

LEEDS TRANSPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS SHEET 185

MAY/JUNE 2016



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

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

Mon. 13 June **Yorkshire Railways (Part 2)**

Paul Abell

Sat./Sun. 18/19 June **Sales Stand** at Middleton Railway model exhibition

Tue. 19 July **Evening Visit to Heaton Park Tramway, Manchester**

Meet 1800 at Duck & Drake, Kirkgate.

Sun. 31 July **Sales Stand** at Sandtoft Gathering

Mon. 12 Sep. Monthly meetings resume.

Sat. 17 Sep. **Society Visit to NET, Nottingham**

Book the date - more details next issue

Sat./Sun. 29/30 October **Sales stand** at Leeds

Model Railway Exhibition, Grammar School

OTHER LOCAL MEETINGS & COMING EVENTS

June

Tue. 21 (LRTA) **Trams on Video** Keith Terry

July

Sat/Sun 2/3 Festival of Model Tramways, Museum of Transport, Boyle St., Manchester

Tue. 5 (MRT) **John Fowler locomotives**

John Pease

Tue. 19 (LRTA) **Heaton Park Visit** see above

August

Sun. 14 Dewsbury Bus Museum Summer Spectacular

September

Tue. 6 (MRT) **China** Adrian Freeman

Tue. 20 (LRTA) tba

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. Meetings resume on 6 October.

tba Information to be advised

FROM THE CONDUCTOR **Malcolm Hindes**

Let's start off with the apologies. Sorry that this issue is rather late, but April is a busy time of year (AGM, accounts, reports, etc.) and there were special problems this year (not concerning LTHS!). However the delay has enabled inclusion of a number of items not available earlier in the month, notably the cancellation of NGT (sounds of gentle cheering from Lidgett Place) and the subsequent Leeds meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group.

Secondly profound apologies for wrong dates given for April and May LRTA meetings, despite Mel Reuben providing me with the correct dates. Many thanks to David Flasher for spotting that one and alerting me to it. I can only blame it on our April meeting being a week early and turning my calculating head.

No apologies though to those who turned up a week late for the AGM! We warned you of the date in September, repeated it in November and February and on the formal notice of the meeting. Dare I say that you didn't miss much? Nothing changed this year!

Finally the good old LRTA have gone and booked their AGM in Birmingham on the same weekend as our Society visit to Nottingham. Unlike last year we don't intend to cancel. However it would be useful to know if anybody will find this clash inconvenient.

SOCIETY SALES STANDS **Stephen Longthorpe**

The stall is booked in at :-

Middleton Railway model show 18 & 19 June

Sandtoft Gathering 31 July

Leeds Model Railway Exhibition 29 & 30 October.

Assistance & display boards are required for all of the above.

If you could help with any of these events your assistance would be gratefully valued .

Telephone 0113 305 0576, Mobile 0749 374 5027

SOCIETY OUTINGS

Heaton Park This will be on the evening of Tuesday 19th July, jointly with the LRTA Leeds Area Group. Members will meet at the usual city centre location (Kirkgate) at the slightly earlier time of 1800 for shared transport in members cars to Heaton Park. There will be the usual rides on the line, with Hull 96 back in Hull livery and a chance to drive (£2 donation) and there will be refreshments (paid for by the LRTA). Return time will be by arrangement with your driver - don't forget a contribution to fuel cost.

Final details will be given at the June meeting.

Nottingham Saturday 17 September (despite the LRTA AGM in Birmingham). By train from Leeds at around 0900 to Nottingham where we will get the first tram that comes and ride the whole expanded system. We are still investigating the possibility of a tour of the depot.

We plan to catch the train back at about 1700. Full details should be in the next News Sheet and at the September meeting. Watch out for the cheap fare offer that usually appears in the YEP around this time or use your Senior Railcard.

APPLRG Meeting, 24 May **Malcolm Hindes**

Hot on the heels of cancellation of NGT, the All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group (APPLRG) called a meeting in Leeds on Friday 24 May, to discuss the way forward for a possible tram-train scheme for Leeds.

As well as the guest speakers, there were present representatives of LRTA, LTHS, TMS, a television crew and the transport press.

