

TROLLEYBUS

Vol. 63 No. 754

May 2024



The Magazine of the British Trolleybus Society



*Walsall and Wolverhampton
SponsorTrolley
Four Daves Go To San Francisco
Industry News*

TROLLEYBUS

The magazine of the
British Trolleybus Society

No. 754. May 2024

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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 7 June 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 8 May (Please note that this meeting has been moved from the usual date to coincide with the London closure anniversary). 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.

Wednesday 19 June Carl Isgar: European Exploration in the Eighties. 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 8 May Subject to be arranged.

Wednesday 12 June Subject to be arranged.

MONTHLY PRIZE DRAW

The winners drawn at the March Reading meeting were:

£50 Andrew Barton, Reading, Berkshire

£40 Brian Wollaston, Painswick, Gloucs

£30 David Snellgrove, Watford, Herts

New Members

We are delighted to welcome the following new members:

Robert Smith, Goole, East Riding of Yorkshire

Stephen Donovan, Swinton, Greater Manchester

John Gordon, Chessington, Greater London

Cover photo:

San Francisco Marmon-Herrington 776 successfully negotiates the Spear Street frog immediately after it had been repaired. See this month's article about Muni Heritage Weekend.

[D G Chick]



Walsall and Wolverhampton 60 Years Ago

Article and photographs by Tony Belton

National Trolleybus Association on a Tour of Wolverhampton using number 408 on 5 April 1964.

Wolverhampton 408, a 1945 Sunbeam W with a 1952 Park Royal body, was chosen because it was the only Weymann-bodied utility trolleybus to be rebodied.

No1 in the charts on 5 April 1964 was The Beatles with Can't Buy Me Love

Tour of Walsall on 20 June 1964 using three-axle number 350

There was a tour of Walsall using their only three-axle Sunbeam S7, number 350, on 20 June 1964. Unfortunately, I was unable to take part in the tour due to having to tow

preserved Huddersfield trolleybus number 541 from Huddersfield to Plumtree in Nottinghamshire the following day. I only saw 350 in service on one occasion and so share two views at Lower Farm Estate terminus whilst it was on route 32. Note it has a distinctive Willowbrook body which has recently been repainted.

Delivered in 1953, the vehicle was originally Pay As You Enter with a seated conductor and numbered 850. In early 1961 it was rebuilt as a standard trolleybus and renumbered 350.

No1 in the charts on 20 June 1964 was Cilla Black with You're My World



Above: The first view of 408 is taken at the Bilston, Fraser Street reverser, having reversed from Oxford Street. Once a very busy short working facility, in latter days it was only used occasionally as the reversing had become an increasingly hazardous manoeuvre due to the growing motor traffic in the area.

Page 83: The second and third views are taken at Bilston depot where there was a regularly used turntable. Bilston depot was converted to motorbus operation on 26 October 1964 and 408 was withdrawn on 31 October 1965, the day we lost the wonderful jointly operated route 29 between Wolverhampton and Walsall.





Walsall 350 at Lower Farm Estate terminus whilst it was on route 32.



SponsorTrolley Update

by David Beach

BTS members will be aware that it is necessary to pay for our fourteen trolleybuses and one motor bus to be kept in secure accommodation, and that Sponsortrolley provides a predictable source of funds to permit the safe storage of these fifteen treasures. Knowing they are safe encourages the Society to further improve their condition and when possible allow for their operation.

The BTS committee are working towards a day when accommodation costs will be reduced significantly when the new exhibition hall is built at Sandtoft. This will be a joint BTS/STCL venture on BTS-owned land behind Burntwood. Meanwhile, fifty-four members contribute funds towards the wellbeing of our vehicles through the Sponsortrolley scheme. A donation of £60 per year [usually done through a standing order of £5 per month] comes close to keeping one vehicle safe for one month and fills one box on the Sponsortrolley chart. Twelve such sponsors [totalling £720] can almost cover one vehicle for a whole year provided the donations are gift aided. Remarkably we have some members who find they can afford more months, donating £10, £15, £20, etc, per month, as you will deduce from the chart.

