

# LEEDS TRANSPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWS SHEET 192

MARCH 2018



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

#### \* PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE AND TIME \*

Meetings at **Leeds Civic Hall**, LS1 1UR, Committee Room 3 (Portland Crescent entrance), **1845 for 1900**.  
Mon. 12 Mar. **Tramways on Ciné Film**

Malcolm Hindes

Mon. 9 Apr. **THE SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** followed by book sale

Mon. 14 May **Hong Kong Trams** Mel Reuben

Mon. 11 Jun. **Video from the camera of Mike Waring**

Mon. 9 Jul. **Evening Tramway Walk through Middleton Woods** led by Eric Smith

Tue. 24 Jul. **Annual Visit to Heaton Park Tramway** jointly with LRTA

### OTHER LOCAL MEETINGS & COMING EVENTS

#### March

Tue. 6 (MRT) **Railways on Home Movies** Malcolm Hindes

Sat. 10 (NGRS) **Narrow Gauge North** Pudsey Civic Hall, 1030-1630, £8

Sun. 11 **Dewsbury Bus Museum Spring Open Day** 1030-1630, admission £3

Tue. 20 (LRTA) **Video films** Mike Waring

#### April

Tue. 3 (MRT) **Return to Australia** Mike Swift

Thu. 5 (NGRS) **North Wales Slate: Dinorwic & Nantlle** Andrew Neale

Tue. 17 (LRTA) **Trams in Hong Kong** Mel Reuben

#### May

Tue. 1 (MRT) **Far East steam in the 60s** Frank Craig

Thu. 3 (NGRS) **Brick & Tile Works of Yorkshire & Humberside** Geoff Hankin

Tue. 15 (LRTA) **TBA**

Fri. 18 (SLS) **Annual Film show evening** Transport films at the Grove Centre, New Street, Horsforth. 7.30 p.m.. Admission £2.

### Groups, Regular 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. 3, Civic Hall, 1900. collection £1.

**NGRS** Narrow Gauge Railway Society, Yorkshire Area, The Epicentre, Meanwood Valley Urban Farm, LS7 2QG, 7.15 for 7.30. Collection £2. Refreshments on sale beforehand 50p.

**SLS** Samuel Ledgard Society. Barry Rennison, 0113 236 3695, [rennison@cc-email.co.uk](mailto:rennison@cc-email.co.uk)  
See announcement for venue.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**9 April**

Members will find the official notice of the meeting and relevant documents accompanying this News Sheet. All existing Committee members are expected to be standing for re-election. Nomination of additional members for election to the Committee can be made at the meeting but the member's agreement to stand should be obtained beforehand. If possible please advise the Secretary.

Please see below for details of the post-AGM activity.

### NEW BOOKS FOR OLD!

**Malcolm Hindes**

No! This isn't one of those meaningless headlines designed to attract your attention - it's a genuine offer. Over the years the Society has published a good number of books - Leeds Transport Volumes 1-5, Leeds Transport on Postcards and most recently Leeds Transport in Colour. Happily these are all still "in print" and available from the Society, but the cost of this is that we have to store substantial quantities of books. So far we have been able to manage with various members providing storage in their homes or other premises to which they had access, plus some books stored (at a cost) by our printers, Amadeus Press. However the imminent departure of Jamie Guest, with the loss of storage at his house and church, has prompted a fresh look at the situation.

The Committee has decided that we have greater stocks of certain books than we are ever likely to need to serve future sales, the books in question being Volumes 2, 3 and 5 of "Leeds Transport". However the usual publishers' ploy of selling them off cheap ("remaindering") is not acceptable, as we need to remain loyal to "full price" buyers and maintain the value of remaining stocks.

An alternative course of action is to send some books for recycling by pulping. This is not as draconic as it might sound as these are extra stocks that were ordered at a bargain price. However nobody likes the idea of destroying perfectly good books, so members who have soiled or worn copies of these books are to be offered new replacement copies. The new books will be available after the AGM on 9 April **in exchange** for your old copies. This offer is for members only and in person only and the old copy must be given in. Country members who cannot get to the AGM may be able to take up the offer provided they send their books and pay all postage/delivery costs. Contact Mel Reuben for more information.

