

LEEDS TRANSPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWS SHEET 195

DECEMBER 2018



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

Meetings are now held at the Leeds Postal Sports Association Club, off Beecroft Street, Kirkstall, LS5 3AS, 1900 onwards for 1930 start. Collection £1.

- Mon. 10 Dec. **Trams in Blackpool** Mel Reuben
Sat. 12 Jan. **Sales Stand** at Pudsey (see below)
Mon. 14 Jan. **Dad's Slides** Eric Smith
Mon. 11 Feb. **Narrow Gauge Railways**
John Holmes
Mon. 11 Mar. **Railway Slides from the Eric Snart Collection** Jim Soper
Mon. 9 Apr. **Annual General Meeting** - followed by Members' Images.

OTHER LOCAL MEETINGS & COMING EVENTS

December

- Tue. 4 (MRT) **Christmas Quiz** Team Dobson
Tue. 18 (LRTA) **Why Did UK Trams Disappear?**
Paul Abell

January

- Tue. 1 or 8 (MRT) **tba**
Sat. 12 (SLS) **24th Annual Rail/Bus Collectors' Fair**, Pudsey Civic Hall, 1000-1500 (LTHS Sales Stand)
Tue. 15 (LRTA) **Trams on Cine** Tony Wilson

February

- Thu. 7 (NGRS) **German Narrow Gauge**
Peter Kirkby
Tue. 19 (LRTA) **The Last Picture Show of the late Keith Terry MBE** Mel Reuben

March

- Thu. 7 (NGRS) **Whittaker Brothers of Horsforth, Engineers, Contractors, Quarry Owners, Brick Makers** Stewart Liles
Sat. 9 (NGRS) **Narrow Gauge North** model railway exhibition, Pudsey Civic Hall
Sun. 10 **Spring Open Day**, Dewsbury Bus Museum (Ravensthorpe)
Sat. 16 (TMS) **First Day of 2019 Season** Crich
Tue. 19 (LRTA) **French Tramways** Graham Jellett

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, Leeds Civic Hall (Portland Cres. Entrance), 1900. collection £1.
NGRS Narrow Gauge Railway Society, Yorkshire Area, The Epicentre, Meanwood Valley Urban Farm, 7.15 for 7.30. Collection £3. Refreshments on sale (50p) beforehand.
SLS Samuel Ledgard Society - see entry for details or contact Barry Rennison ☎ 0113 236 3695, email: rennison@cc-email.co.uk.

MEETING PLACE AND PROGRAMME

Following the successful trial meetings at the Leeds Postal Sports Association Club at Kirkstall in October and November, your committee has agreed that from now on our monthly meetings will be held there instead of at Leeds Civic Hall.

There have been several changes to the published 2018-19 programme since September and you should find an amended issue with this *News Sheet*. Apologies to those members who attended the October meeting expecting a talk on trams - Paul Abell's subject had not been finalised in September.

As a result of an offer on *Freecycle*, the Society now has a large 8 foot projection screen available for meetings. The Club is kindly storing it for us in exchange for which they will also have the use of it themselves.

SALES STANDS

Last year, to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the end of Samuel Ledgard services, the October Pudsey Collectors' Fair was held a week earlier than usual. As it no longer clashed with Leeds Model Railway Society's annual two-day exhibition at the Grammar School, we were able to attend both events, with considerable success.

This year, although the fair had reverted to the last Saturday in October, we decided to try and attend again. For possibly the first time in our history, we had two sales stands operating simultaneously and took well over £500 in the weekend.

Curiously, although we had ample staffing for both stands on the Saturday, on the Sunday, with just one stand, we had the bare minimum staff.

Next sales stand:

Pudsey Collectors' Fair, Saturday 12 January

Again we shall be having a stand at what is now a regular Samuel Ledgard Society event, 10.00 - 15.00. Help is needed setting up beforehand and clearing away after as well as actually staffing the sales stand. Please volunteer at the December meeting or contact the Hon. Secretary at the Registered Address (see back page).

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many thanks to the vast majority of members who have renewed their £10 subscription.

A reminder should be enclosed with this *News Sheet* if you haven't paid up yet. Please don't let this be your final copy as we really value your membership.