Greg Mulholland, chairman of the Group and MP for Leeds North West summarised the past fiascos but stressed this was not the time for recriminations, rather we must look ahead. The main problem for Leeds was that we had not got started. If we could get one line up and running, the example from other systems was that others would follow. This first line needed to be a railway conversion, such as that proposed by Metro in April 2009 (after cancellation of Supertram), which involved the Harrogate line, already earmarked for electrification. The branch to Leeds Bradford Airport, little more than a mile from the railway, would be much cheaper than the proposed road link.

James Harkin (secretary to the Group but wearing his Light Rail UK hat) summarised the proposals and the different possible modes, citing Nordhausen and Kassel as prime examples. A great benefit of tram-train is that it gives better connectivity by going on to the streets: Karlsruhe had recorded an increased retail footfall of over 30% as a result of tram-train operation. Warrington & Halton District was already planning light rail to link up with Manchester's Metrolink.

The proposal is for the Leeds - Harrogate - York circuit, with an extension to Copmanthorpe. In Leeds, it is proposed to leave the existing railway in the vicinity of Kirkstall viaduct, then proceed alongside Kirkstall Road and onto Wellington Street, with a loop round the City Centre; there would also be an on-street section through York. The Powerpoint slide presentation is accessible online at <http://www.applrguk.co.uk/slides> and select "Latests (sic) news" (which also links to the minutes of the meeting and a press release).

Greg Mulholland added that among the extra stations, a park & ride site could be developed at Arthington, and the airport link could be extended through to Guiseley for Skipton and Bradford.

Steve Barber (Nottingham) referred to the proposed HS2 railway. He believed it was a certainty to Manchester, but was not so confident about the Leeds connection. However Leeds was the only city to be served by HS2 that does not already have light rail and construction of such a system would strengthen its case.

John Parry (Parry People Movers) was critical of the size, weight and cost of the Sheffield tram-train vehicles in comparison to the much lighter Parry rolling stock used on Network Rail's Stourbridge line.

In response to a question about platform height (allegedly Network Rail standards do not allow for low platforms), Jim Harkin considered that modern vehicles could cope with both high and low platforms, but didn't elaborate as to how wheelchairs would cope!

In conclusion, Greg told the meeting that he had asked councillors about their "plan B", i.e. if NGT were to fail. Their confidence that NGT would go ahead was such that there was no plan B!

The television report, with interviews, can be found at www.madeinleeds.tv/player/?playercat=76643&vid=wgzd1d45

A Transport Summit of Leeds MPs, Leeds City Council and business leaders was called for 10 June.

CRICH UPDATE **Melvyn Reuben**

The 2016 season at the National Tramway Museum (Crich Tramway Village) commenced on the weekend of Saturday March 19th and Sunday 20th.

The weather was dry but cold on the Saturday and much better on the Sunday with occasional sunshine. A reasonable amount of visitors were present on both days which included quite a few enthusiasts. On the Saturday the trams in service were Leeds 180, Liverpool 869, Blackpool boat 236 and the access tram Berlin 3006. On the Sunday the trams in service were Leeds 180, LCC 106, Blackpool boat 236 and of course Berlin 3006. All the day's running fleet were shopped out in immaculate condition.

There have been quite a few changes which have been introduced for the new season. The museum intend to have a better rotation of tramcars on service whenever possible, with two cars being stabled on the depot fan. The children's outdoor play area has been completely refurbished, which will allow older children to let off steam. The signage around the museum site has been enhanced giving visitors more information. At the Glory Mine terminus the disembarking and embarking stop has been moved to the down line loop. Riding certificates will not be sold anymore on the trams by the conductors however they will be available in the Forge shop.

In the workshop Bluebird LCC 1 (Leeds 301) has been stripped down to the bare bones with the roof been separated from the main frame; it appears that the restoration of this iconic tram could take quite some time. Glasgow 22 is waiting for new components after problems with its truck. The running fleet has been dried out from its winter hibernation and the trams have been cleaned thoroughly inside and outside.

The Exhibition Hall has had a makeover with new drapes installed and every tram has got an interpretation description board.

The first big event was the 1940's Easter weekend, with year's theme being "The Home Front". Many re-enactors were booked in, dressed in their colourful period costumes; quite a few military vehicles were present and of course the resident "Spiv", our very own Charlie Watson, was selling his black market wares only to be arrested on numerous occasions by the local constabulary and the Military Police.

A comprehensive events program for 2016 can be found on the museum web site www.tramway.co.uk.