As an additional offer, some of the second-hand books we have in our sales stock will be made available for members to take in return for a nominal donation, all of which makes it even more worth your while coming to the AGM!

## **ON THE MOVE AGAIN**

As you will have seen above, our monthly meetings are now to be held at Leeds Civic Hall, second Monday in the month, meeting 6.45 p.m. for a prompt 7.00 start. Drivers can use the Civic Hall car park, entrances in Portland Crescent and Portland Way controlled by lifting barriers. Push the intercom button on the barrier mechanism and tell reception you are there for the LTHS meeting; they will raise the barrier for you to enter. Barriers rise automatically on departure.

The nearest bus stops are on Portland Way (service 5), Woodhouse Lane (services 1, 6, 28, 29, 56 & 97) and The Headrow (services 19, 19A, 33, 33A, 49, 50, 50A, 54, 55, 508, 670, X6, X11 & X14) so it is well served by public transport! Access is from Portland Crescent, to the right of the building seen from Millennium Square. For many years, our Society used the top floor meeting room at the L.C.T. Social Club on Concordia Street, descending to the bar for excellent draught Tetley's at the break. The club was close to Swinegate tram depot, Sovereign Street Garage and, of course, Leeds City Transport headquarters. After the closure of both depot and garage, the club (by then Metro Leeds Social Club) moved to the conveniently (and prophetically?) vacant premises of a social club in the Ebor Gardens area, but rather out of the way for off-duty crews. The Tetley's gave way to Stones bitter, but sadly trade could not sustain draught beer and the substitute keg fizz led to further declining beer sales. Since the privatised company decided to dispose of staff social provision, the club has changed its ownership and identity several times, each new administration kindly continuing to host our meetings. However, members arriving for the February meeting found the building in darkness and the doors locked, the club having gone into liquidation. Some swift behind-the-scenes negotiations by Eric Smith and our chairman Ian Dougill resulted in an invitation to hold our meetings in the Civic Hall, but timed earlier due to the need to finish by 9.00 pm.

Grateful thanks are due to Eric, Ian and to Councillor James Lewis. We are sure the new venue will prove convenient for all members.

## **Malcolm Hindes**

which closed in 1953. The tramway is affectionately named by the local people as "Ding Ding" after the sound of the driver foot pedalling his bell.

In 2010 Hong Kong Tramways was purchased by RATP Dev Transdev Asia who acquired it from Wharf Holdings, the owners of the world famous Star Ferries. The tramway is 8.1 miles in length on Hong Kong Island stretching from Kennedy Town in the West to Shau Kei Wan in the East with a single line clockwise loop around the world-famous Happy Valley Racecourse and sports grounds.

Although the original livery of the trams was dark apple green all the fleet now has full body advertising, which I may add some of them are very striking.

There is a unique way of collecting the fares; you pay when you leave either putting your money in exact fare box or swiping an Octopus card on a reader by the side of the driver. On entering the tram at the rear end you have to pass through a turnstile on the older trams and to two swinging half doors on the rebuilds. By our comparison the fares are very reasonable, the fares are all per journey no matter what distance Adult \$HK2.30, Child \$HK1.20, Seniors \$HK1.10 and a 4 day pass \$HK34. With the current exchange rate being approximately \$HK10 to the £1 you can see that's extremely cheap.

On all the trams the downstairs seats are traverse; on the upper deck there is a row of double seats and a row of single seats. The prime seats upstairs are at the front which every passenger tries to make a beeline for. All windows slide down which helps to give you natural air conditioning on the most humid of days. The company did experimentally convert tram 88 to full air conditioning, however the locals much prefer natural air conditioning. One of the interesting aspects is that standing is allowed upstairs and at peak times passengers are crammed in like sardines. The trams go in one direction as all the termini have loops, however in the case of an emergency they can be driven from the rear platform. The power collection is by a single trolley pole with no trailing ropes; the pole itself has a swivel head carbon skate.

