

TROLLEYBUS

Vol. 65 No. 780

July 2026



The Magazine of the British Trolleybus Society



*BTS Weekend
České Budějovice
Jihlava 55
RTS Bradford Tour*

TROLLEYBUS

The magazine of the
British Trolleybus Society

No. 780. July 2026

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Printed by Barden Print, Birkby
Huddersfield. Tel: 01484 422522

*Trolleybus should be regarded as
overdue to subscribers if not
received by the 20th of each
month.*

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BTS NOTICE BOARD

Reading Meetings

Held at the Reading District Oddfellows' Hall, 118b Oxford Road, Reading RG1 7NQ. Admission: There is no charge. However, a suggested donation of £3 for BTS/NTA members or £4 for non-members would be appreciated to help cover the cost of hall hire and refreshments. Meetings commence at 19.30. Organised by the BTS. NTA members are welcome.

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

August

- No meeting

Friday 4 September

- David Jukes, of 'Bus & Coach Preservation' fame, talks about his interest in all sorts of buses, trolleybuses and trams...

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. All meetings commence at 14.30.

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

Wednesday 15 July

- Carl Isgar - "My Early Gricing Years - 1965 - 1972"

August and September

- No meeting

West Midlands Transport Circle

BTS members are invited to attend WMTC meetings on the second Wednesday of each month (not August) at Bradmore Community Centre, Wolverhampton. Start 19.30, finish 21.45. At half-time we have a break with tea/coffee/biscuits! Visitor entry £3. Full details of upcoming talks are on the website <https://westmidlandstransportcircle.wordpress.com/>

Wednesday 8 July

- Presenter and subject to be advised

August and September

- No meeting

Monthly Prize Draw Winners

April Draw

- £50 Alan Murray (Horsham, West Sussex)
- £40 Neil Preston (Walsall, Staffordshire)
- £30 Brian Greenfield (Woodley, West Berkshire)



Front Cover: During the BTS Weekend at Sandtoft, proud owner Graham Bilbé stands with Reading 193, with Reading 113 alongside.

[DG Chick]

BTS Weekend

Report and photographs by Dave Chick, except where shown

This year's British Trolleybus Society Weekend at the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft was held over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend, on 23 – 25 May.

We had an impressive total of five out of our fourteen historic trolleybuses in operation together with an associated "guest", Reading 193, which is owned by Graham Bilbé.

It was the guest vehicle which provided what for many was the highlight of the three-day event. Reading 193 looks magnificent following its external restoration, complete with authentic original advertisements thanks to research by Dave Hall. On Sunday 24 May, 193 ran in service for the first time since its restoration, although passengers were able to use the lower saloon only, because the interior restoration has not yet been completed and the upper deck was not available for use.

Operating alongside 193 was Reading 113, the vehicle which started the trolleybus preservation movement, setting in motion a chain of events which led to the establishment of the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft.

This pairing was something which was never seen on the streets of Reading. No. 113 was the last of Reading's pre-war AEC trolleybuses to be withdrawn, on 14

September 1961, while 193 was the last of the batch of 12 new Burlingham-bodied Sunbeam F4As to enter service, two days later on 16 September 1961. 113 also looked splendid and the pair of vehicles operating together was a wonderful sight.

Providing another same-fleet pairing, our two Huddersfield trolleybuses, BUT 619 and Sunbeam 631, were also in service. These vehicles provide an important link with another part of the Society's history, with 631 coming to the BTS following our merger with the West Yorkshire Transport Circle more than thirty years ago and 619 entering our fleet four years ago as an indirect result of that merger.

These two trolleybuses help to keep alive the memory of a popular and important trolleybus system as well as retaining a link with two greatly-missed Society officers who came to us through WYTC, Philip Jenkinson and Bruce Lake. A third three-axle trolleybus in service was London Transport Q1 1812 and, providing a contrasting colour, South Shields 204, at 89 years old currently the oldest operational trolleybus at Sandtoft, narrowly beating Cleethorpes 54.

Our thanks to everyone who volunteered to help make this another memorable BTS event.

Captions:

Page 128 and page 129, upper: Reading 193 stands at the trolleybus terminus ready for its first service run since restoration. 113 lines up behind to create a scene that didn't happen in Reading, for reasons explained in the article.

Page 129, lower: 113 on the stand, with 193 following.

Page 130, upper, South Shields 204 turns in Sandtoft Square. 204 will remain in service at Sandtoft while the Society plans necessary restoration work.

