

TROLLEYBUS

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The Magazine of the British Trolleybus Society



*Prague Airport Service
South Shields
ROCAR Preservation
Cardiff 203 • Bournemouth 301*

TROLLEYBUS

The magazine of the
British Trolleybus Society

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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.

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

Friday 3rd May Subject to be announced.

London Meetings

Held at The Model Railway Club, 4 Calshot Street, London N1 9DA (nearest Underground station: King's Cross). See meeting details for start time. Organised by the NTA. BTS members welcome.

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

Wednesday 17 April Martin Eady: Southend trolleybuses 1925 - 1954 and San Francisco trolleybuses in 2014. Start 1900 – doors open 18.30.

Wednesday 8 May Hugh Taylor: London's trolleybuses. A commemoration of the capital's trolleybus system, which closed on this day 62 years ago. Start 1900 – doors open 18.30.

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.

Organised by Mike Richardes.

michael.richardes64@btinternet.com

Wednesday 10 April Subject to be arranged.

Wednesday 8 May Subject to be arranged.

MONTHLY PRIZE DRAW

The winners drawn at the March Reading meeting were:

£50 John Black, Newport Pagnell, Bucks

£40 Stephen Oliver, Marple, Cheshire

£30 Keith Manning, Knaresborough, North Yorks

Cover photo:

Prague's airport bus service was converted to trolleybus operation on 6 March. The very first scheduled trolleybus, No. 407, is seen departing from Nádraží Veleslavin bus station.

[Jan Spousta]



Visiting Václav Havel by Trolleybus!

By Jan Spousta

Photographs were taken by Jan Spousta on 6 March except where otherwise shown.

On the afternoon of 6 March, the last diesel bus ran to Prague's Václav Havel Airport and trolleybuses took over, providing 30% greater capacity, at the same time reducing CO2 emissions by

about 1300 tons and saving hundreds of thousands of litres of diesel annually.

In reality some services may still be bus-operated as the 20 new double-articulated Škoda 38 Tr vehicles and new infrastructure bed in.





Page 63, upper: The entire fleet of 38 Trs, lined up at the airport in fleet number order (from 401 on the right to 420 on the left). [Škoda Group]

Page 63, lower. The official launch of the new trolleybus service after the tape had been cut jointly by operator DPMP, Prague City Hall and Škoda Electric. [Škoda Group]

Above: No. 414 arriving at the entrance to Nádraží Vevešlavín bus station.

Below: 407 with its poles up poses with 401 in battery mode in the airport Terminal 3 area.





Above: In the old airport (Terminal 3) area, No. 415 is seen at the scheduled depoling point, changing to battery mode between the old and new airport. A gentleman points out the operation to his young son.

Below: No. 413 approaches the Divoká Šárka stop on the way from the airport to Veleslavín.



South Shields Closure 60 Years Ago

Article and photographs by Tony Belton

Tony Belton commemorates this lovely system with a selection of photographs taken on 14 and 15 April 1963

The South Shields trolleybus system closed 60 years ago, on 29 April 1964.

The system opened on 12 October 1936; by 1950 it had reached its peak of 16

miles with 67 vehicles working over 11 routes.

The No.1 record on 29 April 1964 was Peter and Gordon with "A World Without Love"

Below: South Shields 200 has just turned at Pier Head terminus and is waiting to pull up on to the stop once 227 has departed. The memorial on the right commemorates the local lifeboat pioneers Wouldhave and Greathead. SHOP AT BINNS was advertised on the rear of all South Shields trolleybuses.

200, delivered in 1936, was the first South Shields trolleybus. It belonged to a batch of thirty-four Karrier E4s with Weymann bodies delivered between 1936 and 1938. In 1952 the chassis of 200 was scrapped and the body placed on the chassis of 205, the combination being numbered 200.