There are nine terminal points on the system which are numbered on the side of the tram but not on the front

## **DING DING ALWAYS A TRAM IN SIGHT - WELL NEARLY!**

**Mel Reuben**

[Mel gives us a taster, preliminary to May's meeting]

This article does not delve too much into the history of the tramway as it is quite complicated; however The Light Rail Transit Association has just published a book simply called Hong Kong Tramways, which gives you the all the historical details of this fascinating tramway. On 1st July 1997 after 99 years of British Colonial rule the sovereignty of Hong Kong was handed over to The Peoples' Republic of China. Hong Kong is now known as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China which includes the former Portuguese colony of Macau. The tramway commenced service in 1904. The original 26 cars were built in England and shipped to Hong Kong in kit form and were assembled at Hung Hong Ltd. yard on Des Voeux Road Central.

For a traditional British tramway enthusiast Hong Kong has it all; with a fleet of 163 four wheel trams it's the largest double decker system in the world. The gauge is 3' 6", the same gauge as the Birmingham tramway



destination board. The six main route schedules are Western Market-Shau Kei Wan, Happy Valley- Sha Kei Wan, Shek Tong Tsui – North Point, Shek Tong Tsui – Causeway Bay, Kennedy Town – Happy Valley and Kennedy Town – Shau Kei Wan which has only two trams an hour traversing the full route. Some trams may also show Whitty Street Depot & Works or Sai Wan Ho Depot, but you will have to get off at the

depot entrance as these are the two depots.

Traffic in the central area is very congested with lots of double decker buses and the small Public Vehicle mini-buses competing with the trams, so consequently trams end up bunching and it's not uncommon to see a long line of trams in convoy.

The tramway's major problem occurred in December 2014 when the MTR Island Line subway was extended and parallelled the tram route. There was an immediate 10% fall in the ridership pf the tramway; however the the tram company decided to relocate each of its 120 tram stop only 250 metres apart as opposed to MTR's 13 stations.

One of the most peculiar customs before legislation on drivers working practices were introduced was the drivers "Red Light Meal" the only way a driver could eat his meal was when he was held up at a red light which are very frequent along the tramway. The driver would attempt to gulp a portion of his meal at every red light before the signals turned to green, and it was often said you could tell by the smell coming from where the drivers stood what his meal consisted of.

Our first visit to Hong Kong was in 1994 which was a four day stop over on our way to Australia, I took colour slides with a Zenith sturdily built 35 mm camera, in those days you took plenty of Jessops slide film with you and hoped when they came back from the processor they would be OK, Photography technology has moved on dramatically, nowadays with digital cameras you can instantly see if you have taken a good picture and delete if not. I have since been back to Hong Kong four times and I was determined to Phonograph the tram fleet. I think I have succeeded and only trams I have not Photographed were the ones scrapped or in the works.

To conclude, Hong Kong is such a fascinating destination the people, sights, sounds and the smells will live in your memory for a long time. Hong Kong for the visitor is one of the safest places in the world and to hear and see those four wheeler trams trundling along the streets for a tramway enthusiast is sheer joy. Also on Hong Kong Island is a funicular tramway The Peak Tramway which runs from Garden Road to Victoria Peak. Although it does serve the Mid- Levels it is used mainly by tourist. There is 6 stations on the line which climbs 1,365 Kilometres the gauge is 1,520mm (Russian Gauge). The tramway is served by a 2 two car tram set. The views at the top of Victoria Peak are breath taking you can see the high rise skyscrapers of Hong Kong Island and across Victoria Harbour toward Kowloon and way beyond to the Chinese border. On Victoria Peak summit there is a huge leisure complex which is always packed out with tourists. The tramway is owned and operated by Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotel Group who also own the world famous Peninsular Hotel in Kowloon.

The new town of Tue Mun is located on the west coast of the New Territories. In the 1970's the government had the foresight to leave space for a future light rail system. The Hong Kong Tramway Company wanted to build the system using similar double decker trams that they had on Hong Kong Island, but rather than overstretching their resources they lost interest. Instead The Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) opted to build the system with a budget of

HK\$1.5 billion. The system finally opened in July 1985. The first 70 single-deck LRT were built by Australian Company COMENG in Melbourne and shipped over to Kowloon. The trams resemble the Z class trams that are being phased out in Melbourne. Originally there were 7 route which has been extended to 12. The routes are very complicated and stretch for over 22 miles with 68 stations they are mainly circular and on their own right of way. To reach Tuen Mun the MTR West Rail will take you there, the system is better suited to shooting video shots than still photography as there is so many obstacles in the way. The system is now part of the MTR. Finally it's rare to see a European face in Tuen Mun and nearly everything is in Chinese Mandarin, however I highly recommend a visit to this fascinating tramway.