A GRADELY DAY OUT BY THE SEA J.M.H (or THE L.T.H.S. TOUR THAT NEARLY WASN'T)

Maybe there was not enough notice, or as some said "I can ride trams in Blackpool any time", however numbers declaring an interest in our September 22nd. visit were pretty low. But we persevered.

That's not to say it wasn't attractive; this was a special "Heritage Gold" weekend for the 125th anniversary of the Blackpool system and a lot of extras were promised. Our Secretary had worked out a useful itinerary of connections to get there by train, only to be foiled by the RMT union declaring a strike on that very day. Now no right-minded person questions the desirability of having a Guard on their train, but depriving people of their trains altogether is hardly the way to garner support for your cause. Enough of the politics; there was a plan B - car sharing.

So it was that our small band followed the old Wallace Arnold route to Blackpool via Skipton and Gisburn to Preston before taking to the motorway. A suitable (free) parking spot was found on Clifton Drive, just a short walk south of Starr Gate terminus, and the day's adventures began.

It was clear that it would be some time before a heritage tram ventured that far south, so the next Flexity 2 was boarded for the short run to the Pleasure Beach. That meant that we got paper tickets for the day rather than the attractive card tickets issued on the heritage cars. At £11, the Heritage Day ticket is a bargain, giving unlimited use of both heritage and normal service trams and buses and even the Illuminations Tours (normal cost alone £6.50 per trip). The Pleasure Beach turning circle was a sight for sore eyes, both roads lined with heritage trams of all Blackpool types. The first available departure was an OMO car, which we rode to North Pier where a widened "Balloon" stood in the loop serving as the official souvenir shop. After browsing the wares on offer, a walk up Talbot Road gave a good update of tracklaying progress on the new North Station route. Returning to North Pier, we took the next car - a "Balloon" - to Fleetwood, by which time tummies were rumbling so it was over the road to the Café Royal. Perusing the menu was pointless once we saw our local resident table companion's fish and chips - a crisp battered leviathan overhanging the ends of the long plate. Still, it made splitting the bill easy afterwards! Suitably replete we boarded the next heritage car - a railcoach - for the journey back to Blackpool. The afternoon's succession of trams and journeys between Little Bispham, Bispham, North Pier, Pleasure Beach and Starr Gate would make tedious reading, but we managed to sample most of the cars on offer including TMS "Pantograph" car 167. Ending up on the last heritage run of the day, terminating at North Pier, we took another Flexity to Pleasure Beach.

As it was over an hour to the first Illuminations Tour, we retired to the nearby Wetherspoon's (The Velvet



Coaster). A 40 minute delay on food orders and still full bellies from Fleetwood dictated a liquid-only meal break before we joined the rapidly growing tour queue. The first tram - the Rocket (ex-"Tramnik One") soon filled up but we luckily got seats in the ex-Pantograph car "coach" of the Western Train, still carrying its old "ABC Weekend Television" decorations.

It was high on 9 p.m. when we finally got back to Starr Gate for an easy return journey, beating the main Illuminations rush to arrive home at a civilised hour. Offers not taken up were the depot tours (extra charge) and the "heritage bus tours on former tram routes" which turned out to be merely a run from Blundell Street via the Promenade and Squires Gate Lane to the Airport. Next time maybe?

LEEDS 345

Mel Reuben

Sadly with the recent death of Alfred Keith Dyson Terry MBE, I would like to remind everyone that in 1959 Keith, with considerable help from the LTHS, managed to save Leeds 345 from the scrapman's torch.

345 entered service in 1921, part of a batch of 30 open balcony cars that came into service in Leeds just after WWI. In 1935 the open balcony was enclosed, the upper deck bulkhead panels removed and the end panels inswept for new incorporated number and destination blinds. Keith often said the front seat of these "Converts" as they were known gave you the best forward view of any Leeds tram.

In 1949 most of the batch were withdrawn from service but somehow 345 survived the cull as it had been taken previously in 1948 to Kirkstall Road Works for overhaul. It was officially withdrawn a few months later as the bodywork was defective; however it was converted into a joiners' shop and mess room at the works and was later transferred to Swinegate Depot. In 1959 the LTHS purchased the tram for preservation and it was transported to Crich in December of that year. It wasn't in very good condition; its blue livery of 1945 was faded and the whole of the tram body was in need of a lot of TLC. It was sheeted over to prevent further deterioration and was left to the elements with the hope of restoration in the future. For the tram to be put back into its former glory it needed a complete rebuild.