Although largely trolleybus orientated, the BTS does own one very historic motor bus, Reading 47, which has provided sterling service in a number of ways including helping to advertise the BTS by attending events. Currently it is in need of remedial work to strengthen the bodywork before it can be used to its full potential, and this will be expensive. What makes matters worse is that, being garaged in the South, the rental costs are more than they are for the trolleybuses at Sandtoft. The rental for 47 will be £1,600 this year, and Sponsortrolley is raising only about 60% of this so the balance has to come from other sources and leaves no surplus towards maintenance. It would be wonderful to get some more sponsors for no.47

Five other members of the BTS fleet have blanks against their names, being

Huddersfield 631, Bournemouth 99, Cardiff 203, South Shields 204, and Walsall 872. [Newcomer to the fleet Huddersfield 619 has two gaps but benefitted from some advance payments from the previous owners so this is less urgent.]

We were sorry to hear recently of the death last summer of one of our generous benefactors, Peter Hirst, which explains why Huddersfield 631 is now the least-well sponsored BTS trolleybus.

Whilst thanking all existing sponsors, it would be nice to be able to fill these remaining gaps, and anyone who would like to join the scheme to support any of the other vehicles would be welcomed with open arms. For some vehicles a few months are already 'double booked' on the chart, and thereby some maintenance and restoration costs are funded as well.

Inviting donations in multiples of £5 per month goes back many years, and in due course we may have to ask the existing supporters to increase their standing orders in line with inflation, but meanwhile if some more boxes on the chart can be double booked, maybe we can delay having to do this!

I can be reached at

david.tbeach@btinternet.com

or by post at David Beach, 9 Middle Street, Minehead TA24 5 JH

BTS Membership Renewals

Apologies to members who have not received their new membership card for BTS and Sandtoft yet. Paul Dicken, the new Membership Secretary has moved house and has had difficulties with mail, but rest assured your copy of Trolleybus will still arrive and any backlog will be cleared quickly. If you have yet to renew, please treat this a gentle reminder.

Paul Dicken

8 Glan Llyn, Llanfairpwll, Ynys Môn
LL61 5YX

SPONSORTROLLEY				SUPPORTERS															
Updated	Aachen	Medborough	Reading	Glasgow	Bournemouth	Reading	Cardiff	South Shields	Bournemouth	Walsall	Huddersfield	Huddersfield	Walsall	Manchester	London				
01/03/2024	22	& Swinton 34	47	TB 78	99	113	203	204	301	342	619	631	872	1344	1812				
January	R.T.Cole	F.R.Terry	J.C.Savage	P.J.L.Smith G.Mur	A.A.Turner C.Rowledge	A.J.Wilcock	Glancee	D.J.Barnsden	D.Hall	N.Preston		M.W.Story	S.P.Brown	P.D.Weal	JAF Percival R.T.Cole				
February	D.G.Chick	A.A.Fawthrop	MV Ball	PJ Smith C.N.Gulby	S.P.Brown A.A.Turner	A.J.Wilcock	D.G.Snellgrove	P.Burton	B.Pantaleev D.Hall	P.Weal	R.T.Cole		T.Douce	P.D.Weal	D.G.Snellgrove				
March	M.Eady	A.Williams	J.C.Savage	G.Mur	F.R.Terry	D.Mulvey	S.A.Bradbury	M.Eady	A.Belton	PJ Smith		M.W.Story	K.Manning	P.D.Weal	F.Terry R.T.Cole				
April	T.Douce	L.R.White	S.A.Bradbury	R.T.Cole	J.S.Brett	D.Mulvey	PJ Smith	P.Short	A.Belton	B.Walaston	PJ Smith		T.Douce	P.D.Weal	M.Eady				
May	P.Bleas	A.A.Fawthrop	J.C.Savage	PJ Smith	C.Rowledge	A.J.Wilcock		P.Burton	A.Belton M.Cole	PJ Smith	J.McDonnell	D.T.Beach	C.Page	PJ Smith	R.T.Cole				
June	P.Bleas	S.P.Brown	MV Ball LR Simmonds	PJ Smith	F.R.Terry	PJ Smith	PJ Smith		A.Belton	P.Weal	M.W.Story	D.T.Beach	A.A.Turner	PJ Smith	A.Williams				
July	M.Eady	L.R.White	LR Simmonds	R.T.Cole	C.B.Archer	PJ Smith	C.B.Archer	P.Short	M.Cole		R.T.Cole	M.W.Story	S.P.Brown	PJ Smith	D.G.Snellgrove				
August	D.G.Chick	M.Eady	LR Simmonds	C.N.Gulby	PJ Smith	PJ Smith	J.S.Brett	A.G.Murray	C.B.Archer	P.Weal	J.Meal		A.A.Turner	F.R.Terry	C.B.Archer R.T.Cole				
September	MC Beamish	A.G.Murray	S.R.L.Harper	C.N.Gulby	PJ Smith	S.R.L.Harper		A.G.Murray	K.Manning	C.B.Archer	J.Meal	M.W.Story		F.R.Terry	F.Terry				
October	T.Douce	A.G.Murray	D.Stames	D.Hall	PJ Smith	A.J.Wilcock	PJ Smith	M.Eady	C.Williams	PJ Smith	J.Meal		D.Hall	F.R.Terry	J.Hunt				
November	D.G.Chick	F.R.Terry	J.C.Savage	D.Hall	PJ Smith	A.J.Wilcock	PJ Smith	A.G.Murray	D.Hall	PJ Smith	J.Meal	D.T.Beach	D.Hall	P.J.L.Smith	J.Hunt				
December	P.Bleas	F.R.Terry	LR Simmonds	D.Hall	PJ Smith	A.J.Wilcock	PJ Smith MC Beamish	P.Burton	D.Hall	A.A.Turner	M.W.Story	D.Pack	D.Hall	Glancee	J.Hunt				
If any supporter believes this chart is incorrect, please would they get in touch so I can put things right!																			

