:	7' 6"
Unladen Weight:	
Entered Service:	1934
Withdrawn:	2008
Owner:	The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft

BRIEF HISTORY

In 1932, in an effort to revive its tram-building business English Electric designed a new type of single deck tram, longer and wider than traditional trams of the time, with centre entrances fitted with doors, deep, comfortable seats and a streamlined appearance. At the same time, Blackpool Corporation was looking to modernise its tram fleet and ordered a batch of these "Railcoaches". Soon after they requested a double deck design, and ordered 27 double deckers, the first 14 of which were open topped primarily for the Promenade service. The top decks could also be closed off and the cars run as single deckers.

708 was new in 1934 as open-topper 245, in a largely cream livery with green upper panels. When World War II started in 1939, Blackpool being a "safe area" was inundated with refugees (37,000 arrived over 4 days alone) and troops. To increase the capacity of the fleet, especially at a time when many cars were laid up waiting repair, the open top "streamline" double deckers were rebuilt with top covers in 1941 and 1942. The livery was changed to include green lower panels at the same time.

In 1968, 245 was renumbered with the rest of the tram fleet to avoid duplication with the bus fleet series. It was subsequently rebuilt with some rubberised windows and single-piece destination displays and fitted with seats from withdrawn ex-London Routemasters. A pantograph replaced the traditional trolley pole, and a new largely cream livery applied.

Withdrawn from service in 2008, 708 was stored undercover in Rigby Road tram depot in Blackpool until acquired by the Trolleybus Museum, arriving at Sandtoft on 28th November 2023. It sits on tram rail kindly donated by the East Anglia Transport Museum set in a concrete plinth. After refurbishment it is planned to use it as an indoor children's play area, but it also serves to show visitors the differences between trolleybuses and the trams they replaced.