The car was moved to Clay Cross store to await its turn to be restored but in 1999 an alleged arson attack on the storage facility left a number of vehicles destroyed by fire. Luckily once again somehow 345 survived.

However the tram's deliverance was now back on the restoration agenda and its salvation became a reality when the Tramcar Sponsorship Organisation, with considerable help from LTHS, decided to push ahead in restoring the tram back to its former glory. The whole process of re-assembly was finally completed in 2006. The launch of the tram into service took place on April 1st in a blaze of glory on the depot fan in front of the Tramway Museum Society board and members of the LTHS. So, 47 years after its journey from Leeds to Crich this splendid tram, much to the delight of Keith Terry, began trundling along the Crich metals.

The acceptance of the tram into service was warmly greeted by Keith Terry, the incoming 2006-7 President of the TMS. He was given the privilege of driving

invited guests of the TMS and LTHS to Glory Mine and back. The tram then went into service in the afternoon and fittingly the crew were Leeds Loiners Simon Reuben as driver and yours truly as conductor.



The footnote to this, was, when I was totting up my day sheet on my last trip I inadvertently put my ticket box on top of the resistor box and got an almighty telling off by the Duty Engineer for possibly scratching his newly restored tram.

So fittingly on Sunday 7th October 2018, Keith Terry MBE took his last ever tram ride on Leeds 345, driven by Simon Reuben, to his final resting place at Wakebridge where a memorial service and scattering of his ashes took place.



R.I.P. A.K.D.T. MBE

RIDING THE 399's - AGAIN Malcolm Hindes

Having heard that the Sheffield-Rotherham tram-train service was finally to start on Thursday 25 October, two of us travelled down the M1 to give it a try.

Parking at Meadowhall Park & Ride, we took the first available tram to Cathedral so as to start at the Sheffield end of the route. Track to there now has the deeper grooves needed for railway-profile wheels. Luckily car 202 (TOPS No. 399202) was just ahead of us into the city, so we were able to transfer straight onto it for our first journey.

As far as Meadowhall South/Tinsley, of course, there was nothing new (after all, the Class 399's have been running in public service for a year), but then the tram stopped ahead of the junction, which it took at very low speed. Once over the junction, the tram track converges to single line and takes a very sharp curve under the Tinsley motorway viaduct, then coming back alongside the railway line that it had left just before Meadowhall South. [Surely it would have been more

economical to put the junction before the routes separated, with a third platform for the Rotherham service, but who dare question the planners' wisdom?] Having received a green light we joined the Network Rail single line east for a couple of hundred yards, crossing the River Don again before reverting to double track just before Magna Science Park. A stop here would seem logical, as the track adjoins the large car park, and it has been suggested.

Continuing eastwards, we crossed the river yet again joining the regular Sheffield - Rotherham railway line and running in to the new low-level platforms (3 & 4) at Rotherham Central station.



Photos: John Holmes

Beyond Rotherham Central the tram runs through industrial surroundings and alongside the canal before branching left onto a single-track stub terminal platform at Parkgate Retail Park.



Following a short retail break we returned to the platform, meeting up with local Paul Abell who had been at the opening ceremony that morning, then took the next tram back to Rotherham to seek out lunch. Returning to the station we boarded the next tram - 202 again - for the short ride to Meadowhall South and back to Meadowhall P&R for the journey home. Little were we to know that sister tram 204 would very shortly endure a Close Encounter of the Lorry Kind at Staniforth Road crossing.

Postscript - Paul Abell (a Rotherham ratepayer) gleefully tells us that "Rotherham has pinched one of Sheffield's trams!" A Sheffield Düweg car has been fitted with 204's bogies so that it can operate the tram-train service until that car is repaired.

FROM OUR FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT
Or tales from lands across the channel

Jamie Guest

Bonjour to you all from our new home in France. As many of you will know Beth (my long suffering wife) and I took the decision a few years ago to move to France. The main reason was for Beth's health, with the warmer and dryer climate. The fact that we had found a house with a shed big enough to house my model railway and close to copious supplies of the local liquid harvests of Cognac, Pineau and wine, had absolutely no influence on the decision.

