

TROLLEYBUS

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April 2023



The Magazine of the British Trolleybus Society



*Prague Airport Line
Memories of 1963
Nancy, au revoir*

TROLLEYBUS

The magazine of the
British Trolleybus Society

No. 741 April 2023

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BTS NOTICE BOARD

Reading Meetings

Held at the Reading District Oddfellows' Hall, 118b Oxford Road, Reading RG1 7NQ. Admission: Adults £3.00, Juniors £1.50. Non-members £4.00. Meetings commence at 19.30. Organised by the BTS. NTA members welcome (Please note that there has been a small increase in the admission charge but that there will now be no charge for tea and coffee).

Meetings Organiser Graham Bilbé, 12 Belle Avenue, Reading RG6 7BL. Email grahamebilbe@btinternet.com

Friday 14 April PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE. This meeting has moved to the second Friday to avoid the Easter weekend. Alan Butler presents a selection from the late John Zebedee's slide collection, particularly of motorbus subjects.
Friday 5 May Shaun Bradbury with views from his various trips abroad, including trolleybuses and trams.

London Meetings

Held at The Model Railway Club, 4 Calshot Street, London N1 9DA (nearest Underground station: King's Cross). Organised by the NTA. BTS members welcome. Start 19.00 – doors open 18.30.

Meetings Organiser John Parkin, 59 Beechwood Court, West Street Lane, Carshalton SM5 2QA. Email trolleybus654@aol.com

Wednesday 19 April Dave Hall presents a digital photo show from the Stanley King collection, showing UK trolleybus systems in the 1950s and early 1960s.

Wednesday 17 May Keith Farrow – Trolleybuses at Home And Overseas.

Bradford Meetings

Meetings are not being held at present.

West Midlands Transport Circle

BTS members are invited to attend WMTC meetings, which are held on the second Wednesday of every month at Bradmore Community Centre (Main Hall) in Wolverhampton. Doors Open 19:05, Start presentation : 19:30 prompt!, Break (around) 20:30 - 20:45; Finish 21:45: Out of venue by 22:00 Visitor fee £3.00, just turn up and bring others with you.

Wednesday 12 April Bob Belcher: My Encounters with the National Bus Company (1970s & 80s). A look at the constituent companies of NBC at various stages from early days to privatisation, including livery and vehicle standards.

Organised by Mike Richarides.
michael.richarides64@btinternet.com

MONTHLY PRIZE DRAW

The March Draw winners were:

£50 David Smith, East Leake, Leics
£35 Spencer Lane, Dorchester
£25 Keith Burbidge, Bournemouth

Front cover: Nancy's unique TVR system closed on 12 March. No. 24 is seen a few days earlier on 1 March. [D G Chick]

Prague Vaclav Havel Airport Line

There have been two significant developments in preparing to replace bus service 119 to Prague Airport with trolleybus line 59. On 14 February a ceremony was held to mark the commencement of construction of the new line.

On 16 March the first of the 20 Solaris Trollino 24s for the airport line was photographed in the Solaris plant in Bolechowo, Poland. It will transfer to Škoda in Plzeň in mid-April for installation of the electrical equipment.



Upper: Ceremony

[DPP]

Lower: First Trollino 24 [Škoda Group]

Memories of 1963 : South Shields to Woodcote

Article and photographs by Tony Belton

We continue with the towing of preserved South Shields 204 from South Shields to the Chiltern Queens bus garage in Woodcote.

The tow took place on 31 March 1963, a dull miserable day, difficult for photography as 50 ASA film speed was the highest you could get at the time. The vehicle used to tow 204 was an ex-Southdown Leyland coach registration DUF 173 owned by a friend of Don Jones called Vic Blackmore. Due to work commitments Don and myself couldn't complete the entire tow, instead arranging to meet them at Jack's Hill Café on the A5 at Towester. From there the tow

through to Chiltern Queens was only interrupted by DUF 173 over-heating on a few occasions.

204, delivered in 1937, has a Karrier E4 chassis with a Weymann composite body. The vehicle was presented by South Shields Corporation to the Reading Transport Society in 1963 and now forms part of the BTS collection at The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft.

