

# LEEDS TRANSPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS SHEET 184

FEBRUARY 2016



## **FORTHCOMING L.T.H.S. MEETINGS & EVENTS**

Meetings at Richmond Hill Community Club, Railway Street, Leeds, LS9 8HB, 1930 for 2000

- Mon. 8 Feb. **Transport Cine Films**  
Malcolm Hindes
- Mon. 14 Mar. **Tramways and LRVs from his travels**  
Mike Waring
- Mon. 4 Apr. **Annual General Meeting**
- Mon. 9 May **Tramways** Ian Dougill
- Mon. 13 June **Yorkshire Railways (Part 2)**  
Paul Abell
- Tue. 19 July **Evening Visit to Heaton Park Tramway, Manchester**
- Sat. 17 Sep. **Society visit to NET, Nottingham**  
Book the date - more details later

## **OTHER LOCAL MEETINGS & COMING EVENTS**

### **February**

- Tue. 16 (LRTA) **Trams in Hannover**  
Richard Buckley

### **March**

- Tue. 1 (MRT) **Middleton Railway – views from the past** David Hebden
- Thu. 3 (NGRS) **Fowler Locomotives** John Pease
- Sat. 5 (NGRS) **Narrow Gauge North**  
Pudsey Civic Hall

- Tue.15 (LRTA) **tba** Charlie Watson or Mel Reuben

### **April**

- Tue. 5 (MRT) tba
- Thu. 7 (NGRS) **Island Railways** Tim Hudson
- Tue. 12 (LRTA) **Tramways of the Ruhr**  
Mike Waring

### **May**

- Tue. 3 (MRT) tba
- Thu. 5 (NGRS) **Threatened Narrow Gauge Railways of India** David Barker
- Tue. 10 (LRTA) **tba** Mel Reuben or Charlie Watson

## **Groups, Meeting Places & Times**

- MRT** Middleton Railway Trust, The Engine House, Moor Road, Hunslet, 1930. No charge, refreshments on sale in the interval.
- LRTA** Light Rail Transit Association, Committee Room No. 5, Civic Hall, 1900. collection £1.
- NGRS** Narrow Gauge Railway Society, Yorkshire Area, The Epicentre, Meanwood Valley Urban Farm, 7.15 for 7.30. Collection £2. Refreshments (and fresh eggs!) on sale.
- tba** Information to be advised

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

As usual, our April meeting is the Society's AGM. The formal notice of the meeting, Minutes of the 2015 AGM and combined Trustees' & Secretary's Report are being distributed to members with this News Sheet. This year, to avoid duplication, we have combined the Secretary's Report with the Trustees' Report, which is, of course, also our official report to the Charities Commission.

Accounts will be available at the meeting, or on request from the Hon. Secretary at the address on the back page (SAE please).

Members' attention is drawn to item 6 on the agenda. The Committee is always seeking to recruit new members, and nominations for election can be made beforehand to the Secretary or at the meeting. The nominee's assent must, of course, be obtained.

Since the documents for the AGM are being sent out with this News Sheet, all members will receive hard copies regardless of usual arrangements. However, as always we appeal for anybody prepared to receive the News Sheet in electronic form (pdf) to email Malcolm at [malcolm.hindes@btinternet.com](mailto:malcolm.hindes@btinternet.com). Not only will you receive your News Sheet sooner, you will save the Society at least £3 a year in printing and postage costs, money which can then be devoted to Society projects.

## **SOCIETY OUTINGS**

### **Jamie Guest**

For a variety of reasons the outing to the expanded Nottingham system that was planned for last year did not take place due to a clash of dates with one organised by the LRTA nationally. However we are planning to go ahead this year.

Two outings are being planned:

**Heaton Park** This will be on the evening of Tuesday 19th July, shared with the Leeds Area Group of the LRTA. Members will meet in the usual city centre location for shared transport in members cars to Heaton Park. There will be the usual tour of the system with (hopefully) a chance to drive and there will be refreshments (provided by the LRTA). Full details will be given in the next News Sheet.