[Dave Hall]

Page 130, lower: Manchester 1344 and Bournemouth 301 were not in service but were on display outside the David Croft Depot.

[Dave Hall]

Page 131, upper: Reading 113 in service. On the left, Huddersfields 631 and 619 together with South Shields 204 are available to be put into service. Lincolnshire RoadCar Volvo bus 907 is about to depart on the free Isle of Axholme tour and London Transport 1812 can just be seen at the rear.

Page 131, lower: On Bank Holiday Monday, 25 May, Huddersfields 619 and 631 are followed by London 1812 as they queue for their morning leak tests. On the right is an installation by the Museum's Artist in Residence, Julie Oxenforth, created using unwanted West Yorkshire PTE bus fronts.









České Budějovice

All photographs taken on 25 April 2026 by Gunter Mackinger

Trolleybuses operated here from 1909 – 1914 using the Mercédès-Électrique Stoll system. A second system opened in 1948 but only lasted until 1971. The latest installation has lasted longer than either and celebrated 35 years of operation on 2 May.

The fleet has grown considerably and now comprises 20 Škoda 25 Trs built 2005 – 2012, 17 Škoda 27 Trs dating from 2013 – 2018 and 35 Škoda 33 Trs which were delivered last year. Six routes are operated and there are two night-services.

↓ Trolleybus 438 on line 9 at Sidl. Vltava.

Page 133, left: No. 412 on interurban line 2 from Borek seen at Nemanice.

Page 133, right: The České Vrbné terminus trolleybus is the setting for this view of No. 433 on line 9. This is also the terminus of line 15 which is operated exclusively by battery-equipped trolleybuses.





Crowdfunder Launched to Restore Jihlava 55

A campaign has been launched to complete the restoration of the last original Škoda 21 Tr trolleybus from Jihlava, nicknamed "Karkulka" ("Little Red Riding Hood"), because it ran in an all-red livery after the removal of adverts. After withdrawal it was sold to Brno, where it operated as No. 3061. The vehicle is in significantly worse condition than originally thought. So far the restoration has cost around

£18,000 and another £9,000 is needed for welding and repairing corroded areas of the body, repairing the interior and restoring it to its original Jihlava condition, the purchase of new tyres and final painting. Owner Petr Přihoda has set up a crowdfunding campaign to fund the work.

<https://donio.cz/pomozte-dopsat-pribeh-karkulky>

➡ *Jihlava 55 being loaded on a road trailer for transport to Brno in 2016.*

[Petr Přihoda]



60 Years Ago: RTS Tour of Bradford on 758

Story by Tony Belton with photographs by Francis Whitehead

The Reading Transport Society organised a tour of Bradford using 758 on Sunday 10 July 1966.

Bradford 758, a BUT 9611T with Weymann body, entered service on 1 January 1951 and was amongst the last four completely new trolleybuses delivered to Bradford, all further purchases being second-hand. Experimental flashing direction indicators were fitted to the vehicle in May 1952, the first such application to a UK vehicle. The vehicle was withdrawn on 31 March 1964 but reinstated in service on 1 December 1965.

Mike Dare and I arranged the trip between us as we were going to use my Dennis Lancet coach KJH 900 to transport the enthusiasts. The vehicle

normally towed trolleybuses to and from different locations. I made sure that KJH 900 was parked at Smith's of Reading for the previous evening so that Mike could pick up the Reading members early the following morning. It was arranged that he would then pick up the London members on the A4 at Hanger Lane in London; Mike and I took it in turns to drive 900 to Bradford. We parked at Thornbury depot for the day whilst the tour took place. Following a very successful day in Bradford we made our way back to Reading via London. It was a very long journey and both Mike and I were totally wrecked by the end of the day. Thank goodness we can remember the highlights of the tour thanks to the camera of Francis Whitehead.

↓ *Bradford trolleybus 758 carefully negotiates the overhead at a very quiet Bolton Junction. The tour vehicle is continuing straight across on Idle Road using a non-revenue link permitting trolleybuses from Saltaire and Greengates to access Thornbury Depot. The following trolleybus is inbound and will turn right into Bolton Road and descend to the city centre.*





↑ 758 has stopped at Shipley in Bridge Street. Participants have been given the opportunity to photograph the trolleybus negotiating Windhill railway bridge some hundred yards in front of the trolleybus.

↓ 758 has moved forward quicker than expected and caught me off my guard as I didn't have time to get my video camera ready for action. The photograph is at Shipley passing under Windhill railway bridge. The trolleybus has approached via Bridge Street and is emerging into Briggate.