Page 67: This view of Karrier E4 number 232, on route 12 to Chichester, is taken at the junction of Mortimer Road and Stanhope Road and shows it bearing right into Stanhope Road. The view was conveniently taken from the upper deck of a trolleybus in Mortimer Road





Page 69, lower: The spring tulips add colour to this view of Fowler Street, with Karrier W number 248 passing on route 12 to Marsden Inn via Horsely Hill.

Page 69, upper: Standing at the cliff top terminus of route 11 at Marsden Grotto is Sunbeam F4 number 270. The building to the right of the vehicle marked 'Marine Grotto' is a lift which took passengers down to the seashore where there was a pub and other attractions. Numbers 261 to 270 from 1950, Sunbeam F4s with Northern Coachbuilders bodies, were the final trolleybuses to be delivered to South Shields.

Page 70, upper. South Shields acquired eight 1950 Sunbeam F4s with East Lancashire bodies from St Helens in 1958 when that system closed. Illustrated is number 201, ex St Helens 374, which was used as the 'Last Trolleybus' in its hometown. In this view, 201 on route 3 to Tyne Dock, has come up from the town centre and is in Fowler Street, about to pass the Town Hall. Numbered 374 to 381 in St Helens they were given fleet numbers at South Shields which had become vacant by the withdrawal of the pre-war Karriers.



Above: Karrier W number 240 is seen in Fowler Street with the Harton Colliery railway bridge in the background. It is working on route 12 to Marsden Inn via Stadium. I can practically smell the tar as the road has recently been resurfaced using tarmac dressed with chippings as was normal in those days! In 1946 the first post-war trolleybuses were delivered, numbered 240 to 245, they were Karrier Ws with Roe utility bodies.

Below: The scene here is at Market Place. Karrier W number 247 is passing one of the later Sunbeam F4s number 267 both with similar Northern Coachbuilders bodies. 267, going to Stanhope Road, has had its trolley poles taken off the wires to allow 247, going to Tyne Dock, to pass. Note the ragged booms on 247.







Above: See caption on page 67

Below: South Shields also purchased four 1945/946 Karrier Ws with Park Royal utility bodies from Pontypridd UDC in 1957 when that system closed. South Shields 236, ex Pontypridd 8 from 1946, is seen in Laygate having just negotiated the Chichester roundabout on a route 4 to MARKET. Note the unusual location for the bamboo poles on all South Shields trolleybuses; they were positioned on the mid rail between the upper and lower decks. The four vehicles retained their wooden slatted seats on the upper saloons whilst at South Shields.



Inițiativa pentru Muzeul Transportului Bucureștean (The Initiative for the Bucharest Transport Museum)

Romanian transport enthusiasts have saved a heritage trolleybus from being scrapped. Built in 1994 and put into service in 1995 when the Târgu Jiu trolleybus system was opened, this ROCAR 217E worked tirelessly for 26 years.

The trolleybus carried fleet number 104 and the registration number "Târgu-Jiu 0108". Following the delivery of new Solaris Trollino trolleybuses, No. 104 was taken out of service in 2021 and in April 2023 was sold to two enthusiasts who wished to save an important part of Romania's transport history.

It was loaded on 26 October and arrived at the Romanian Automobile Museum in

Campulung the following day. The team there says that it will be loved and will be on display for everybody to enjoy and learn about its story.

The team behind the project were surprised by the support and public interest they received, and they are grateful to the individuals who donated to cover the cost of the transport.

Small repair works will be carried out from time to time but at the moment, a full restoration is out of the question.

All photos courtesy The Initiative for the Bucharest Transport Museum



Left: The historic trolleybus being loaded on 26 October.

Right: A 1 a.m. a stop with a spectacular display of stars, meaning there must have been little light pollution.





Above: Arriving at the museum on 27 October

Below: A group photo with the owners, museum administrator, transportation crew and local helpers.



Cardiff 203 on Tow - Part 2

Article and photographs by Tony Belton

Further to 203 being left at Harringay Stadium on 8 March 1964 (see Trolleybus 752) we returned KJH 900 to Smith's of Reading and explained the problem with the towing equipment. They very kindly rectified the problem, promising that we would never have that problem again (which we never did)!