**Nottingham** This is on Saturday 17th September. It will be by train from Leeds at approximately 9.00a.m. to Nottingham where we get the first tram that comes and ride the whole expanded system. Ian Dougill is going to see if he can get us a tour of the depot. We plan to catch train back at about 5 p.m. Full details will again be in the next News Sheet, by which time the new Railway timetables should be available.

**SPOT THAT TRAM BUS**

The last of Chris Spring's puzzle pictures brought the usual pleasure, even through they were all buses.



To start off, TS8 No.24, has just turned out of Wortley Road on to Whingate [R. Marshall collection]

Regent 269 at the long-lost junction of Hunslet Lane and Gt. Wilson Street [TLP]



Crossley 714 is inbound on Dolly Lane, passing the Albion Inn [R.F.Mack]

The next pictures are hows? We see Beeston Air Brake 399 first in November 1958, then ready for despatch to Crich in August 1959, but facing the other way round. By this time (Chris suspects) the Hunslet route had finished and the northbound exit from Swinegate depot was out of use, so how was it turned?



was out of use, so how was it turned?

And the easy one to finish, Regent V 777 is on Upper Accommodation Road, with redevelopment work on York Road visible in the background.



[R.F. Mack]



This month's puzzle pictures are all of trams and come from Chris Thornburn; those who were at the January meeting will already have had a preview. Only the first one is a "where is it" shot, and it is deceptive. It looks like Boar Lane, but it isn't! There is some reason for the streets to be decorated, so it's a "why" as well. Enjoy. (We do know the answers).



## **Tales from LTTG**

**Mel Reuben**

I was recently looking through some old Leeds Transport Touring Group archives when I spotted a weekend tour in the 1980's in North East Scotland. Former LTTG members will have read my article about the Stagecoach Group in the LTTG Newsletter but nevertheless I feel that LTHS members would like to know how a small band of LTTG members were informed directly from (the now Sir) Brian Souter his plan for his small independent operation to take on the big boys National Express and Scottish City Express. Briefly, the late Bob Mack asked Tony Wilson if on our way back home we would call at a small independent bus operator near Perth, as he was collecting a number plate from the owner. We arrived at the depot and we were met by Brian Souter; his sister Ann Gloag was inside a little wooden hut which was their office. Like most small operators the yard was full of dilapidated vehicles plus surprisingly some ex-London Transport RT's which were used for school and Perth local services. To put it bluntly Brian Souter told us he was on the verge of going out of business, however his last throw of the dice was that he had purchased a second hand Neoplan coach which was located inside his shed. His inspired Baldrick-style "cunning plan" was that he had found a loophole in the Transport Act of 1980 which allowed express services of over 35 miles to be free of the Traffic Commissioner regulations. He would undercut the big boys and run an express coach service from Dundee to London, mainly aiming at the growing student population. Furthermore he would drive the coach and his sister Ann would sell snacks, sandwiches and drinks to the passengers. After a welcome cup of tea made by Ann we bid our farewells. As we left we wished him and his sister the best of luck and to be quite candidly our party reckoned he was taking a huge gamble, or so we thought.....?

The rest is history. Stagecoach Group PLC is the second largest transport company in the UK; it has cornered 16% of the bus market, 25% of the rail market which includes a 49% share of Virgin Rail Group and 46.8% of bus builders Alexander Dennis. Operating 8,100 vehicles and employing 18,000 personnel, they operate Sheffield Supertram and did until recently operate trolleybuses in Wellington, N.Z. Brian Souter was knighted in 2011. He is the 118th wealthiest person in the UK; Ann Gloag OBE is the richest woman in Scotland.

I know it's hypothetical but I am wondering; if Samuel Ledgard had been a few years younger could he have possibly built a huge bus and transport empire like Brian Souter and Ann Gloag have? I certainly think so; sadly we will never know, but it is tantalising to think we could have had on our own doorstep a similar transport giant like Stagecoach Group PLC.

