A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TROLLEYBUS

Many of our parents and grandparents will recall the era of the trolleybuses in Great Britain. The first British trolleybuses, or ‘trackless’ as they were often referred to, commenced operation in both Bradford and Leeds in 1911. Like the tramcar, the trolleybus uses electricity (500-600 volts DC). It is a quiet vehicle, as you will notice as you ride on our preserved examples today.

No fewer than 50 towns and cities in Great Britain once operated trolleybuses. The largest of these was London, with nearly 1,850 vehicles and some 250 miles of routes. However, with cheap oil imports, the cost of overhead equipment and the continuing development of the motor bus in the 1950s, the cost of operating trolleybuses became less attractive, so gradually the trolleybus systems were converted to motorbus operation.

Britain’s last trolleybus operated in Bradford on 26 March 1972.

By the 1980s, with oil prices rising and concern over air pollution in town and city centres, the re-introduction of the trolleybus was being given serious consideration. On 1 July 1985, an experimental vehicle based on a Dennis Dominator motorbus was constructed for trials on a specially erected one-mile section of overhead adjacent to Doncaster’s racecourse.

The trolleybus has yet to return to public service in Great Britain, but the next decade could see this happen, with government funding now approved for trolleybuses to commence service in Leeds in 2016.

Dogs
We request that dogs are kept on a lead at all times. Dogs, other than assistance dogs, are not allowed in the Café, Souvenir Shop, Prefab or Lecture Theatre.

Photography
There is no restriction on the taking of photographs or the use of video cameras for private use. Please ask permission before using any such material for publication.

Safety
Because of the quietness of the Trolleybus, we must ask you always to be careful when walking alongside or crossing the Trolleybus circuit. Please keep to the marked walkways and crossing points.

Smoking
In accordance with government legislation, smoking is not permitted in any of the museum’s buildings or vehicles.

WHY NOT JOIN US AT THE TROLLEYBUS MUSEUM

If you would like to become a volunteer or support The Museum by becoming a member, pick up a leaflet from the visitor information point.

Current membership rates are:

- Adult: £17.00
- Juniors/ Family Members: £10.00

Join today and we will refund your admission fee

Welcome to The Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft. As a visitor today you can experience a trip on a selection of trolleybuses or take a journey on one of our vintage motorbuses; wander round our trolleybus collection and discover the various exhibitions and artefacts which extend well beyond the transport theme. Wallow in the nostalgia of our 1950’s/60’s prefab bungalow; explore our gardens; picnic by the children’s play area; indulge yourself in the Souvenir Shop or relax in the café.

A plan of the museum site is presented inside and the following information is for your guidance during your visit here today. The Museum is staffed entirely by volunteers who will be pleased to answer any questions or provide assistance if you have any problems. Don’t hesitate to let us know if any aspect of The Museum or the service we provide is not to your satisfaction. We also like to know if you’ve enjoyed your visit!

We hope you will enjoy your visit and we look forward to you returning again in the future for other events.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MUSEUM

The Museum is located on part of what used to be RAF Sandtoft between 1943 and 1946. The large concrete area was the base for a service hangar. Halifax, Lancaster, and Spitfire aircraft were based at Sandtoft for a training school, although it often saw action as a landing strip for aircraft based at nearby Finningley and Lindholme airfields that were returning disabled from bombing missions. The access roads to the main runway now form part of the quarter mile trolleybus circuit.

The Museum was formed in 1969 with help from members of various transport societies involved in the preservation of trolleybuses. The collection of vehicles has grown considerably, the oldest trolleybus in the collection being a 1927 Garrett from the Mexborough & Swinton system. The newest is the experimental Electroline vehicle built in 1985 for trials on a specially constructed line at Doncaster racecourse.

The first 100-yard section of overhead wiring at The Museum was opened on 12 September 1972, the same year that Britain’s last trolleybuses ran in Bradford. The Museum’s own financial resources are used to develop the facilities on site, whilst the vehicles are predominantly restored and maintained by their respective owners.

Whilst The Museum has been developing, various construction projects have transformed the appearance and improved visitor facilities on the site. Recent developments have provided improved pedestrian and wheelchair access around the site, plus the creation of a display area for our ever-increasing collection of cycles and lawnmowers. Plans to further enhance The Museum by erecting a custom-built exhibition hall are currently being developed.
The Pelham Building
This bungalow was originally located in Pelham Road, Immingham and was one of four such buildings constructed to house managers during the construction of Immingham Docks. It was dismantled during 2004 and is now used to house temporary exhibitions and displays.

Souvenir Shop
The Souvenir Shop is situated in the Axholme Stores and sells books, models, souvenirs, hot & cold drinks and light refreshments.

The Tea Trolley Café
The Café is situated in the Axholme Stores building and serves a selection of hot & cold drinks and snacks.

Sunbeam Bicycle Shop
The Sunbeam Cycle Shop, situated on the far side of the car park, houses an exhibition of bicycles and lawnmowers. Working demonstrations of various aspects of bicycle repair and maintenance can normally be seen here. All trolleybus and motorbus services around the site stop at the Cycle Shop on request.

Disabled Access
Much of the Museum (including toilet facilities) is accessible to persons with disabilities, but there may be wheelchair access problems in some areas and on trolleybus rides. We will assist wherever possible.

The Regal Lecture Theatre
The Regal presents a selection of audiovisual presentations, which will continue throughout the day. An entrance ramp is provided at the rear for wheelchair and disabled access.

Children’s Play Area
Please note that the play equipment in this area is for the use of children under twelve years of age who should be supervised by an adult at all times.

1950s/60’s Prefab
The refurbished Prefab building adjacent to the vehicle depot has been furnished internally in a style typical of the trolleybus era of the 1950/60’s.

Trolleybus Rides
Trolleybuses depart from outside the Regal Theatre at regular intervals. Please pay the conductor your 1d fare (that’s the old penny you received at the entrance!) on your first journey to obtain an all day rider ticket. Visitors must remain seated at all times when riding on Trolleybus or Motorbus services. All Trolleybus and Motorbus rides are free.

Vehicle Depot
You are welcome to look around the vehicle storage depot at your leisure. The gaps between vehicles are somewhat restricted and we therefore ask you to take care. Also, please do not climb on any of the vehicles, or board them without the permission of the owner or a member of the museum staff. Depot access for disabled visitors is limited. A guided tour of the exhibits is normally held on Open Days, see notice board at the Information Point for details.

Isle of Axholme Tour
Free mid afternoon motorbus tours around the Isle of Axholme will depart from outside the Axholme Stores building. These tours operate on a first-come-first-served basis. (See notice board at the Information Point for details).

Information Point / Main Entrance
After paying your admission fee here you will also find details of today’s trolleybus and motorbus services and any available guided tours.

Toilets and Baby Changing Facilities

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