We have moved to the department (a sort of equivalent to an English county) of Charente Maritime. This is on the Atlantic coast of France north of the Gironde estuary that leads to Bordeaux and south of Brittany. Our nearest port is La Rochelle which is about 60 miles due west of us.

Apart from a local station half a mile north of the village that closed in the early 1950's there isn't much nearby in terms of public transport. Our two nearest railway stations are Ruffec, which is on the main line from Paris to Bordeaux, and St Jean D'Angely, which is on a rural line that meanders across the department from a town to Saintes to another town called Niort. Niort, some 35 miles north west of us is on the branch line from La Rochelle to Paris which joins the main line from Bordeaux at Poitiers.

Apart from that, our village has one bus per day in term time that takes the two school age children into Aulnay, our market town 10 miles away. We can use it if we wish to spend 7 hours in Aulnay.

However if we travel a few miles there is tramway interest. Just south of La Rochelle is a major rolling stock factory run by Alstom in a suburb called Aitre. This makes TGV carriages but also produces trams and there is a test track along and across public roads for these trams. One of these days I will try and get to see it properly and take some photos.

I have though managed to ride two of the second generation French tram systems since we came here in June.

In early August I had to go down to the nearest Ikea branch in Bordeaux to buy a bookcase, now named Billy from Bordeaux. This is about 100 miles south of us. I drove down and after making my purchases took the tram into the city to the main railway station. The system has three routes with a fourth under construction. I caught a tram on Line C from a stop called 40 newspapers (I've no idea why).



A day ticket only cost me a few Euros and in no time at all I was aboard a comfortable modern tram heading south. Soon it all came to a halt as we were turfed out onto a replacement bus for the next stage of the journey. It turned out that most of line C was shut for track repairs. The bus took us through the city centre where there was track work in evidence but trams were running on the other two routes.

All the city centre routes use the modern stud contact system Alimentation par Sol (APS), where sections of a centre rail are energised when a tram is above them. Where the repairs were ongoing it looked similar to works on conduit track. Bordeaux was the prototype for this system and it seems to work well. The trams were clean and well patronised. The bus replacement service was well organised and worked well. The system is well worth a visit.



My other system was in Orléans which is about 160 miles north-north-east of us though the journey is over 200 miles. I was going to visit a large model railway show that's held there every two years. I looked at the transport options and driving would have cost well over 100 Euros in tolls and fuel. I got a return train ticket for 39 Euros which I am sure will delight a Yorkshire based club. I also booked a hotel for the Friday night as I wanted to have a full day at the show but be back in reasonable time ready for the Armistice Day ceremony in the village the next morning.

Off I set to Niort to catch a TGV to Tours St Pierre des Corps where I changed into an Intercity train. This was a proper train with a big loco and six coaches and got me up to Orléans along the Loire valley in good time. The main station in Orléans is on the outskirts at Les Aubrais, but a good tram system connects it to the city centre.

The system has two lines in the form of a cross. The north-south line A has normal overhead all the way and was the first built. The second, Line B, crosses line A in Place Charles De Gaulle, and uses the same APS system as Bordeaux in the historic city centre. I rode Line A down to the exhibition centre to see where I would be going the next day and discovered that it also had a stop outside my hotel. How convenient!

I then came back and changed to Line B and rode the eastbound leg, which passes the Cathedral, experiencing the changeover from overhead to stud contact which appeared to be seamless. Then it was back to Place Charles De Gaulle where I saw a tram

jam at the crossing of the two lines.



This is the view from there along to the Cathedral.



Then it was back on to Line A and up to Les Aubrais station for a fascinating evening's train spotting before catching a tram to the hotel. This was the view from my bedroom window. The main Paris to Bordeaux line at the top, the connection to the main line from Orléans Central and the tram line on the right.



I don't have details of the trams but they appeared to have been built in two batches. The lower numbered ones only operate on Line A and presumably have no stud contact gear. The later batch operate on both

lines. The weekday service was a six minute interval on both lines extended to ten minutes on the Saturday and 15 minutes on Sunday. A day ticket only cost 3.90 Euros and I thought was excellent value. The show was good and included a lovely 0-gauge model from Belgium of what I think was a Vicinal tramway, all scratch built. All in all, a good two days away.