Four Daves Go To San Francisco, Part Two,

By Dave Hall, photographs by Dave Chick

In late 2022, BTS Secretary, Paul Dicken, suggested to three of his former schoolfriends, BTS Chairman Dave Chick, another trolleybus enthusiast friend, David Barney and me, that we should have a week in San Francisco in the late summer of 2023. There were only three Daves but Paul was made an honorary Dave for the holiday! Part One appeared in Trolleybus 751, February 2024.

Just two weeks before departing we learned from John Day, who had been advised by his friend Mike Bergman, that Muni Heritage Transport Weekend was scheduled while we were there. What a bonus! So on Saturday morning we made our usual journey to Embarcadero, and a short walk to Ferry Plaza to be greeted by the sight of some very old streetcars, motor buses and three vintage trolleybuses. Flyer E800 number 5300 was one of more than 300 of these trolleybuses which entered service in the mid-1970s, being retired in 2002. Behind was Marmon-Herrington TC48 number 776. It was one of 110 such vehicles which entered service in 1950 and survived until around 1977. Finally, ETI-Škoda 14 TrSF number 5538 completed the heritage operational fleet. 240 of these vehicles entered service between 2001 and 2003, the last ones not being withdrawn until 2019.

We remained in Ferry Plaza taking photos of all the old vehicles before boarding trolleybus 776. On departure we turned into Market Street, a thoroughfare where most Muni services operated for at least part of the way. On reaching Spear Street Junction we turned left and diewired on passing through the frog. Our journey continued downtown and eventually we crossed Chinatown and turned left into Stockton Street (the main street through Chinatown) and diewired again! We eventually returned to Ferry Plaza without further incident.

After a lunch in the Ferry Terminal and a ride on a couple of preserved trams, we boarded ETI-Škoda 14 TrSF 5538. Again, we turned into Market Street and turned left into Spear Street and diewired! The trolleybus services that use this junction normally continue straight ahead but clearly there was something wrong with the frog as all the preserved trolleybuses came to grief on that left turn.

The 14 TrSFs were not quiet trolleybuses, emitting a distinctive loud tram-like growl as they made their way around the city. 5538 was no different although I quite liked the sound. We made our way up to Chinatown and continued north to the route 30 short working terminus at Chestnut. On return to Ferry Plaza, we went home exhausted from our busy day but full of joy from our transport experience.