Admission prices this year are Adults £16, Seniors (60+) £12, Children (4-15) £9 and a Family ticket £39 (2 Adults + 3 Children), with free return admission on full price tickets only, when the venue is open to the public (however this does not apply to certain events which you can find on the museum web site).

The museum sincerely hopes that the new 2016 season will bring in new customers as well as the regular visitors.

GIFT AID

Malcolm Hindes

Our Treasurer, Tony Cowell, reports receipt of a cheque for £745.77, being tax refunded on donations received and claimed back through Gift Aid.

The Committee has been considering the suggested possibility of claiming Gift Aid on subscriptions, and Tony has managed to get confirmation from HM Revenue & Customs that as a registered charity we can do this.

However, the Committee feels that the Treasurer's job is already demanding enough, since he also administers membership matters. The answer is one which many charities have already adopted, and that is to appoint a Gift Aid co-ordinator who would be registered with HMRC and make the relevant claims on our behalf.

Any willing and suitably competent member is warmly invited to make himself (or herself) known to the Committee, who will then decide which of the numerous offers to accept! Some financial experience is valuable but not obligatory.

Whilst on the topic of appointments, members are reminded that our Hon. Secretary, Jamie Guest, has intimated that he will not stand for re-election in 2017 as he will be moving to France. Again, a willing and suitable member to take over would be very welcome.

In both cases, the gentlemen concerned will ensure adequate briefing for an easy handover.

END OF THE Z CLASS TRAMS IN MELBOURNE

Melvyn Reuben

Who will mourn the Z-Class, Melbourne's first "modern" trams, now they are gone?

Small and boxy, with steep steps and no air-conditioning (except in the driver's cabin), they lacked the old-world charm of the W-Class and the mod-cons of the newer trams.

But the Zeds have been the humble workhorse of Melbourne's tram fleet for 40 years, and by the end of April the first generation of them were gone, mostly retired to workshops to be pulled apart for scrap.



Fewer than 10 of the original Z-Class - the Z1 and Z2 models - remained in service, operating on three routes between Melbourne University and East Malvern, East Brighton and Carnegie.

By the end of April that number was zero, and with no heritage listing proposed for these 1970's

trundles, volunteer-run tram museums may soon be the only place to find one.

The Melbourne Tram Museum stated the Zeds are relatively unloved today, except among a handful of enthusiasts. But were a marvel for their time, they brought an antiquated street car system into something more modern. The Z-Class tram fleet was built in two batches of 115 cars, between 1975 and 1984, after a 20-year gap in tram production, during which time calls grew for Melbourne to rid its streets of old-fashioned trams for good.

Their reliability saw them become the template for Melbourne tram design for 25 years, until the eventual arrival of low-floor trams.

They ran on [route] 96 for a long time because it's where the best trams would go, because they ran past the front of Parliament, so they [politicians] could see the value of their investment every day.



But their old parts and obsolete electronics became increasingly difficult to source and maintain.

A Yarra Trams spokesman said the number of Z1 and Z2 class trams on the network had been cut from about 30 cars 18 months ago to between five and seven a day, during which time more than 25 new E-Class trams had entered service.

"Z1 and Z2-Class trams have served Melbourne well for 40 years but their planned retirement is part of a modernisation of Melbourne's tramway network to meet the future needs of Australia's fastest growing city. E-Class trams have three times the capacity of Z-Class trams.

Public Transport Victoria may possibly convert one of them into a mobile bar. If the idea finds a willing backer, the tram-bar would provide employment training to disadvantaged youth, and preserve an original Z-Class tram on the tracks, running in off-peak times", he said.

The second generation of the Zeds, the Z3 Class, was built between 1979 and 1984, and will remain in service on several routes.

[Readers may question the relevance of this report to Leeds.

In the 1950's, during the run-down of Leeds City Tramways, the Melbourne & Metropolitan Tramways Board placed advertisements in the Yorkshire Evening Post for tram drivers, offering low-cost assisted emigrant's passage. It is quite likely that some long serving ex-Leeds tram drivers drove the Z-class cars.

The young Mel Reuben actually applied, but at the last minute decided to take employment locally. Things might have turned out very differently!
Ed.]

WHERE'S THAT TRAM?

Last month's "where is it?" picture caused some head-scratching, but with the aid of Leodis (the online resource of historic Leeds photographs) we have an answer).