Just think - the Samuel Ledgard Group PLC..... now that would have surely have given First Group a run for its money, and possibly Ledgard's PLC would be now operating bus services in the West Yorkshire area ... and a darn sight better than the current ones.

If only... One can dream.....

## **CHARLIE'S COLUMN**

**Charlie Watson**

I apologise for a break in this columnist's output. Work and other pressures caused me to miss the last issue but now I'm back and this one's a belter ....

### **PATIENCE CAN BE REWARDED**

in 1939 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Railway Company built a batch of lightweight cars for its New York operation. These were an updated version of the Birney Safety Car and were the last non-streamlined cars built in America, working there until 1948.

Under the "Marshall Plan" which helped a war-shattered Europe, 40 of these cars were sent to Vienna to help rebuild its system. When the first few arrived in Vienna they were used for type training. One driver was sick and tired of old underpowered cars and couldn't wait for the fast, powerful and newer cars to run around the city. He got his training on them but before the cars were allocated to his depot time caught up with him and he was to retire.

He couldn't believe his bad luck - he could ride on them but was not allowed to drive them, but you can guess where this is going ....

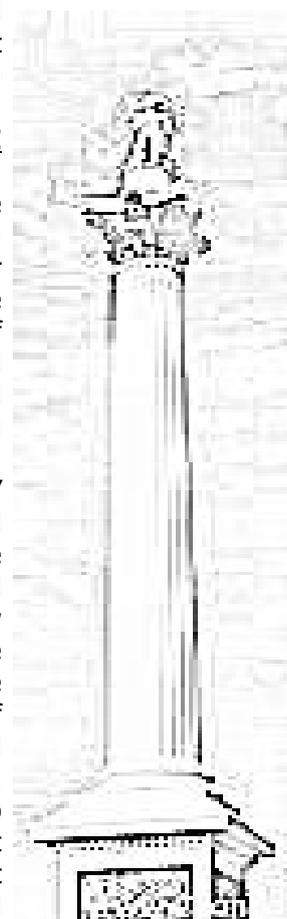
A few weeks later he spent the evening in a bar and after plenty of beer he walked home. As he turned the corner, there stood a "New York" car, lights on, compressor ticking over and NO DRIVER!

It was as though fate had made his dream come true and he wasn't going to waste his chance. He settled into the cab and drove off. Being well known on the tramways, other drivers and staff didn't think twice when they saw him drive onto his favourite route. At each stop, he announced to intending passengers that he was giving free trips to celebrate the arrival of the modern cars, so he soon had a capacity load.

He was having the time of his life, but all too soon the terminus was reached and upon his arrival he was arrested by two policemen and taken to the Police Station.

Once in the local Bastille, the Police and tramway officials found they had a problem - what to charge him with? He didn't steal the car - he fully intended to return it. He didn't drive dangerously - he was a trained driver. He didn't deceive the passengers - he'd not taken any fares.

The solution was that the tramways would charge him the cost of the electricity used by him. This came to a small amount which he was only too happy to pay. Once paid he was released and left a very happy man.



In February last year, her indoors (the Mrs) decided that she had had enough of the cold wet winter and colluded with number one son Simon, a Travel Consultant, to book a 10 day break on the holiday island of Tenerife. We would fly out with Jet2 from Leeds Bradford Airport and spend 10 days in a luxury apartment in Los Cristianos; furthermore, strangely Simon would be joining us. As you all are aware just like a chip off the old block (me) Simon is a tram nut. After booking the holiday Simon whispered in my ear and said “Don’t let on to mum that there is a fairly new modern tramway in Santa Cruz”. Then I realised why Simon wished to join us!

The day arrived, Tuesday 3rd February. We were transported by number two son Daniel to LBA. We checked in had a bit of breakfast and waited for our flight to be called; everything was going to plan, we boarded the aircraft a Boeing 737/300, strapped in to our seats and waited . . . and waited. I was looking out of the window and spied a couple of mechanics opening the port (left) side engine cowl, it did not look good. After what seemed an eternity the Captain announced that there was a pump leak on the port side engine, the good news was they had a spare part, but it would take nearly two hours to repair and for our own safety we must return to the terminal lounges. Two boring hours later our flight was re-called and without any more delay we were on our way.