↑ This rear view of Bradford 758 is at an unknown location! Can anybody assist please?

↓ Trolleybus 758 is turning at Tong Cemetery, terminus of route 18. The turning circle was at the wide junction where Tong Street split into Westgate Hill Street and Bradford Road. Tramcars had continued along both roads, the former leading to Drighlington and the latter to Birkenshaw



MUSEUM & PRESERVATION NEWS

Edited by Dave Hall



The The Long Shop Museum, Leiston

Ipswich 26 This Garrett Type 'O' with Strachan & Brown 30 seat dual



Ipswich 26's restoration was nearing completion at the Long Shop Museum when this photo was taken on 15 April 2026.

[Dave Carson]

entrance bodywork which entered service back in 1926 has been the subject of a major restoration project since its arrival at The Long Shop in July 2021. The restoration is now complete and to mark 26's centenary, **the Museum will be hosting a Trolleybus Centenary celebration between 10.00 and 15.00 on Saturday/ Sunday 11/12 July 2026.** Apart from being able to see the magnificent

restoration job conducted on 26, there will be visiting vintage and veteran vehicles, mechanical music, food vendors and more. It will be well worth a visit.



Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft Derby 172



Keith Hopkinson is busy stripping the external paintwork on Derby 172 in the Sandtoft depot workshop. *[DG Chick]*

Work is progressing on stripping the external paintwork and undertaking body repairs prior to it being repainted in the not-too-distant future.

Reading 193

Although the upper deck repaint is nearly complete, the opportunity was taken to re-launch 193 back into service at the BTS weekend event at Sandtoft over the Spring bank holiday. Passengers were limited to using just the lower deck. It looked magnificent following its external repaint and the addition of its original adverts that were applied before entering service in Reading in 1961. A report on the BTS weekend giving further details is included in this edition of Trolleybus.

July Open Days

- Saturday 11 July Atkinson Lorries Preview Day
- Sunday 12 July Atkinson Lorries Day Featuring a display of classic lorries
- Saturday 25 July Sandtoft Gathering '26 Preview Day
- Sunday 26 July Sandtoft Gathering '26 Display of vintage buses and cars. Entertainment, beer tent and more!



The model of Cardiff 243 poses alongside the real thing. A model of a Swansea & Mumbles tram was also displayed.

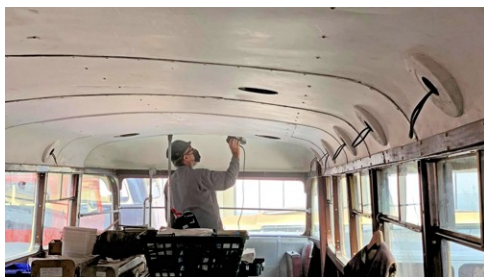
[Keith Walker]

[Open Days – The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft](#)

The Cardiff & South Wales Trolleybus Project

Cardiff 243 & 262

Regular readers will know that we keep you updated with news on the restoration of Cardiff trolleybuses 243 and 262 which are being restored at Barry by the Project team. One visitor that appeared on Saturday 30 May was a model of 243, which is normally located at Wythall Museum. However, as James Knight, a Wythall member, was on holiday in South Wales, the opportunity was taken to call in at Barry and photograph the two together.



Cardiff 262's roof panels being prepared for repaint.
[Keith Walker]

Recent work on 243 has seen body filler applied to the side roof panels prior to smoothing it back down. The platform doors have now been fitted.

Meanwhile 262's interior roof panels have been prepared for receiving Craftmaster white undercoat and gloss. 243 will receive the same treatment shortly.



Keighley Bus Museum

Some good news is that the Museum has finally re-opened, having been closed since the fire at an adjacent building from which embers spread to the roof of the museum. A prohibition order was applied for the fire exits/ marking out and emergency lighting etc to be improved. During the closure, the roof has been patched over and the blocked guttering sorted out.

Following a successful meeting held on 31 May at the Riverside Museum between the Directors and other members with Inspectors, the prohibition order has been lifted and members are allowed into the building, but with one or two limitations. No major repairs are to be carried out except in the workshop area, and all members/volunteers entering the

building are required to wear hi-visibility vests and to inform a Director.

Public visits are back to a "drop-in" category (preferably on a weekend 10am to 3pm), with all areas clearly marked. Volunteers will be on duty on these days and all are asked to sign the visitors' book on entering and leaving the building.