Our last full day in this wonderful city saw us return to Embarcadero metro station. On walking along Market Street we saw a tower wagon with staff repairing the errant frog. Whilst the New Flyer trolleybuses passed by on battery traction, Marmon-Herrington 776 had to wait patiently as it did not have the ability to move under its own power. There were many enthusiasts in town for the heritage event and there was quite a crowd watching overhead repairs being carried out. Chatting to these onlookers we discovered that one of them was Mike Bergman, without whom we would not have known in advance that it was Muni heritage weekend! Eventually 776 took the left turn very carefully and thankfully did not diewire.

We continued enjoying travelling on some of the older streetcars including a 1896 car that survived the 1906 earthquake, conscious we had not had a ride on Flyer trolleybus 5300. We just made it back in time to Ferry Plaza before it operated its last journey at 16.00. It was a one-way journey to Presidio trolleybus depot via trolleybus route 2 to Sutter. On arrival all passengers alighted outside the depot.

5300 made its way into the depot yard and had to negotiate several frogs to get to the required lane. The only problem was it had no traction batteries, so the driver had to accelerate between frogs whilst a depot hand pulled the booms down just before it was to pass over each frog. It was quite amusing watching this process. Once 5300 had reached its junction we made our way back downtown on a service 2 trolleybus 5837. We spent our last evening at an Italian restaurant before returning to our temporary home to prepare for our journey to the UK the following day. I was sad to be leaving. With cable cars, PCC streetcars painted in liveries of various USA cities, the Metro and trolleybuses, there is much there for transport enthusiasts to enjoy.





Page 89, upper: Flyer 5300 & ex-Milan Peter Witt car 1815 are seen at the Ferry Plaza on 24 September 2023.

Page 89, lower: Later the same day 5300 has run in after service and is seen during the procedure at Presidio described in the text.

Above: San Francisco PCC car 1010 passing trolleybus 776 in Ferry Plaza on 23 September 2023.

Below: Behind 776 is PCC 1056, painted in tribute to the Kansas City system. Behind them a New Flyer XT40 rounds the curve in front of the ferry terminal.







Page 91, upper: ETI-Škoda 14 TrSF 5538 at the Ferry Plaza.

Page 91, lower: No. 5538 passing Neoplan USA AN440 motor bus No.8350, which dates from 2002, in Ferry Plaza.

Left: No. 776 heads for Presidio after service on the 24th.

Below: Marmon-Herrington 776 waits while the overhead crew work on the defective Spear Street frog.



MUSEUM & PRESERVATION NEWS

Edited by Jody White



The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft Johannesburg 589's New Identity.

One objective of the 589 restoration project is that for five years or so it will be 'illustration of a London SA3', because it was part of the batch of trolleybuses built postwar to replace the vehicles which could not be exported in wartime and became the London Transport SA3 class.



The latest edition of Sandtoft Scene reveals that No. 589 will become London Transport 1764. Project team member John Shearman explained that the decision was based on the fact that 1764 was used for the official London Passenger Transport Board (LPTB) photographs when brand new at Fulwell, making it the most straightforward to copy, and the accuracy of that styling cannot be challenged whatever changes 1764 might subsequently have had during its working life. By 1945, when its wartime features were removed, 1764 would not have been



589's new doors
[DGChick]

modified or rebuilt because it was only two years old. Adopting the 1943 appearance from the official photos means that it won't also have to include masked headlights, etc.

1764, new in June 1943, is also the closest built of the 18 SA3s to the 45 replacements built for Johannesburg soon after the War's end (Johannesburg 564 -

608). So, London Transport no.1764 it will become, representing the immediate postwar period.

Recent Progress on 589

The top deck interior restoration has been just about completed and it looks superb. Work is now being concentrated on the lower deck. Once this has been completed and the seat frames have been powder-coated the seats will be refitted to both decks.

The body restoration is expected to be completed in the next few months and then the vehicle will be going elsewhere to be painted in its temporary guise as London Transport 1764. The trolley gear and HV equipment also has to be fitted, wired and tested and six new tyres fitted.

At the present rate of progress, and as long as sufficient donations continue to be received, it is likely that in 2025 it will be possible to see and ride on a "London Transport SA class" trolleybus for the first time since they were all withdrawn and scrapped in 1959.

