

## **Newcastle 501** **(LTN 501)**

|                    |                         |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Chassis:</b>    | Sunbeam S7              |
| <b>Chassis No:</b> | 70003                   |
| <b>Motor:</b>      |                         |
| <b>Body:</b>       | NCB H39/31R             |
| <b>Length:</b>     | 30 feet                 |
| <b>Width:</b>      | 7ft 6ins                |
| <b>Unladen</b>     |                         |
| <b>Weight:</b>     |                         |
| <b>New:</b>        | September 1948          |
| <b>Withdrawn:</b>  | 30 May 1965             |
| <b>Owner:</b>      | Beamish Open Air Museum |

### **BRIEF HISTORY**

The City of Newcastle-upon-Tyne introduced trolleybuses in 1934 and like many towns and cities used them to replace trams. This programme was interrupted by World War II, but at the end of the War the Corporation ordered 186 new trolleybuses, not only to complete the tram conversion but also replace all its prewar and "utility" (wartime standard) trolleybuses. Both aims were achieved by 1950.

501 was part of a batch of 30 trolleybuses based on the Sunbeam S7 chassis, being the first examples of this type. It was delivered in September 1948, with deliveries of the remainder continuing into 1949. The bodywork was by the local firm of Northern Coachbuilders (NCB), which had started as the coachbuilding section of Rington's Tea, manufacturing their delivery vans and commercial vehicles for other operators. It had been incorporated as a separate company (whilst remaining under the same family ownership) in 1931 and soon turned to building bus bodywork, but the works was sold to pay death duties in 1950 and the firm closed down.

Newcastle's trolleybus crews gave their steeds nicknames. This batch of trolleybuses were somewhat unkindly christened "Coffins" due to their narrow width and long length! 501 seems to have led an uneventful life until the City Council adopted a report recommending replacement of the trolleybus system by diesel buses in 1963. It was withdrawn from service in 1965, the year before the final closure of the system, and presented to the city's Museum of Science and Engineering. In 1974 it passed to the Beamish Open Air Museum and restoration work was completed in 2003.

Since then 501 operated on loan for several years from July 2005 at The Trolleybus Museum, before moving to the East Anglia Transport Museum for a period and then returning to Beamish.

It is currently on a two-year loan to The Trolleybus Museum from Beamish.