24th ANNUAL RAIL/BUS COLLECTORS' FAIR

PUDSEY CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

Saturday 12th January 2019 | 10.00AM - 3.00PM

The leading indoor event for all collectors of railway, bus, ship and aircraft memorabilia, books, photographs, tickets, paperwork, metalwork, railwayana etc.

ADMISSION £2.00

VENUE: 400 yards North of New Pudsey Railway Station. 200 yards from the junction of the A6120 Leeds Outer Ring Road and the A647 Leeds and Bradford Road at 'Dawson's Corner'

Fair & Civic Hall Signposted | Ample Free Parking next to the Hall

e-mail: rennison@cc-email.co.uk

tel: 0113 236 3695

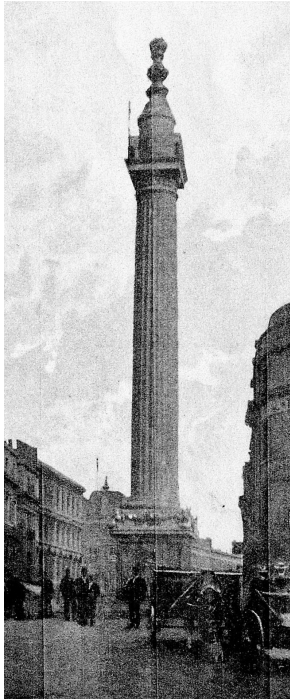


Don't forget - we have a sales stand to man
(And staff get in for nowt!)

CHARLIE'S COLUMN **Recent Happenings**

Charlie Watson

There we were - at Sandtoft. In the rain. For the first time in months the good weather had let us down and as we stood there, in our wet socks, Sarah - my girlfriend - asked James - her 3-year-old son - which bus he'd like a ride on. James looked and pointed at the London K1 - "That one" - and rushed over to it.



This was the first of many rides around the circuit. There can't be many 3-year-olds whose first London bus ride is on a trolleybus in 2018! Now James thinks all double-deckers are trolleybuses but cannot work out where the overhead is! Further training will be needed . . .

At least the weather was fine on August 9 as I and many others said our final farewell to Keith Terry. I cannot say that I knew Keith for as long or as

well as other members but I do have cause to be thankful

to him because he invited me on a day trip to Rotterdam which opened my eyes to European tramways. Not only did I fall in love with the tramways but the city itself. I conducted with Keith at Crich a few times and although - it has to be said - he wasn't the best driver I worked with, he always had time to answer my questions about all things tramway. We lost a good 'un there.

The other day I had to go to York - not one of my favourite cities - so to avoid driving through the city I parked at the Designer Outlet on the A19 to take advantage of the Park & Ride scheme. The bus was a Citaro, a bus I am only too familiar with thanks to Bus Vannin but with the added bonus of being articulated. True to form it was noisy, bumpy and generally uncomfortable. It didn't help that until Tower St. I had to stand, however the slow speed of York's traffic made it more bearable, but when I left the bus at Rougier St. I was quite glad to be off. Thank goodness the IoM are spared these horrors - an ordinary Citaro is bad enough, never mind one with an extra 15 feet of body swinging about, but at least I didn't have to drive in York and that's a blessing!.

Just to finish off, I was driving out of Norton when a Leeds top deck flashed past on the A19 towards Selby.

By the time I got to the junction, the bus was far in the distance, but a yellow rear panel meant it must be Regent V No.413.

Sunday 19 August - anyone know? . . .

AN ATMOSPHERIC WINTRY MEMORY



[Photographer not known]

A CHRISTMAS GHOST STORY

by Mel Reuben

The Red Lion pub opposite the former Corporation Transport depot was well frequented by retired Corporation tram, trolleybus, bus, drivers and conductors. Old Jack, who had worked for the Corporation man and boy over 50 years, would hold court in the public bar. He would tell some old yarns about the Transport Department to anyone who would listen to him which invariably led to the odd free pint of his favourite tippie.

One particular afternoon near to Christmas Jack was sat in his usual comer when his former conductor Fred walked in with his grandson John. After Fred purchased a round Jack started to tell young John about the strange happenings that took place over the road at the site of the old Corporation Depot one Christmas Eve shortly after the Corporation had sold out to "Stagebus".