After a Board/Events Committee meeting on 20 June a date has been announced for the first open day of 2026. Aptly named the "Phoenix Event", it will take place at Riverside on Sunday 23 August, opening 10am until 4pm. Admission will be free, but donations will be gratefully accepted to help replenish KBMT's reduced coffers.



Keighley Bus Museum Trust



A line-up inside Keighley Bus Museum which includes Keighley 5, the Brush-bodied Straker-Squire trolleybus dating from 1924.

[Andy Haley]

World News

Edited by Colin Page



Numbers in parentheses indicate the previous edition of Trolleybus containing news of that operator

INDUSTRY

The World's Largest Trolleybus System

The latest consideration is that the largest trolleybus system in the world in 2026, both in terms of fleet size and route length, must be that operating in St Petersburg, Russia with over 800 in use. See report below. Next would be Minsk, Belarus, with 660 (and likely to exceed 700 at the year-end), followed by Mexico City with about 550 trolleybuses in service (see Trolleybus 779).

Beijing, China remains in contention and while it may be possible to calculate that there were over a thousand in 2024 various unverified reports since then indicate the numbers have been declining to the point where there could be fewer than 500, especially as no additions to the fleet have been noted since 2016.

ARMENIA Yerevan (768, 779)

The last fifteen of the 2025 order for forty-five new Yutong ZK6128BEVG trolleybuses were officially unveiled to the public on 16 May, with the expectation to enter service at the end of that month. The first thirty were delivered from the beginning of the year and all join fifteen similar trolleybuses which were delivered in 2022. Together with fifteen Zhongtong LCK6162E artics delivered in 2024 this delivery will enable all earlier

trolleybuses of other types to be withdrawn and provide a fleet of 75 low floor and air-conditioned vehicles with IMC capability.

At the beginning of June, a renumbering of the fleet has been initiated which will be completed when the last Yutongs arrive. The route network is also being renumbered from the same time, with some changes to actual routes being made which include new off-wire termini being introduced.

The issue of a new tender for 26 trolleybuses to expand the services and network is imminent.

BELARUS Minsk (765)

It is expected that 129 new trolleybuses will be delivered this year. The first 33 are BKM type 43300D artics which will be delivered between July and October and will join a similar 50 already in service.

Of the other 96 expected, part of the number will be supplied by MAZ. 134 MAZ type 303T20 2-axle trolleybuses fitted with batteries and IMC for off-wire operation were purchased between 2024 and 2025. Together they will replace most of the BKM 333 trolleybuses of which fewer than 100 remain in service in mid-2026.

CANADA Vancouver (777)

The prototype articulated Solaris Trollino 18 trolleybus arrived in Gdynia on 17 May 2026 (prior to being shipped to Vancouver) for a test programme like that of the Trollino 12, which left the Polish city on 23 March. The bus is

fitted with two motors. MEDCOM supplies the electrical equipment.

Significant differences between these two types of Trollino and their European counterparts include rear lighting cluster arrangements and the customary bumper features required for buses operating in North America. The electrically operated wheelchair ramp is located by the front door.

FRANCE, Limoges (779)

In May, Le Réseau des Transport en Commun de Limoges Métropole announced the "l'Horizon du Projet Mooveo" which intends to provide a comprehensive change to the whole transport network. The pivotal focus will be the introduction of two new BRT style, high quality express lines by 2030, entitled BHNS ("Bus à Haut Niveau de Service") running north to south (line A) and east to west (line B) across the city and joining important places away from the centre which are presently not well connected.

Electricity will be the chosen power source for the services using battery electric buses as the main type of vehicle across the entire network but also including major use of the existing trolleybus system. Lines A & B will be operated entirely by new battery-electric buses, with high frequencies throughout the week and co-ordinated transfer facilities at new hubs (referred to as PEMs).

The existing trolleybus network consists of five routes.

- 1 Route de Lyon – Porte de Louyat.
- 2 Pierre Curie – La Bastide
- 4 Montjovis – Pôle Saint-Lazare
- 5 Jean Gagnant – Les Courrières/La Cornue
- 6 La Bastide 2 – Maréchal Juin

Each runs as a cross-city service to the ten termini in the suburbs. Of

specific interest regarding them is that the two BHNS routes will subsume two sections of this existing trolleybus network. The north half of route 2 (to La Bastide) will be taken over by line A and the east half of route 1 (to Route de Lyon) will be taken over by Line B. The eight remaining "half" routes will be rearranged to provide four trolleybus cross-city routes using the existing wiring to the present termini and with off-wire running to various new extensions. They are to be renumbered T1 to T4. Service frequencies will be increased with greater interchange opportunities.