Sandtoft's Next Events

- Saturday 25 – Monday 27 May Bank Holiday Open Days
- Tuesday 28 – Friday 31 May Open all week
- Saturday 15 – Sunday 16 June Father's Day Weekend, featuring a display of vintage cars (Sunday only)

Cardiff & South Wales Trolleybus Project February/March 2024

Photographs by Keith Walker. This period's news has a number of tasks worked on - mostly our decker Cardiff 262. However, as we approached the end of March, the "Doodlebug" 243 also received some attention. Work with 262 has continued on jobs overlapping from previous months. John Webb has his monumental task of fitting all the internal hardwood window trim moving between both decks.

During an examination and test of both vehicles' resistor banks, we noticed that on 262 the small securing clamps on the front axle leaf springs were damaged.



Leaf-spring clamp

Fortunately, the offside clamp was salvaged, while the nearside was broken in two and distorted badly. While an enquiry at an established spring manufacturer in the Midlands was negative, it was decided to proceed with making one. The head scratching problem, that these clamps are rivetted in place, was resolved by carefully grinding the old rivet head away - and once fitted, the remainder of the rivet splayed over.

Throughout this period, 262 has seen the



The completed front offside upper deck hardwood window surrounds on Cardiff 262.



The offside of Cardiff 262 showing the longitudinal rainwater deflector strips above the windows of both decks.

completion of the longitudinal rainwater deflectors (4) above both nearside and offside windows on both decks, while all the beading on the rear was completed

prior to this report. Just before Christmas an examination of both vehicles' tyre conditions was carried out; and although they are off the floor on blocks, there are a number beyond their sell by date. In a recent tyre change, the motorbus group donated tyres suited to our needs; and currently, we are removing wheels and about to contact a tyre fitter to proceed with tyre changes.

In closing, we extend an invite to members of trolleybus groups who are local to Barry Bus Museum or are visiting the area, to call in and see our restoration work (the only trolleybus restoration group in Wales) on a Tuesday or Saturday. You will be very welcome.

Keith Walker

2024 COMING EVENTS!

Long Shop Museum

Main Street, Leiston, Suffolk UK IP16 4ES
Sunday 2 June 40th Anniversary Celebration!

- Friday 21 June Suffolk Day
- Sunday 21 July Steampunk Sunday
- Sunday 15 September Motorcycle Day
- Sunday 13 October Model Engineering Show
- Sunday 3 November Final Fling

East Anglia Transport Museum

Chapel Road, Carlton Colville, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 8BL

- 11 to 12 May
1960s Weekend 2024
Time: 11am - 5pm both days
- 13 to 14 July
British Bus Fleets, East Anglia
Time: 11am - 5pm both days
- 11 August
999 Event 2024
Time: 11am - 4:30pm

This is one of our most exciting events where we will be bringing examples of current serving and ex emergency services as well as other agencies that work closely with emergency services, all coming together at the museum, with displays and demonstrations throughout the day.

- 28 to 29 September
Trolleybus Weekend 2024
Time: 12pm - 9pm Saturday,
11am - 5pm Sunday
- 26 October Halloween Event 2024
Time: 3pm - 8pm
- Weekends of 7 & 8, 14 & 15, 22 & 23 December
Ride the Lights 2024
Time: 3pm - 7pm

Ipswich Transport Museum

The Old Trolleybus Depot, Cobham Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 9JD

- Sunday 5 May
52nd Ipswich to Felixstowe Historic Vehicle Run. The premier road run in

East Anglia! Over 500 vehicles gather in Christchurch Park and depart at 11.00 for display on Felixstowe Promenade from noon. A magnificent spectacle - free to visit and watch at either end or en-route!

- Saturday 15 June
Ipswich Transport & Model Festival
10am - 4pm

Four great attractions on one inclusive ticket - the Transport Museum, Ipswich Plastic Modellers (IPMS), The Ipswich Railway Modellers Association HQ & the Ipswich Model Engineering Society. A free bus service links the sites and the Ipswich Model Railway Centre using historic vehicles. Inclusive 'all attractions' Adult ticket £15.00, accompanied children £1. Normal admission if entering museum only.

- Monday 26 August 11am-4pm
ADX63B 60th Birthday A bus themed

event to celebrate the 60th anniversary of our Ipswich Corporation AEC Regent V bus No. 63. With supporting cast of Museum and visiting buses.