### **THE MARCH QUIZ**

**John Holmes**

All the clues are for places that have or had trams.  
Use the red letter in each place to find the anagram of another similar place.



Robert, a pompous English actor



Went into the Premier League in 2017



Formerly world's largest Building Society



Northern end of M6



Was the home to another Building Society in BD16



A fictional street, to them next door



You would find a few of IKBs achievements here



Has bridges called King Edward, Swing, & High Level



This could be the opposite of new pork.



### **The December Quiz - Answers**

**CHEMNITZ**

Karl Marx Stadt

**GLASGOW**

Weegies come from here

**DOUGLAS**

A capital boys name

**ROUNDHAY**

Dried grasses after a circle

**BEAMISH**

Open air living museum in the North

**HUNSLET**

Germans allow

**MIDDLETON**

Centre weight

**LAWNSWOOD**

Grass beds in the trees

**MANCHESTER**

Mamucium

**BRADFORD**

Twinned with Galway

**BLACKPOOL** A coloured ball & the game it is used in

**YORK**

On the River Foss

**ST PETERSBURG**

## PUZZLE PICTURES



New Dennis Lance 125 in Walsall blue and white in 1932. It is in Queenswood Drive. Charles H. Roe.

Last month's pictures proved interesting to say the least! The first - the erroneously captioned photo from "Leeds Transport in Colour 1880-1952" (copies still available, get yours now!) has still not been positively identified. However it is now thought to be in Austhorpe Road, Crossgates, probably opposite Manston Park (and only a few hundred yards from Roe's factory). The houses match but the apparent road junction in the foreground does not now seem to exist - maybe someone knows if it did so in 1932. Was it a park entrance?

The second photo caused no great problems, although there were one or two wild guesses and it foxed one local resident (details withheld to spare blushes!).

This is Kirkstall, at the junction of Commercial Road, Bridge Road and Kirkstall Lane seen from Abbey Road,

with the unidentified Feltham heading for Kirkstall Abbey. The blue lamp of Kirkstall Police Station is clearly visible on the right, which prompted Chris Spring to ask another question. He has the LTHS photo of Horsfield 251 taken looking the other way (see "Leeds Transport Vol.4" page 1190), with a sign on the same lamp which says "Public Library". The answer to that one came from studying old Ordnance Survey plans which show both Police Station and Library alongside each other. More recently Kirkstall Library was in a building off Norman Street, next to the Abbey Cinema - presumably it moved there when the Police Station/Library building was demolished in 1955. It was not unusual for Leeds to put Libraries and Police Stations in the same building - Woodhouse Moor and Dewsbury Road come to mind immediately and there was a tiny Police Station in Bennett Road immediately next to the old Headingley Library. However Libraries and Police Stations are not really transport history!



Now for this month's pictures. In a complete change of tack, we have been asked if our members can identify locations for others!

Nigel Ponsford of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society Yorkshire Area bought our first photo on ebay. He suspected it might be Stanningley Road, but you might have other ideas. Unfortunately we haven't been able to distinguish the tram's fleet number.





The Headingley Development Trust is establishing a gallery of photographs of old Headingley and likewise has asked if we can help, both by identifying photographs they have acquired and allowing use of some of ours (which has been agreed conditionally). Here are two of the photos which have already appeared on their website.

Here we see elaborately decorated BT-H open-top car 170 displaying CARDIGAN ROAD on its route boards. It appears to be outside a churchyard, but where is it and what was the occasion?

(See also "Leeds Transport, Vol.2" page 728)

The final photograph (for this month) had a confusing pencilled note on the back - "Cricket Ground" - which led it to be included in the Central Headingley section of the gallery.

Several members have already identified the location. Can you?