Number 1 in the charts on 31 March 1963 was Gerry & the Pacemakers with "How Do You Do It?"

Below: Jack's Hill Café, which opened in 1955, has been in the news recently as unfortunately due to financial problems and staff shortages it was forced to close on 14 November 2021. South Shields 204 towed by DUF 173 is departing the forecourt of Jack's Hill Café turning right on to the A5 at Towester.

Page 65, upper: DUF 173 over-heating on the North Circular Road gave me the opportunity to photograph a British European Airways RFW (NLP 650) overtaking South Shields 204.

Page 65, lower: A refreshment stop took place at Slough Railway Station where Thames Valley 732 (JRX 807) a Bristol KSW was photographed alongside 204.







This view of 204 departing Slough Station shows the distinctive style of the station building.



204 has arrived in Reading and is about to turn right from Broad Street into West Street.



204 is now seen in West Street, Reading and will follow the local trolleybus route to Caversham Bridge on the final part of its journey to Chiltern Queens.



Caversham Road railway bridge was only just high enough for the local trolleybuses to pass underneath and where a 5 mph speed restriction was in force for them due to the booms being lowered to just above roof level. A couple of enthusiasts watch anxiously as 204 proceeds under the bridge.

Nancy's Unique TVR System Ends

Dave Chick paid a final visit

Nancy came late to trolleybus operation, opening its first system on 27 September 1982. By the time that Martin Nimmo organised a BTS visit to France in April 1998 only one of the three routes remained and that closed the following year.

The replacement system opened on 8 December 2000 using Bombardier's GLT (guided light transit) technology, known in France as Transport sur Voie Réservee (TVR). This was designed to be an economic alternative to tramways but only one other city, Caen, opted for TVR, and it was a failure in both. The Caen TVRs were fully guided and had pantographs, with return via the guide rail, but the Nancy version was a trolleybus which was not guided for the full length of the 11.1 km route.

Nancy experienced technical difficulties with its TVR operation from the start. Vehicles "derailed" resulting in two accidents causing injuries. After some short breaks in operation, the system closed from mid-March 2001 to 12 March 2002 for significant improvements, after which operation was much more successful.

In 2018, 12 TVRs from the Caen operation, which had been abandoned the previous year, were acquired for cannibalisation to keep the Nancy fleet running.

Nancy has always branded its TVRs as "trams" and their construction is closer to a tram than a conventional trolleybus. Not just the overall appearance, but the doors and the articulations are very similar to those of modern lowfloor trams.

The city initially intended to replace the TVR system with a tramway but eventually decided to have a new trolleybus system which will be operated by Hess double-

articulated trolleybuses. This was partly for economic reasons but it is difficult to see how trams could have handled the severe gradient out of the city towards the CHU Brabois terminus. The photographs on the rear cover show the most difficult part of the route.

The TVRs ran for the last time on 12 March and initially there are two replacement bus services while the guide rails are removed and the route is rebuilt as a modern BRT system with a slightly wider carriageway.

I was very impressed by the operator's determination to make sure that all users of the service were aware of the changes. Every bus stop displays a large poster saying that "the trolley is coming" and giving details of the temporary bus services and the location of the nearest stop. There was also a passenger host on every vehicle during the day handing out leaflets and making sure that passengers were aware of how the changes will affect them.

A film made in the final days of operation affectionately describes them as "magically bonkers". That is quite an apt description; they could operate in guided and non-guided modes and had an auxiliary diesel engine for emergency use and to reach the depot, which was not connected by overhead. They cost a lot of money and have not served the city as well as a conventional trolleybus system would have done, but they were unique and when it all worked well it was impressive.

Watch "Why Nancy Is Scrapping Its Magically Bonkers Monorail-Bus-Trams" on YouTube

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=Kr4EZwZbxwQ&si=EnSikaIECMiOmarE>

Page 69, upper: A procession of three Renault PER180s starting to climb towards CHU Brabois in April 1998.