- Saturday 5 October 11am-4pm
Classic Vehicles Day
An informal gathering of museum and visiting vehicles, celebrating classic cars and light commercials. Includes free bus tour of the local area.
- Sunday 8 December 11am-4pm
The Christmas Cracker A festive family themed event. Decorations, lights and entertainment in the Museum help get you in the Christmas mood. Ride on historic Museum vehicles then meet Santa in his grotto. (Entry to the grotto is £2 extra, which includes a gift.



On Easter Sunday and Monday a hugely successful 1940s event was held at Sandtoft. There were large numbers of visitors and many activities across the site. Here a couple of sheep are being taken for a stroll past a Morris side dancing in front of Cleethorpes 54 and Doncaster 94, which has an ex-trolleybus body.

It has already been announced that a three-day 1940s event will be held next Easter.

[DGChick]

John Shearman

John Shearman, who had been a member of this Society for around 60 years, passed away on 19 March. Although he had very wide interests in transport, also taking in commercial vehicles and classic cars, John made a lasting contribution to the trolleybus movement, having been one of the prime movers in the project to bring Wellington 82 to the UK and also Johannesburg 589.

John was diagnosed with cancer towards the end of last year. In December he visited Ian Barrett's premises to see the progress on 589. What he didn't know until he

arrived was that Ian and his team had prioritised work on a vintage Leyland lorry owned by John and he was taken for a lengthy road run in it. That unexpected treat and the significant progress that had been made on 589 led John to declare that it was the best day that he had had for years!

It is very sad that John will not see 589 when it is "illustrative of a London SA3" (in John's words), but he made sure that the SA3 identity was decided, as we report in this month's Museum & Preservation News. DGC

Industry: Manufacturer Developments

Van Hool

The Belgian bus and trolleybus manufacturer Van Hool recently became insolvent following disagreements between the major company shareholders as the business tried to recover from the cost of the pandemic. The company was still owned by the Van Hool family but there had been inheritance disputes.

It was reported on 11 April that the Belgian receiver had accepted an offer for the business from the Dutch VDL Group, an international industrial family business with its head office in Brainport Eindhoven. Founded in 1953, the Group has some 15,000 employees and operates in 19 countries.

It was also reported that VDL was particularly interested in Van Hool's coach-building business and especially the North Macedonia factory which has continued to produce vehicles.

One press report stated that the production of Van Hool city and intercity buses (and thus trolleybuses) is likely to end. Crisis manager Marc Zwaaneveld confirmed that existing contracts were also at risk. Specifically, he commented on the Paris "tram buses", battery-electric versions of the double-articulated Exqui.City 24, which he said, "... just cost too much to produce. As with other city buses, I don't think we're making enough money from them, so it's better to stop production. It is up to the acquirer to decide whether to adopt this strategy."

Exqui.City 18 trolleybuses operated in a number of cities and Linz, Austria, has a fleet of Exqui.City 24 trolleybuses.

VDL CEO Willem van der Leegte is reported to have said that he expects to achieve economies of scale from the acquisition of selected Van Hool assets. However, VDL is losing significantly to its Chinese competitors in the domestic market.

Yutong

The Chinese company Yutong is trying to establish itself in the European Union market with its trolleybuses for the first time. The world leader in the sale of electric

buses (it has about a 10% share of the global market) has delivered 428 trolleybuses to Mexico City since 2019. The company has been producing battery-electric buses for the European market and is active in the expert group dedicated to trolleybuses in the International Public Transport Association (UITP).

Yutong is a relative newcomer to trolleybus production, with its first trolleybuses being delivered to the Chinese city of Guangzhou in 2010. In 2014 a 2.5 km test track was built in the company's production plant. In 2017, 68 trolleybuses were built for Shanghai.

The huge capacity of its production plant, the series production and the affinity with the electric bus concept also give Yutong a competitive advantage in terms of vehicle delivery time. The company is able to deliver its vehicles within 6 months of a contract being signed (although this does not include the time needed for homologation). Yutong produces over 30,000 vehicles annually, of which about a third are electric. The maximum daily production of electric buses/trolleybuses is 375 vehicles.