To see more of the HDT gallery, go to  
<https://www.headingleyleeds.com/historic-headingley>

# Model Railway Exhibition

## NARROW GAUGE NORTH 2018



Pudsey Civic Hall

Dawsons Corner, Pudsey, Leeds, LS28 5TA

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March

10.30am-4:30pm

Adult £8

Accompanied Child (6-16yrs) £1

Working layouts in all the popular narrow gauge modelling scales

A full range of trade and society stands

Refreshments available

All proceeds to Sue Ryder Wheatfields Hospice



[www.narrowgaugenorth.org.uk](http://www.narrowgaugenorth.org.uk)

Sue Ryder



## THE TRAM MAN

Sue Betts

I am a tram lover, I love all things tram,  
In fact, you might know me, I am the tram man.  
As both man and boy it has been plain to see  
That trams are a thing that were special to me.

I am a tram rider, I just love to ride  
Up top or below at the front, back or side.  
I don't even care where the tram journey ends,  
I'll just stay on board and then come back again.

I am a tram driver; I love to drive trams,  
With my tram controller, you're safe in my hands.  
I'll give you a ride if you want to hop on,  
I'll ring my bell loudly and then we'll be gone.

I am a tram expert, I know inside out  
The workings of trams and what they are about.  
I know every detail, just ask - and I'll bet  
There's not a tram question I've not answered yet.

Trams are my hobby, wherever I can,  
I visit tram places, I am the tram man.  
Or else I may go to my own garden shed  
And have fun and games with my own trams instead

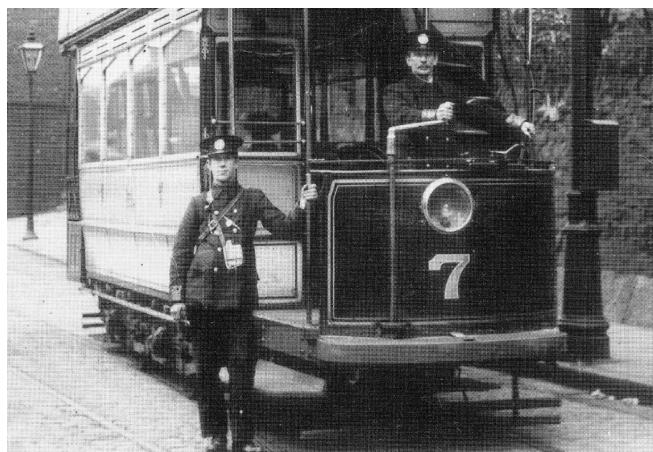
I'm full of tram trivia, (some say tram bore) ,  
I know all the tram parts and what they are for,  
I know all the models, their numbers and routes,  
I wear tram man's trousers, tram hat and tram boots.

I am a collector, I've models and books  
And trams of all sizes, tram pictures on hooks.  
Tram memorabilia - trinkets abound  
And sound effect records that play the tram's sound.

I'm full of tram stories, and willingly share  
Where the trams go to, and from, and to where.  
I travelled the world as a good tram man should  
Tram riding as many as I possibly could

And now here I am at the end of the track  
I've made my last journey - I'm not coming back  
Remember the tram man, although I can't stay  
Just think of a tram and I'm not far away.

The Tram Man© by Sue Betts - March 2011



## CHARLIE'S COLUMN

Charlie Watson

### Things That Go Bump in The Night

The night fitters had all gone home and, apart from the depot cat prowling, all was still. The Night Watchman, having patrolled around outside, entered and, heading for his pog, walked past a line-up of brand new Wulfrunians.

In his pog the Watchman read his paper and drank his tea. Then he heard a strange sound - like a sort of tearing, grating sound.

The Watchman opened his door but could see nothing untoward, but he could still hear the noises. He walked around the depot but saw nothing, yet occasionally he could hear the sound of metal rubbing against metal.

Perhaps he thought it was his imagination or he shouldn't

have had strong cheese in his sarnies. But when the first road crews came to take their buses out a shock awaited them. All the new Wulfrunians were propped against each other and all showed paint damage.

A driver got into the Arab alongside and as he pulled away the Wulfrunian next in line rubbed alongside - the noise had to be heard to be believed.

What West Riding had not realised was that the Wulfrunians' air suspension units had deflated, causing the buses to assume strange angles. The parking bays were fine for buses with conventional steel springs but just a little too close for air-sprung Wulfrunians.