Four hours later we touched down at Tenerife Sur and were whisked through the formalities and greeted by a driver holding up a card with the name of Mr. Reuben. After a 20 minute ride we arrived at our apartment and checked in. After unpacking my wife said time to go shopping and stock up with “vitals”. The nearby super market “Hiper Dino”, was it named after the prehistoric dog “Dino” in the Flintstones? I noticed that the supermarket was adjacent to the Los Cristianos, Transportes Interurbanos de Tenerife S.A.U. (TITSA) bus terminal. You could write an article on TITSA alone, the Tenerife Island Council owned, lime green liveried bus company has 160 routes served by 550 buses and carries a staggering 40 million passengers a year.

We had a few days R & R soaking up the very pleasant warm sunshine. After the third day Simon suggested that we should take a bus ride to Santa Cruz and mentioned to his mum there is a huge “El Corte Ingles” department store opposite the Intercambiador bus terminal. Now, any woman worth their salt knows when in Spain, Balearics or The Canaries that to shop in “El Corte Ingles” is a no-brainer. So after breakfast we walked down to the bus terminal and purchased three “BONO” tickets Tenerife’s equivalent of London’s Oyster card. We boarded the Express 110 to Santa Cruz. The bus which, was packed to the gunwales, sped along the Autopista Sur (TF1) and after one hour travelling, we arrived in Santa Cruz. My wife already had seen the El Corte Ingles and was eager to sample shopping Spanish style. We arranged to meet her in three hours time in the bus terminal, so we went our way and she set off in anticipation towards the store.

I had already done my homework and I knew that the tram terminus for line 1 was outside the very impressive Intercambiador on Avenida la Constitución. Sure enough I had correctly done my homework, we walked over to the Tramvia and purchased a “Bono Diaro” a day ticket for the trams for 4.50 Euros. The fleet of 20 Alstom Citadis trams are of the basic manufacturer’s design, with one exception; to cope with the demanding nature of the terrain with up to 8.5% gradients, the 720kW vehicles are equipped with all-axle drive. To conserve energy, regenerative brakes are fitted, which are expected to save 20% over conventional braking systems. The route of Line 1 is steeply graded (600m in 12km) as it climbs up the streets of Santa Cruz and La Laguna to La Trinidad on grass tracks. The modern depot at El Cardonal half way along Line 1 can accommodate 36 trams. The second short line between La Cuesta and Tíncer opened in 2009 connects with Line 1 at Hospital Universitario and El Cardonal. The novel feature, fittingly for an island with limited natural resources, is that the system’s power is generated by ten wind turbines, producing 10MW. By being provided in-house by Metropolitano de Tenerife, the 100% zero-emission system represents a first in light rail.

We thoroughly enjoyed our day riding and photographing on both tram routes and when we met my wife at the bus station laden with bags of shopping, she asked “what have you two got up to” and Simon (the stupid boy) let it out of the bag and replied “we have been tram riding”. You should have seen my wife’s face. She said “I should have known why you dragged me away from sunbathing, you and your blooming trams”.

Postscript: Looking on the Transvia website it appears plans are afoot to extend Line 1 north from La Trinidad to the Tenerife Norte Airport and a very ambitious scheme to create a 85 km light railway to Tenerife Sur Airport and beyond to the holiday resorts of Los Cristianos, Las Americas and Costa Adeje.

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Contributions of news or articles for News Sheets are always welcome and may be submitted to the News Sheet co-ordinator, Malcolm Hinds, at 34 Moor Park Villas, Headingley, Leeds, LS6 4BZ, e-mail [malcolm.hinds@btinternet.com](mailto:malcolm.hinds@btinternet.com)

All statements and comments are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent Society policy.

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