This shot of 363 was taken on New Briggate, at its junction with Upperhead Row (now The Headrow), the policeman being on point duty of course. The block of buildings immediately to the left was demolished to make way for the Lewis's store, but some of those further in the background survive. The flags and bunting? They were out for the Leeds Tercentenary celebrations, which dates the photograph to 1926.

As for the question of how 399 was turned between the other photos (not repeated here), there have been several suggestions of possible manoeuvres. The most probable, since they required minimal street running for an unservicable (?) car, involved use of the triangular layout at the main entrance to Swinegate depot, or out by the back door into the railway arch and then round via Pitt Row to the east entrance. But nobody actually knows!

Now for this month's puzzle pictures. Chris Spring has again come up with an absolute cornucopia of locations to be identified, indeed so many that instead of emailing them he sent them on a disk.

To start with, a couple of tram shots:

The first is a photograph David Packer took in July 1956 of trams 7 & 155. We know which street it is on, but whereabouts exactly? (It looks nothing like that now!)



Our second picture is another of David's, taken a little later on an adjacent route, with Horsfield 178 bound for Halton and Feltham 574 in the background. The houses at the right hand side of the picture are still there, but all the rest have gone.



Now for some buses. Here we have AEC single-decker 33 on the 45 route in sylvan surroundings, but where? [S.J. Butler collection]



Finally, one to really get the puzzle-heads working. This shot of 322 on an enthusiasts' special was taken in September 1958 (or 1959?) So there is no route number to give any clues; we can tell you that virtually all of the buildings are still there, so get looking on Google Streetview! [© John Fozard



Answers next issue.

2016 FESTIVAL OF MODEL TRAMWAYS



Museum of Transport

Boyle Street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester, M8 8UW
10am - 5pm 2/3 July Full £7.50 Concessions £6.50

Free heritage buses serving Victoria Station

Website: www.tramwayinfo.com [facebook.com/tramwayfestival](https://www.facebook.com/tramwayfestival)

CHARLIE'S COLUMN SO LONG AGO

Charlie Watson

With the coming of a new year*, one reflects back to earlier (perhaps happier) times in one's life. Back in the '70s I was beginning to concentrate my interests in buses - and later trams - and the bus world was a very different place.

I don't claim to remember Bradford trolleybuses but contemporary motorbuses were still around - Lodekkas, Titans, Regents, Atlanteans and Fleetlines were still pounding the roads and still being built. Saloons were Swifts, Leopards, REs and the new "wonder bus" - the Leyland National.

The main operator was the National Bus Company whose red and green liveries were viewed with horror as they replaced well-loved paint schemes. In some areas operators amalgamated to form PTEs or merged with neighbours.

To aid modernisation of fleets, the New Bus Grant was available for operators to buy buses suitable for One Man Operation. This was 25% of the cost of a new bus, so if you bought five new buses you paid for four and in effect got the fifth bus for nothing!

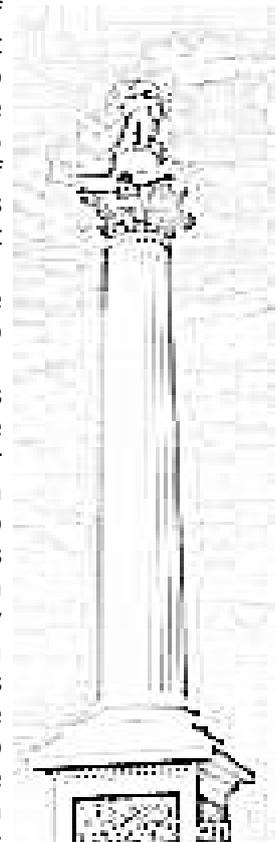
Buses in those days were littered with fag ends and chip papers, slow and uncomfortable, but things gradually got better by the end of the decade. Passenger numbers started going down so fares kept going up (decimalisation didn't help) as operators struggled to return a profit. Vehicle reliability started to become a problem and in 1974 a big spares shortage affected the whole industry, forcing operators to use older buses when these should have been in scrapyards. Some operators started to challenge Leyland's iron grip by helping to develop new models (Dennis Dominator) or buying from other companies (Volvo, Ailsa, MCW Metropolitan).

Coaches were Bedfords, Fords, AECs, Leylands and almost always bodied by Duple or Plaxton or Willowbrook, but continentals such as Volvo and Mercedes-Benz were starting to infiltrate the market leading to the flood of imported coaches in the 1980's.

amongst all this, Blackpool stood alone. Its Balloons, Railcoaches and OMO cars carried locals and holidaymakers up to Fleetwood and along the Promenade though there were mutterings at the Town Hall to scrap the trams

With all this going on, is it any wonder I found it all so interesting??