The company decided to enter the market to supply trolleybuses for the EU as part of a huge tender for the supply of up to 160 vehicles for Budapest. Yutong is represented by local partner, Ikarus.

The first part of the selection procedure, which is to be multi-round process, is currently being evaluated. On 25 March, only applications for participation and qualification documents were submitted. In addition to Ikarus and Yutong, three other companies intend to bid for the Budapest contract: Škoda Electric (with SOR Libchavy), Solaris Bus & Coach and Turkish manufacturer Bozankaya.

Sunwin

Although it has not so far resulted in any orders being placed, a trolleybus from the Chinese manufacturer Sunwin was tested in Mexico City in the winter of 2022/23 and it is currently in passenger test operation in Guadalajara.



Above: The only Van Hool Exqui.City 24 trolleybuses are the 20 produced for Linz. The first to enter service was No. 222, seen on its first day in service, 28 November 2017. The city is planning to increase its trolleybus fleet.
[D G Chick]

Below: An artist's impression supplied in connection with the Yutong/Ikarus expression of interest in bidding for the supply of up to 160 new trolleybuses for the expansion of services in Budapest.
[Yutong]



World News

Edited by Bruce Lake



ARGENTINA Rosario

The programme of converting used diesel buses into trolleybuses is progressing. No. 36 has been in regular service since the beginning of January and more are being converted, at the rate of about one every two months.

Line Q had temporarily been converted to diesel bus operation but with the overhaul of the TROLZA trolleybuses and their return to service trolleybus operation has resumed.

Ten of the original twenty Volvo/Marcopolo/Powertronics trolleybuses are still operational. Some of them have been repainted in the current blue livery in recent months.

The 30th anniversary of the return of trolleybus service in Rosario on 24 January 1994 was commemorated using historic trolleybus 39.

CZECH REPUBLIC Pardubice

A contract has been awarded to SAGASTA s.r.o. for the design of the technical solution of the construction of the extension of the trolleybus line to the Medical School. The construction is to be an approximately 850m long double line running along the southern branch of Průmyslová Street along the overpass over the railway siding to the loop. The connection to the existing line will be made by inserting

switches in the area of the roundabout.

ITALY Avellino

Trolleybus service had not resumed by the end of April. For the continued use of the trolleybus route, on 14 March the mayor concluded an agreement with representatives of the neighbouring municipalities of Atripalda and Mercogliano, which provides for a line from Atripalda and Mercogliano. In the urban area, the existing overhead line is to be used for charging and the 3.5 km and 2.5 km sections of the route are to be driven on using batteries. This will replace the current bus lines 1 and 4, which currently serve the two neighbouring municipalities every 20 minutes.

ITALY Bologna

As part of a move towards a completely electrified public transport system the first line of a planned four-route tramway is due to open in 2026.

Although part of this line will replace an existing trolleybus service, a new project, as part of the public transport expansion programme Progetto integrato della mobilità bolognese (PIMBO), envisages the electrification of some of the existing bus routes. These include the current lines 11, 19W, 25 and the south-east branch of line 27. Seventy articulated battery trolleybuses with IMC will be

used, which will be put out to tender this year.

ITALY San Remo

By early April the overhead had been dismantled from the depot to Taggia, including the easternmost section of the urban route U.

LITHUANIA Vilnius

Road testing of the first Škoda 32 Tr commenced in Plzeň on 22 March. A total of 91 is to be delivered.

MEXICO Guadalajara

The two-axle trolleybus from the Chinese manufacturer Sunwin, which had previously been tested in México City, has been in regular service since November 2023 on the city's only trolleybus line (3) and has been painted blue to match the colours of the STE in the capital.

The construction of a BRT trolleybus line is being considered, based on the model of line 10 "Trolebús Elevado" in the southeast of the Mexican capital, which has been successfully and cost-effectively installed. However, the route has not yet been defined.

MEXICO Mexico City

In addition to the 84 new trolleybuses which are to be procured by private concessionaires, STE also intends to procure a further 30 two-axle vehicles, and it is expected that the number of Yutong two-axle vehicles will be increased.

NETHERLANDS Arnhem

It was expected that delivery of the batch of ten Solaris Metrostyle trolleybuses would be completed by the end of March.