So, two weeks later on 22 March we arrived at Harringay with 900, connected up 203, and made our way to Reading.

On the journey 900 was riding very rough and we needed to know why; when we got to the first lay-by on the North Circular Road we pulled in to investigate. As we were all new to this game it took some time but it turned out that the inner rear nearside tyre had a puncture. None of the crew had ever changed a tyre on such a large vehicle before so it was a difficult experience for all of us; having to take one tyre off to remove the inner one was an extra headache. Eventually, after a lot of swearing and shouting, we managed to change the tyre

and after putting both tyres back on we were ready to go, wondering what else could go wrong? One good thing was that we had parked opposite the famous Ace Café so there had been no shortage of refreshments! The rest of the journey went smoothly apart from stopping occasionally to check 203's offside rear wheel hubs as they were running very hot.

Upon arriving in Reading we decided to stop for a photoshoot in Mill Lane, where Reading Corporation housed their vehicles. We were very surprised to be joined by Reading trolleybus 149 which was on a tour of the system; a very nice surprise for all concerned. We then made our way to Smith's which was located in Rose Kiln Lane, where we joined fellow preserved trolleybuses Bournemouth 212, London 260 and Reading 113.

Billy J Kramer was No.1 in the charts with
Little Children

Below: Trying to get the inner rear tyre off wasn't an easy job; we were attempting this as the photo was taken. The view also shows The Ace Café where most of the crew had disappeared to!





Above: The crew of RTL407 on route 112 were very interested in our plight and stopped for a few minutes to chat.

Below: Checking the offside rear wheel hubs on 203 gave me the opportunity to photograph the passing Thames Valley Bristol Lodekka WJB 233 on route 43 to Reading.





Above: We had parked up in Mill Lane in Reading for a photoshoot when Reading 149 pulled up behind us; it turned out to be on a special tour hired by the Electric Traction Society, a group based in London. The two vehicles meeting like that was a nice surprise.

Below: Having arrived at Smith's 203 was reversed into position next to Reading 113, Bournemouth 212 and London 260. Cardiff 203 would remain at Smith's for exactly three years.



Bournemouth 301

A restoration update by Dave Hall and Francis Whitehead

Dave Hall and Francis Whitehead visited Bournemouth 301 on 13 March to see the progress on its restoration.

Dave says, "It is looking absolutely fabulous. The windows need to be put back in with new rubber, certain items are to be sent away for re-chroming, a few seats need to be reupholstered and some tidying up will complete the job. If all goes well 301 should be ready for launching into service at Sandtoft over the British Trolleybus Society's August bank holiday weekend event."

Francis, who is BTS Treasurer as well as Vehicles Officer, says that there should be enough in the kitty to see 301 through to completion and returned to Sandtoft, but he would like to remind our generous BTS members that the 301 fund is still open for donations as there are bound to be ongoing maintenance, mechanical and/ or electrical repairs and other costs to meet as time goes on.



These photographs were taken on 13 March. Bournemouth 299, another MF2B which was part of the same batch as 301, is seen in the background of one photo.

[Dave Hall]



MUSEUM & PRESERVATION NEWS

Edited by Jody White



The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft Forthcoming open days

- Saturday 20 April and Sunday 21 April
Southern Trolleybuses Weekend, featuring trolleybuses from the south of England.

- Saturday 4, Sunday 5 and Bank Holiday
Monday 6 May

Join us for a Busman's Holiday Weekend. Everybody is welcome, but employees of bus operators in particular are invited. It is also intended that there will be accessible trolleybus and bus operation.

Keighley Bus Museum

Keighley Bus Museum Trust completed the purchase of the premises they have been renting on 9 February 2024. Not only does this give the Trust security but it means that they can now plan necessary building repairs.