The story goes that in 1934 a tram was returning to the depot after its final trip late Christmas Eve. The approach to the depot entrance was down Winter Hill, a rather steep incline with a sharp right hand hook in to the depot yard. It had been snowing for the last few days, with a bitterly cold north wind blowing straight through the windowless tram front. The tram driver Tommy Jenkins was cursing the fact he had drawn the short straw when clocking on which resulted in him being rostered with one of the old timers instead of the brand new streamliners.

As the tram approached the top of Winter Hill, Tommy was feeling really under the weather; despite wearing gloves his hands felt like two blocks of ice. All he could think of was getting a welcome warm drink in the depot canteen. He was envious of his conductor who was inside the tram counting his pennies and sorting out his waybill. As he descended the hill a big black dog suddenly crossed the path of the tram. Tommy panicked. He tried to apply his brakes but his hands were somehow welded by sheer cold to the controller and hand brake. He hit the dog which gave a loud howl, the tram derailed and slid sideways down the icy road, crashing through the depot rails and thudding into three trams which were waiting to go in to the depot.

Pandemonium broke out with everyone rushing to the crash scene. Sadly poor Tommy was in bad state and despite a heroic effort by the staff and the emergency services he was declared dead. The conductor was so badly injured he never worked again. At the subsequent inquiry by the Corporation and Government Rail Inspectors the blame was placed on the driver despite the conductor stating that a big black dog was responsible for the accident. However at the hearing it was reported there was no sign of the dog after the wreckage was cleared away.

The older trams were withdrawn early in the New Year and two years later the trams were abandoned for trolleybuses. There were stories told that every Christmas Eve the clanging and grinding of a tram rushing down the hill and the howling of a dog could be heard by the night cleaners, but Jack said he thought was a load of hogwash.

Jack had returned to the Transport Department after serving with distinction during the war. He became a trolleybus driver and later a bus driver serving the Corporation until the Council decided that the running costs of the transport undertaking were becoming a liability on the rates. Consequently the Council accepted a huge amount of money from "Stagebus" and the Corporation Transport ceased to exist. It was a sad day for Jack; some of his workmates decided to look for other jobs, but Jack had only a few years left and as "Stagebus" stated they would honour his pension he accepted the offer of a job as the depot gatekeeper. Jack said at least he was warm during the winter months and the only problem he had was keeping the bus "anoraks" out of the Company's premises. A year later the Company announced that they were moving their bus operation to a new depot at the edge of town and had sold the depot site to a supermarket chain.

During a period between November and December all the buses and office staff were re-located to the new facility. Jack was asked if he would stay on as gatekeeper until after Christmas when the demolition men would be moving in. On his last shift on Christmas Eve, Jack brewed himself a cup of tea. Sitting in his comfy office he looked up Winter Hill; it had been snowing and it was very cold outside. Suddenly he heard the loud howling of a dog, a gathering crescendo of metal and then an almighty thud. Jack ran out to see if there had been car or bus crash, but to his amazement there was nothing to be seen except for some strange marks in the snow. It suddenly dawned on him that all those ghost stories told by the old Corporation workers could be true.

John said to Jack "That's strange. My mate works in the supermarket on the site of the old transport depot. Last Christmas Eve, if you recall, there was heavy snow all day so due to the weather they closed the store early and let the staff have a Christmas party in the canteen. The party was in full swing when one of the staff came rushing in to the canteen and said he could hear a dog howling and the sound of mangling metal coming from the supermarket car park. The Emergency Services were called immediately on 999 as it sounded as though there had been a almighty crash. When the staff rushed out to see if help was needed they could find no trace of a dog, but strangely, half way up Winter Hill they could see huge paw marks in the snow right across the path of two grooved lines approximately 4ft 8½ in apart. The groove marks stopped dead and then there was a massive clearing of the snow as if a snowplough had cleared the road right the way down to the supermarket car park.

Season's Greetings

from your Committee - Ian, John, Tony, Jim, Mike, Mel, & Malcolm

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Committee & Trustees: Ian M. Dougill (Chairman); Malcolm Hindes (Vice-Chairman); Tony Cowell (Hon. Treasurer), John B. Holmes (Hon. Secretary)

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