Page 69, lower: On 7 November 2002, eight months after TVR operation recommenced following remedial work on the infrastructure, No. 6 negotiates one of the tight curves near the station that had initially been problematic.

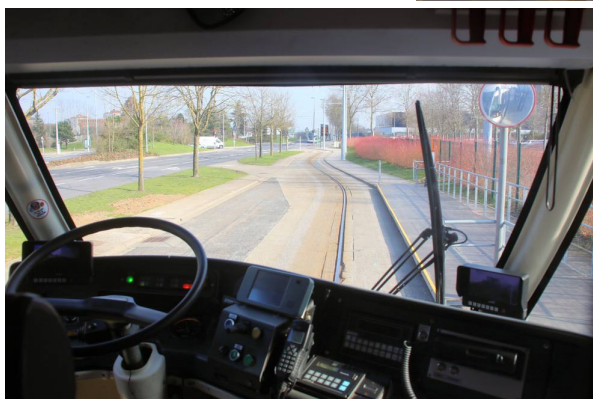
Page 70, upper: No. 3 on the right has just lowered the guide wheels at the start of the guided section at Viaduc John F Kennedy. The vehicle on the left is No. 20.





Right:

No. 2's rear guide wheel can be seen after being lowered.



Left:

The driver's cabin, No. 25

Right:

The interior of No. 25, looking towards the rear



Below:

The Maginot stop, displaying information about the changes from 13 March.





Above: No. 23 at the CHU Brabois terminus.

Below: Nos 23 and 24 pass each other.



Upper:

*No. 19 glides up the very steep incline towards
CHU Brabois.*



Centre:

*Returning from Essey
Mousimpre, No. 22
crosses the outbound
wire.*



Lower:

*One of the tight curves
outside the station.*



MUSEUM & PRESERVATION NEWS

Edited by Jody White



Cardiff & South Wales Trolleybus Project

The Project hopes that TROLLEYBUS readers have a happy 2023. This update begins at the start of December 2022, when members concentrated their efforts on the front of the 'decker 262, beneath the cab windscreen. We discovered there was a lack of timber framing to support external



Bob Heatley fitting new under skin timber framing.
[Keith Walker]

panels, so areas around the headlights received hardwood frames. However, the front profile of 262 differs not only from side to side, but also in the perpendicular, so required a bit more thought before applying the panels.

From our stock of aluminium sheets, one was marked out and cut to size using the guillotine. At this stage, a member - proficient with a plasma cutter - quickly cut

the openings for the various light fittings. One at a time, the panels were pinned in place and trimmed to size and shape, followed by a coat of Bitumastic paint on their inner surfaces.

Then came solving a windscreen problem, as something wasn't right with the bottom edge. Once the driver's or offside half screen and the full nearside glass were removed, the problem revealed itself. Apart from the timber being in poor condition, the thickness (from as built) was barely enough to accept securing screws, so Bob reduced the upper surface and added new sections bolting through the steel body frame. Then when refitting the offside half windscreen, it became apparent that the chrome frame had distorted enough to prevent the glass fitting, no doubt through old age and effects of the fire. Unfortunately, even with extreme care, the laminated glass cracked! Luckily for us, our supplier was able to cut the new glass to size on site and within three hours, it was on its way back to Barry. Once the structure was in place, and windscreens refitted, all was complete.

Following the Christmas and New Year break, work continued with projects both ongoing and new:

- the driver's cab, cleaned and ready for paint stripping
- the driver's seat, removed for servicing.
- the offside driver's cab window work – removal of the Tecalmit, self- lubricating reservoir tank stripped and primed
- the long running upper deck ceiling, now being stripped right back - not only removing coats applied during its life with the Cardiff Trolleybus Society, Cardiff Corporation Transport - but the original builders back in 1948! Any volunteers?

One really useful item of kit came with member Ty Cochlin, a plasma cutter, and we marvel at its accuracy. E.G., 262 headlight mounts and long lengths of aluminium for rain deflectors above the

windows (very apt for Wales!).
Keith Walker

Right: Both new front panels fitted to 262, awaiting a coat of primer. [Keith Walker]



The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft

BTS Weekend at the Museum – May Day Bank Holiday Weekend

A weekend featuring the operation of the Society's trolleybuses is being held over the bank holiday weekend of Saturday 29 April to Monday 1 May. Come along and support the Society!