In announcing the good news the KBMT Board said, "Our thanks go out to everyone that helped out with donations however large or small".



Above: After a very long and difficult restoration, work on Cleethorpes 54 is approaching its conclusion. It is seen in the workshop during the March working party weekend. [D G Chick]

World News

Edited by Bruce Lake



AUSTRIA Linz

The finance has been agreed to expand the city's trolleybus and tram systems. New trolleybus line 48 is to be built and 16 new trolleybuses purchased.

BULGARIA Sliven

Six new SOR/Rail Electronics trolleybuses numbered 0123 to 0623 and four battery-electric buses were officially handed over to the municipal transport company on 19 October 2023. The new vehicles are part of a project that aims to improve air quality and ensure more efficient and high-quality urban transport. It is also the first new trolleybus procurement since 1987. As part of the project, the 35-year-old infrastructure has been renovated and repaired. The rectifier stations in the "Druzhba" district and in the "Nish" street have been completely renovated as have eight sections of the overhead line network.

CZECH REPUBLIC Brno

Type approval has been received for the first two SOR TNS 12 trolleybuses, nicknamed "Marios". They were delivered as a kit, with the final assembly completed by DPMB in its Komin depot. They are recognisable in the streets thanks to the figures of Mario and Luigi behind the windscreen, referencing the video game Super Mario, whose "heroes" were a duo of Italian plumbers. However, the etymology of the name "Mario" in Brno follows the prototype of the SOR TNB 12 vehicle nicknamed ACUMARIO.

DPMB has the option to purchase another 38 similar vehicles at an exceptionally favourable price, but it must do so by the end of 2025. For this

year, it plans to use the option for only eight vehicles. If necessary, it should be possible to equip vehicles with traction batteries supplied by Škoda Electric. So far no line has been established in Brno on which battery trolleybus technology would be regularly used, but DPMB is to examine this possibility in cooperation with the city management, including the possibility of constructing additional trolleybus lines. Following the delivery of the second batch of ten Škoda 32 Trs, Nos. 3322 – 3327 and 3329/3330 entered service at the end of 2023. 3321 and 3328 arrived at the end of January. Škoda 21 Trs 3013, 3018, 3022, 3027, 3054 and 3061 were withdrawn in December 2023 and January 2024, leaving only 30 of the once 64-strong type still in service.

CZECH REPUBLIC Ústí nad Labem

Following delivery of most of the new Škoda 27 Trs, the last regular service journey of a Škoda 15 Tr(M) trolleybus was operated by No. 564 on line 53 on 28 February. However, Nos. 564 and 567 operated advertised farewell journeys on several routes every day between 18 and 23 March and finally a farewell tour was operated on Sunday 24 March.

ECUADOR Quito

50 new high-floor articulated trolleybuses will be procured for the system, to be used in left-hand traffic with step-free access at central platforms. They will not be double-articulated, in particular because no trolleybus model in the appropriate configuration would be available for Quito in the long term.

An information event was held on 23 February and deliveries are scheduled to begin in 2025. Around 100 of the Mercedes-Benz O 405 GT buses procured in 1995 and 1999 are currently in service on the network.

ESTONIA Tallinn

Mayor Mihhail Kõlvart has announced the decision to continue the development of the trolleybus system as an important and environmentally friendly means of public transport. It is planned to reconstruct the infrastructure of the overhead line network and to purchase 40 new battery-equipped trolleybuses over the next five to six years. 22 will be of 18 m length and 18 will be 12 m.

The battery drive is to be used in the city centre, where the overhead is to be dismantled. At present, the fleet consists of 44 Solaris Trollinos, of which 18 are articulated and 26 are rigid.

FRANCE Nancy

The first HESS lighTram® 25 DC was delivered on 13 March and was to take part in roll-out events to introduce the new trolleybus to residents from 22 March (see rear cover).