Training trips for use on line 352 to Wageningen are in full swing. The conversion of the line is scheduled for 12 May, when the operation of line 352 will be included in the roster of Breng/Transdev trolleybus drivers. The overhead line from Arnhem to Oosterbeek has already been extended by around 1 km.

RUSSIA Bryansk

On 5 March, 23 newly-delivered trolleybuses (Nos.1600-1622) were officially put into passenger service. It is the 100% low-floor model PKTS-6281.00 "Admiral" from the Russian manufacturer LLC PC Transportation Systems, which is 12.38m long with 30 seats and up to 66 standing places. Bryansk already has this model in its fleet. The trolleybuses have a low autonomy in battery mode of less than 1 km.

RUSSIA Chita

In the spring of 2023, 10 battery-equipped Avangards were delivered, bringing the total of the type in service to 55, leading to the withdrawal or decommissioning of all 30 ex-Moscow Megapolis, 25 of which had been in service for less than two years after arriving in October 2020, the other five having only been used as a source of spare parts.

RUSSIA St Petersburg

Last year the 2021 order for 166 new rigid vehicles was completed with the delivery of

108 new Avangards. Also delivered were 52 of the 97 battery-equipped Olgerds ordered in 2021. Another 79 Avangards and 30 more Olgerds from Trans-Alfa are on order.

RUSSIA Vladivostok

After many years with no new purchases, 16 new rigid battery trolleybuses are to be supplied by Trans-Alfa. The operator specified that the warranty on the vehicle was to be two years or 150,000 km, the warranty on the battery life of at least 8 years, the warranty on the corrosion-free body of at least 10 years, and the range of the vehicle on batteries to be at least 40 km.

SLOVAKIA Žilina

Bratislava Solaris Trollino 24 No. 6903 was tested here in March. The Slovak Ministry of Transport had requested that tests of the vehicle be carried out under the 750V DC system.

No. 6903 was transported to Žilina on 20 March and after a technical and safety test at the depot it set off without passengers and drove through the entire network with the exception of a short section to OC Dubeň where parked cars sometimes cause difficulties for the 18 m trolleybuses.

On 21 and 22 March the vehicle operated with passengers on lines 4 and 14 without charging fares. On Thursday 21 March it was in operation from 04.49 to 21.02 (last departure) and on 22 March from 04.49 until 12.57 (again the last departure), when it returned to the depot ready to return to Bratislava. While in Žilina it travelled 260

km with passengers against a Slovak Ministry of Transport requirement of 260km. Drivers from Bratislava DP trained the drivers from Žilina. The trolleybus also made a large crowd of transport fans and ordinary passengers happy. On one Thursday morning connection from the centre to the local university during rush hour, even the increased transport capacity was not sufficient to meet the increased demand, to which DPMŽ had to respond by deploying an operational backup.

It turned out that the frequency of the radio used by the Bratislava DP has a clear range all the way to Žilina, a distance of 169 km (105 miles), so announcements from the Bratislava traffic control centre could be heard in the driver's cab!

SPAIN Castellón de la Plana

New battery-electric buses are to be purchased to replace the diesel buses that supplement the trolleybuses on this line. The operator contract expires in 2028 and the city intends to abandon trolleybus operation and fully switch to battery electric buses by that time.

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Rear Cover: Marrakech Trolleybus 09 in service on Av. Hassan II, upper, and 01 parked out of service with the police station in the background, and lower, on the same avenue. [Marian Henbest]



Marrakech

Morocco, has a trolleybus line which operates as a bus rapid transit system (BRT, but known as Bus à Haut Niveau de Service de Marrakech). Since it opened on 29 September 2017 it has had a troubled history, as reported in this magazine by Gunter Mackinger. The 12m Chinese-built Dongfeng Yangtse trolleybuses had been expected to be joined by a batch of articulated trolleybuses in 2019 but this appears not to have happened.

When visiting on 11 March, Marian Henbest and Stephane Koguc spent about two hours close to Av. Hassan II but only saw two trolleybuses. No. 01 was parked in the bus lane by a Police station and didn't move. No. 09 passed by in service in battery mode with passengers on its way to the city centre terminus at Bab Doukkal from Massira. The overhead wiring was some distance away and they did not visit that section of the route.