- T1 Porte de Louyat (route 1 in 2026) to La Cornue (route 5 in 2026)
- T2 PEM Bastide (route 6 in 2026) to University Hospital (route 2 in 2026) to P Corie)
- T3 PEM Casseaux (route 6 to Maréchal Juin in 2026) to Val de l'Aurence (route 5 to Mal Juin in 2026)
- T4 PEM Beaublanc (route 4 to Mont Jovis in 2026) to PEM St. Lazare (route 4 to Pôle Saint-Lazare in 2026) This is the existing route 4 with extensions.

The "(route x in 2026)" is the WN editorial assessment of which part of the existing trolleybus network will be used:

All the retained trolleybus infrastructure will be upgraded including modernised depot facilities, renewal of most of the substations and replacement of much of the overhead which is life expired. It is expected that various lengths in the centre will be dismantled and covered by trolleybuses running in off-wire mode.

The plan refers to the number of new electric buses that would be required together with reference to 40 battery operated trolleybuses with in-

motion-charging to provide enhanced services. The present fleet comprises 101-127 Irisbus Cristalis ETB12 built between 2006 and 2011, 901-904 Hess/Vossloh Kiepe "Swisstrolley" artics built 2013 and 911-917 Iveco Skoda Crealis/Skoda, artics built between 2019 and 2022.

RUSSIA St Petersburg (754)

Numerical indications are that in 2026 St Petersburg has the largest fleet of trolleybuses in the world. Putting aside much older trolleybuses (now considered to be in the 'service' fleet), the Megapolises from 2013 are the oldest. Between 2020 and 2025 542 deliveries were registered. They start with 20 type BKM 433030 "Vitovt Max II", then 97 type BKM 32100D "Olgerd", 87 type PKTS 6281.00 "Admiral", 216 (three lots - 166/30/ 20) type VMZ-5298.01 "Avangard", 23 articulated trolleybuses of type VMZ-6215.01 "Premier", 79 type BKM 321 "Olgerd" and ending in 2025 with 20 of type Sinara 6254.00. Added together this gives a total of around 750.

At the beginning of 2026, a tender was issued for 86 new trolleybuses to be delivered by the end of the year, which would bring the total of operational trolleybuses to over 800. Between 2023 and 2024 Gorelektrotrans, the local operator expanded the number of lines with off-wire running using battery-powered trolleybuses from 9 to 15 and together with basic trolleybus routes now has 48 active lines.

SWITZERLAND Lausanne (747)

In August, route 9, running from Lutry Corniche via Temple de Broye to Prilly centre will be extended via Renens to Place Centrale, Crissier. It is the only route which presently uses double artics but the fourteen new double artic HESS lighTram 25 DC trolleybuses

now being delivered (fleet numbers 721 to 734) will be allocated to this service. 727 was running on test in mid-May. Route 7 will be converted to double artic operation at the end of the year when all the new deliveries are in service.

UKRAINE Kyiv (776)

26 May 2026 witnessed the arrival of the first three of the sixteen new 12m trolleybuses now being delivered. They are the first new trolleybuses to arrive in the city for five years. The period from tender to delivery of just five months has raised questions about the legality of the process. They have been manufactured locally by Politechnoservis, (PTS), designated type T12309 and with bodies supplied by the Turkish company AKIA. Completion will be by the end of the year. The range of 1 km from the batteries is already being seen as inadequate for a location with difficult electricity supply problems. One trolleybus will be provided with a new generation body in a style not seen before and would be symbolically the hundredth body supplied by AKIA to Ukraine.

Thank you to Dave Chick, Jordan Gondeau, Československý Dopravák

Page 143, upper: One of Kyiv's new AKIA trolleybuses. [AKIA]

Page 143, lower: St Petersburg 2000, built by Belkommunmash, with Smolny Cathedral as a backdrop. It is thought that St Petersburg now has the largest trolleybus fleet in the world. [BKM]



Rear cover captions - Beijing. Photos by Roy Watts

Beijing appears to have lost its crown as the largest trolleybus fleet in the world. There is a considerable amount of off-wire running, which resulted from the introduction of new trolleybus services with limited or no additional wiring. These photographs were taken in early June and show Foton trolleybuses using wired and battery modes.