Please note that the Museum will not be open for the Weekend of the Coronation or the Coronation Bank Holiday.

Events: Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 May Weekend Trolleydays featuring three-axle trolleybuses.

Saturday 27 – Monday 29 May Spring Bank Holiday Trolleydays featuring BUT trolleybuses.

Tuesday 30 May to Friday 2 June Weekday Opening

Following the success of the first-ever full week of opening in August 2022, three full weeks of opening have been scheduled for the new season, the first of which will follow the Spring Bank Holiday.

One trolleybus will run every day and all the attractions at the Museum will be open for all or part of every day, depending on how many volunteers are available.

Please come along and help the Museum to make a success of the open weeks, either as a visitor or as a volunteer. Please also make sure that others are aware that the Museum is now open on some weekdays.

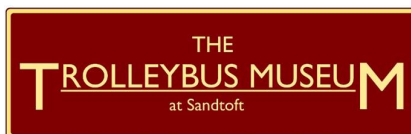
Johannesburg 589

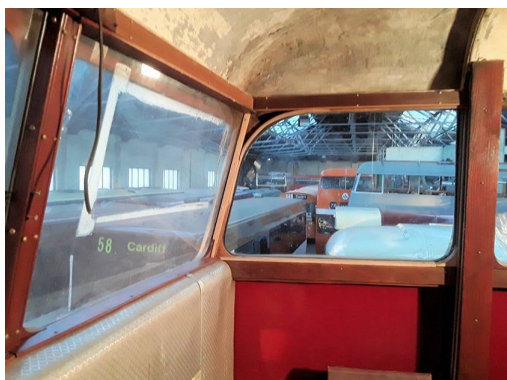
Recent efforts have focused on the upper deck, fully preparing it for painting and then painting the ceiling and all the sides.

The next stage is for another coat of varnish on the upper saloon timber, as well as fitting the newly-fabricated window handles and sealing the windows.

BTS Sales at Sandtoft

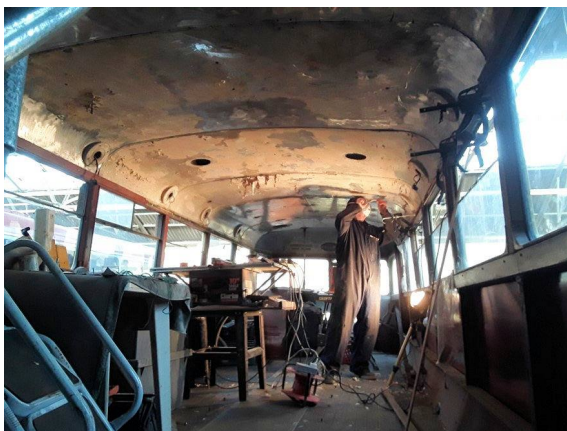
The Trolley Shop at Sandtoft is being reorganised for the 2023 season. Eric Moy has been appointed Shop Manager and BTS Sales and DO&LRS Sales will also be based in the shop. This will help to provide more cover in the shop and will provide a better environment for the Contributing Societies' sales stands.





Left: Cardiff 262's front offside upper deck window with its hardwood surround.
[Keith Walker]

Left: Painting and stripping 262's upper deck ceiling.
[Keith Walker]



World News (see page 77)



The Škoda 36 Tr prototype is seen on 15 March after arrival in Prague (Praha). [Skoda Group]

World News

Edited by Bruce Lake



AUSTRIA Salzburg

On 31 January, HESS delivered the first of the six lightTram® 18 DC ordered from the options of the framework agreement. It was expected that the outstanding five vehicles will have arrived by the time this report is published. Eight more (Nos. 436 to 442) will be delivered in July/August this year, with another eight to follow in 2024.

BRAZIL São Paulo

Following the end of pandemic measures, the trolleybus operation of the municipal SP Trans has been returned to its former extent. The trolleybuses that had been out of service have all been returned to use. The planned procurement of 40 additional trolleybuses to expand services is still open.