*[Editorial Note: As you may have guessed, Charlie wrote this earlier in the year. Unfortunately it wasn't received in time for the last issue]



In the 1970's British Rail ran numerous trips to destinations that my family and I had never visited before. Some were called Merrymaker excursions and they also ran mystery excursions.

On one particular excursion we boarded a train in Leeds station which had started at Huddersfield. It proceeded to York to pick up more passengers; the loco then ran round and we set off south, passing through Doncaster, Sheffield, Derby and Uttoxeter across to Shrewsbury. The railway buffs started guessing where we were heading; Aberystwyth looked the favourite, but further confusion occurred when the train entered the Mid-Wales line towards Craven Arms. Now could it be Swansea? We suddenly came to a halt at Llandrindod Wells, Powys, which was our mystery destination. To our astonishment the Mayor of the town was there to give us a warm welcome and told us about the virtues of his small town. To be honest the town had many Victorian and Edwardian buildings with tea shops and lots of small curiosity shops. In the centre was a very well appointed park with a lake which had little paddle boats. We had a very nice enjoyable day in a part of the UK that I had never visited. I later found out that four railway enthusiasts managed to stay on the train which went down the single track line to Swansea where the class 47 was stabled for a few hours; the loco was then turned so it would be facing the right direction for its return trip to Yorkshire. After picking us up at Llandrindod Wells it proceeded up to Crewe then across through Stockport and Stalybridge to Huddersfield and Leeds, where we got off, and terminated at York. Another mystery trip was to Barry Island in the middle of the 1976 heatwave. This was another excursion where we were kept guessing; we thought Cardiff was the destination or even Tenby. I remember the grass verges in Barry Island been scorched brown and there were massive queues for ice cream, the pubs were doing roaring trade. I left my wife and my young niece to soak up the sun on the beach, whilst Simon and I explored the famous steam train graveyard.

We also went on a British Rail Holiday preview trip to Great Yarmouth and Tony Wilson and I went on another Excursion to Plymouth.

Another interesting trip was to Bristol with Simon. We were pulled by two class 47's and meandered down through the South Midlands to reach the Great Western line at Didcot. The train stopped at Bath where Simon and I got off as I wanted to photograph the many FLF'S and Lodekkers in the city. We made our way back to Bath Spa station and to our extreme joy a brand newly commissioned HST 125 pulled into the station. We had no hesitation boarding the train and within a blink of an eye we arrived into Bristol Temple Meads. As our train back to Leeds was not leaving Bristol for another few hours we had a bus ride to the Bristol Omnibus depot at Lawrence Hill where a kind depot foreman let me photograph lines of FLF's and then it was back to the station for our return journey home. We also went on another mystery trip from Normanton and ended up in Edinburgh.

British Rail also offered a excursion to Ireland; Tony Wilson and I took advantage of this reasonably priced trip. We boarded the train in Leeds late afternoon and ended up in Holyhead where we embarked on the midnight ferry to Dun Laoghaire. We arrived around 6 am and after breakfast in an Irish greasy spoon we took a rickety DMU train pulled by a GM Loco to Dublin. At that time Dublin was full of half cab buses, so Tony and I were in our element. We made our way back to the port for our 8pm sailing and boarded the ferry back to Holyhead.

To conclude, a friend of mine from York was on a British Railways holiday in North Wales. He spotted an advertisement in Llandudno station for a mystery rail trip, so he and his wife decided to book it and you would not believe it, the mystery destination was York. Arriving in York they got on a bus and popped home, his wife started tidying up and made a some lunch and left their son a meal in the oven, without leaving a note. Later on in the afternoon they went back to York station for the return trip to Llandudno. Their very worried son contacted them that evening and said something strange had happened in the house." I have just come home from work knowing that I would have to tidy up and make my dinner, but to my utter amazement the place is spotless even the pots and pans have been put away in the correct place, the empty beer bottles and the take away left overs are in the bin and and furthermore the carpets have been vacuumed. There was also a very nice roast chicken in the oven with two veg." He said when he left late for work that morning having slept in, the house was a tip as he and his mates had been watching a football match the previous evening on TV. They thought to let him keep wondering and did not tell him about their strange day out until they returned home from their holidays!

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

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

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