The mistake had been learned. The spacing was altered, the paint lads set about touching up the worst of the damage and it never happened again - at least not at Belle Isle, but a few years later East Yorkshire was taking delivery of AEC Bridgemasters which had air suspension. You'll never guess what happened ....

**Dewsbury Bus Museum**



**Spring Open Day**  
Sunday 13th March 2016  
10.30 am - 4.30 pm

Free shuttle service from Dewsbury Town Centre!  
Mini excursions & mystery tours!  
The famous Bus Museum Café!  
Huge variety of trade stalls!  
Tombola with great instant prizes!

Free feeder services to the event will run from Leeds Bus Station, White Rose Centre, Wakefield, Keighley, Bingley and Bradford!

Full details will be posted on our website:  
[www.dewsburybusmuseum.co.uk](http://www.dewsburybusmuseum.co.uk)

Admission only £3.00 - includes souvenir programme containing bus timetables and vehicle allocation.

You can order your programme in advance by post.

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Our other events in 2016:  
The SUMMER SPECTACULAR on Sunday 14th August  
AUTUMN OPEN DAY on Sunday 13th November

Tel/fax: 0844 504 0085  
Postal address: 47E Dale Street, Ossett, WF5 9HE

These words, cribbed from a comment on a Leodis photo made by Dave Johnson, probably reflect the sentiments of many transport enthusiasts who mourn the passing of their favourite vehicles. But why do we get hooked on these things which many if not most ordinary adults find totally uninteresting. For me it was eventually the sights and sounds of an A4 arriving at Leeds Central or, at an earlier age, the quaint 62727 'The Quorn' simmering in the gloom of City Station. But my first love, when I was about 5, was for those strange vehicles plying the streets of Leeds. Why was I so taken by trams from such an early age? The late Bernard Donald once wrote me a lovely letter in which he expressed the view that tramlines gave an element of certainty to our surroundings, and to a small child beginning to find his way in the world would give some comfort. For me it was wondering where all those tramlines went to, stimulated by the revealing of unknown parts of the city as the conductor wound the destination blinds.

Being born at the end of 1947, my first memory would have been in the early 50s and was of potted meat trams. "What?", you may ask. These were domed roof cars, either ex-Southampton or Manchester, which had roof shapes like a tin of potted meat. Despite extensive research I can't identify the brand. I remember travelling in a blue liveried tram

to the railway bridge on Armley Road to visit my grandmother who worked on the looms at Lutys factory there. I remember travelling back by taxi from visiting family friends near Rothwell, and seeing my first Middleton Bogie cars at the Waterloo Road junction. I wrote the numbers down in a little red 'Sylvine' note book which I kept for many years afterwards but stupidly threw away in my teens.

When I was eight years old we moved from Seacroft to just behind the Clock Cinema at Harehills. I did not want to leave my old school but all sadness was quickly forgotten as I realised trams ran just a few yards from our house. At the age of nine I was given my first camera, a simple affair without a proper viewfinder. My photo of what appears to be post-war car 276 is indicative of the quality of my photographic skills.

My brother was a year older than I, and this gave us freedom to ride into town, then explore closed routes, or walk out towards Hunslet to see and ride on the single deckers. We travelled on the Moortown circular just



before it closed in September 1957, and early in 1959 my father, who thought our interest in trams was juvenile, did take us on the Middleton circular. Having got on at the Corn Exchange I remember him asking for 'one and two halves to the Corn Exchange' and getting a very funny look from the conductor.

In the period leading up to 7/11/59 (the last day of Leeds trams) I had a bit more pocket money and independence, but I can't remember doing much tram riding. With hindsight I wish I had done more. I knew nothing of the "Terry Tours", but luckily found out about the Open Day at Swinegate. I was at Cross Gates on the last day but we were not allowed out after dark for the procession.

On my infrequent visits to Leeds I try to look for remnants of the tram system, mostly tracks reappearing as the tarmac wears out. I have a recurring dream in which tracks were left uncovered, a few cars were retained and periodically still run on the old route to Cross Gates. Real memories live on with the help of artefacts now on the wall of our barn. But if only I could go back for just one day.



**Published by Leeds Transport Historical Society (a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, Registered No. 1160446)**

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Printed and published in the West Riding of Yorkshire