CZECH REPUBLIC Brno

DPMB has ordered ten new trolleybuses, exercising another option for the supply of new 32 Trs from the framework contract with Škoda Electric. Five are due to arrive by the end of this year and the other five by the end of January 2024. They will replace Škoda 14 Trs and 21 Trs.

The contract provides for the trolleybuses to be equipped with batteries that allow a range of 10 km away from the overhead wires. The total capacity of each vehicle is 95 passengers, 35 of whom can be seated.

The first deliveries from last year's contract are due imminently.

CZECH REPUBLIC Pardubice

The city is to purchase another ten battery-equipped

12m trolleybuses. Of these ten, six will have a smaller battery for emergency use only. The vehicles should have a service life of a minimum of 180 months. Minimum occupancy is set at 75 people including at least 26 seated.

The requirement for the heating system assumes the use of air conditioning with a heat pump function, a solution that is popular with battery-electric buses, but its purchase price is higher than a classic air conditioning unit, but with the advantage of lower electricity consumption. In the event of a significant drop in temperatures (when the outside temperatures fall to around -5 °C, the heat pump can no longer be used), the trolleybuses must also be equipped with additional heating.

The winning bidder has 14 months to supply the trolleybuses. The warranty for the trolleybuses is to be 24 months and battery suppliers must provide an extended warranty of 60 months, either for up to 100,000 km when driving on batteries, or until the consumption of 250,000 kWh of energy from the traction batteries, whichever occurs first.

CZECH REPUBLIC Praha

Construction of the trolleybus line from Nádraží Veleslavín to Václav Havel Airport began on 14 February. The route is about 9km in each direction and 50% of the length will be wired. Double-articulated trolleybuses will replace the line 119 buses.

Work will be co-ordinated with the construction of the new

Divoká Šárka – Dědina tramway.

The Škoda 36 Tr prototype which is being hired until the new SOR trolleybuses arrive was delivered on 15 March (see foot of page 76).

The 15 SOR TNS 18 trolleybuses which will be used on line 58 have been significantly delayed because Cegelec has had to accept extended delivery deadlines for certain components. The alternative would have been to redesign the static converter blocks using spare components.

Škoda Group published a photo on 16 March showing the first of the 20 double-articulated Solaris Trollino 24s which will be used on airport service 59 when it is converted to trolleybus operation next year.

It will transfer from the Solaris plant in Bolechowo to Škoda in Plzeň in mid-April for installation of the electrical equipment.

They are 24.7 metres long and offer 54 seats, with a total capacity of 179 passengers plus 2 wheelchairs.

Curiously, one of the photos shows the vehicle displaying service number 119, which is the number of the bus route which will be converted.

FRANCE Nancy

As reported elsewhere in this edition, the TVR system closed on 12 March. Double-articulated trolleybuses will be introduced from September 2024.

GERMANY Solingen

Following withdrawal of the last Berkhof articulated trolleybuses on 31 January,

from the following day, new Solaris Trollino 18s Nos. 873, 875 and 876 entered service. The "BOB" fleet of battery-equipped trolleybuses now comprises 16 articulated cars and eight rigid cars. The total trolleybus fleet strength is 55 vehicles.

ITALY Avellino

The competition for the design and construction of three new trolleybus lines is being relaunched. There had been no applications, possibly because the tender announced at the end of December was so complicated that even potential domestic bidders had a problem with its conditions. In February, the deadline was extended to 27 February, but even this did not result in any bids being submitted.

ITALY Chieti

At the beginning of November a company was sought to carry out the work of converting the city's only trolleybus line, route, 1 into a circular service by connecting the two termini Piazza Sant'Anna and Ospedale Clinicizzato via Via dei Vestini with 4.8 km of double-track overhead. Expressions of interest should have been submitted by 21 November but no application was received for the tender, which was not surprising given the short deadline of 10 days. Thus, the city has lost the grant funding of around €4 million and it must also repay a deposit of €200,000, which the region has made available for preparatory and design work.