GERMANY Solingen

Of the eight 12m Trollinos expected at the end of 2023, only No. 216 had been delivered by early February. The last of the order for articulated Trollinos, No. 880, has been in regular service since 18 January. Following the withdrawal of VanHool 256 at the beginning of February, 15 VanHool and 15 Hess articulated trolleybuses are now in use in addition to the 20 articulated and eight 12m battery-equipped Solaris Trollinos. The articulated vehicles with auxiliary diesel

engines are to be replaced by 30 articulated battery-equipped trolleybuses (BOBs) in the coming years.

HUNGARY Budapest

The delivery of 108 Solaris Trollino trolleybuses was completed last year, resulting in the near-elimination of high-floor trolleybuses.

BKK has announced a new tender for the purchase of up to 160 trolleybuses to expand the system. The contract envisages the delivery of 40 vehicles; 16 of 12m length and 24 articulated, with an option for up to another 120.

ITALY Milano

The last four Socimi two-axle vehicles have been parked in the depot since November 2023. Although they are still operational, line 93 is currently operated in battery mode between Argonne and Lambrate FS using the new Solaris/Kiepe artic due to construction work. New Trollinos up to No. 866 were delivered and registered at the beginning of February. The four trolleybus lines are currently operated by Trollinos up to fleet no. 856 along with the VanHool articulated and 406 and 407, the two remaining Irisbus Cristalis artic.

Eleven Socimi and five Breda articulated trolleybuses are still occasionally used on weekdays during the morning peak. The last of the MAN Bassotto/Autodromo articulated vehicles were retired in 2023.

ITALY Modena

Newly- delivered this year are two Solaris Trollino 12s with Kiepe equipment, numbered 43 and 44, joining eight of the same type delivered in 2019/2020.

ITALY Pescara

A nine-week programme of trolleybus tests on the BRT corridor between Pescara and Montesilvan began on 22 February, taking place on weekdays from 08.00 to 19.00.



One of Prešov's new Škoda 27 Trs is seen on test prior to entering service. [DPMP]

ITALY San Remo

This picturesque system is to close. On 26 February the Imperia province and Riviera Trasporti company approved the closure of the 21 km interurban trolleybus line Ventimiglia – Sanremo – Taggia, which has been out of service since 2018, although the line to Taggia was "suspended" in the 1990s. A contract has been placed for dismantling the overhead, which will start imminently.

LITHUANIA Vilnius

The first SOR body for the batch of Škoda 32 Trs being built for this operator was photographed on the back of a low-loader while caught in a traffic jam on 5 March on its way to Plzeň for fitting out.

ROMANIA Timișoara

Solaris Bus & Coach and Bozankaya A.Ş. are competing for a contract to deliver 33 trolleybuses.

SLOVAKIA Bratislava

Solaris Trollino 24 No. 6913 was the first double-articulated trolleybus to enter service, on 5 February.

SWITZERLAND Bern

BERNMOBIL has awarded the contract for the delivery of 13 double-articulated trolleybuses to HESS.

They are expected to be used from summer 2026 to replace diesel buses on route 10 between Bern railway station and Köniz/Schliern, which will have overhead lines on some sections. Trolleybuses have the advantage over battery bus solutions of significantly shorter charging times, which means that the number of vehicles used can be kept to a minimum.

SWITZERLAND La Chaux-de-Fonds

TransN's new battery-equipped trolleybuses will be tested here once all have been delivered. In anticipation, the overhead line was permanently energised again from 12 February.

USA Philadelphia

It is reported that SEPTA intends to retain trolleybus operation for the foreseeable future, with budgetary provision for replacement of the existing fleet from 2025 with new trolleybuses equipped for In Motion Charging.

With thanks to: Busportal, Dave Chick, Československý Dopravák, Plzenské Trolejbusy, sustainable-bus.com, Škoda Group, Jan Spousta, Trolleybus Trollino, Urban Transport Magazine, zdopravy.cz

Rear Cover: Nancy's first HESS lighTram® 25 DC is seen following delivery on 13 March. [HESS AG]