ITALY Pescara

Almost six years after the installation of the new system's overhead was completed, on 22 February, at around 16.00 a Van Hool Exqui.City 18 trolleybus rolled out onto the streets of Pescara, accompanied by one police car and three police

motorbikes. Trolleybus No. 05 headed to the BRT corridor leading to Montesilvano, whose planned opening this year was prevented at the end of last year by the Administrative Court of the Abruzzo Region following lobbying by opponents of the trolleybus scheme. The city lodged a 34-page appeal to the Council of State (Consiglio di Stato), highlighting the detriment to the city if the Council of State upheld the Court of Appeal's judgment and the large amount of money spent on the installation of the infrastructure and purchase of vehicles.

Mayor Carlo Masci and Mobility Councillor Luigi A. Mascia, who took part in the trial run, said that it was intended to test battery capacity. The Mayor said that the 8.3 km journey disproved opponents' allegations that the trolleybuses do not have enough battery capacity and have problems with charging.

NETHERLANDS Arnhem

New battery-equipped Solaris Trollino 18 Metrostyle trolleybuses will be received from next year for use from Arnhem Central Station under wires to Oosterbeek and then on batteries to Wageningen. They will operate under the RRReis brand.

POLAND Lublin

A further four Solaris Trollinos have been sold to Vinnytsia, Ukraine, bringing the total to 20. 3869, 3870, 3871 arrived on 13 February and 3872 one day later.

RUSSIA Khabarovsk

Another 7 Gorozhanin type 6241.01 battery-equipped trolleybuses are on order, which will bring the number of the type to 17 by August. This should lead to the replacement of almost all old trolleybuses, including most of the ex-Moscow BKM 321. Abandonment of trolleybus

operation has been repeatedly proposed in recent years, so the acquisition of 17 trolleybuses in less than a year is a big change for the better.

SLOVAKIA Bratislava

A photo of the first of the order for 16 double-articulated Solaris Trollinos was published on 17 February, showing it at the Solaris works in Poland. It is the first production model of the Trollino 24. It was transferred to Škoda in Plzeň on 16 March for installation of the electrical equipment.

They will initially be used on the high-capacity line 201, where they will replace older articulated trolleybuses. The vehicles have 60 seats and a total capacity of 160 passengers. They are powered by two traction motors with an output of 160 kW each. The additional traction batteries placed on the roof of the second section are charged from the overhead line en route.

UKRAINE Vinnytsia

Four more Solaris Trollinos have been acquired from Lublin, Poland, bringing the total to 20. Lublin 3869, 3870, 3871 arrived on 13 February and 3872 one day later.

Modifications were carried out on the trolleybuses before commissioning, including changes to the information system, minor body repairs and repainting in a pale blue with black livery.

The ceremonial presentation of the first ten vehicles, which have been given fleet numbers 361–370, took place on 2 March. The Trollinos replaced ZiU-682s which, despite investments in trolleybus transport in recent years, still accounted for the majority of the fleet.

The city is the first Ukrainian operator of Solaris Trollino trolleybuses.

USA San Francisco

The 22-Fillmore line has been rerouted to 3rd and 16th Streets, a little over one mile of new overhead line being erected. It is expected that

most future extensions use battery mode.

With thanks to: Dave Chick, Československý Dopravák, Plzenske Trolejbusy,

sustainable-bus.com, Škoda Group, Trolleybus Trollino, Urban Transport Magazine, Ville Rail & Transports, zdopravy.cz

Right: The first production Solaris Trollino 24 for Bratislava arrives in Plzeň on 16 March [Škoda Group]

Below: Vinnytsia, Ukraine, has taken delivery of 20 Solaris Trollino 12s from Lublin, Poland. This was the scene of the ceremonial presentation of the first ten vehicles on 2 March. [Vinnytsia]



Rear cover upper: Nancy operated a fleet of Renault PER180H trolleybuses for the duration of the first system. No. 603 is seen in Avenue Jean Jaurès in April 1998 during the BTS visit. [D G Chick]

Rear cover lower: No. 1 at the same spot on 1 March 2023.

[D G Chick]

