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November 2009, Issue 10
November marks the 50th Anniversary since the Leeds Corporation Tramways system closed. Following on from our “Crich50” special earlier in the year, we thought that it was appropriate that we marked this event accordingly, and have compiled an Issue that is jam packed full of Leeds information, including short profiles on most of the preserved Leeds cars and then a more in depth look at one of the current major restorations in the tramway world – that of Leeds Horse Car 107. We’ve also got a multitude of photographs spanning over a century, and I’d like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to this Issue; in no particular order, these are: Andrew Waddington, Tony Waddington, Jamie Guest, Jason Cross & Richard Lomas. Please note that all material remains the copyright of their respective author and may not be reproduced without their permission.

At this stage I’ll explain why we’re doing a Leeds Special – especially as many of those in the tramway world who know me will be aware that, with the exception of Leeds 602 and Leeds 6/Hull 96, I dislike every Leeds tram... particularly the currently withdrawn Leeds 345! Well, we have decided to produce this special as we felt that the 50th Anniversary since closure is a particularly significant event in the history of British tramways, and therefore was not something that we could really miss! I hope that you agree with us and enjoy this Leeds themed Issue.

More pertinent to Tramways Monthly this month is the news of our latest “first”. Earlier in the month we announced the release of our first publication, ‘A Guide to the Blackpool Tramway’, and this is now available to order via Mail Order. For more details please see page 17, and if you would like to order one at (what we believe to be!) a bargain price of £3.50 including postage and packaging you can email us at sales@tramways-monthly.com. The Guide has been in production for almost 6 months now, and contains 56 pages detailing every class of tram in the fleet, a fully fleet list and a very wide variety of photos across the system. It would be a useful addition to any Blackpool visitor’s suitcase – be they hardcore enthusiast or casual visitor!

Also don’t forget about the Tramways Monthly Blog, Forum and Twitter page which are regularly updated and the Forum in particular is building up a rather large community.

Finally, a note that I will be in Blackpool on the 8th November for the Fleetwood events. During the morning you’ll see me out and about on the system, before moving onto “Tour D” – the tour using Twin Set Three and Balloon 706. Hope to see many faces there!

I hope that you all enjoy the Issue.

Jack Gordon, 06/11/09
Tramways Monthly Editor
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Withdrawn Brush car for Fleetwood finale!
The Fylde Tramway Society have announced details of what looks set to be one of the most exciting tram tours of recent times - the very last run to Fleetwood Ferry before the street tramway through Fleetwood closes for remodelling!
The tour is due to take place on the evening of Sunday 8th November, and will include two runs to Fleetwood. The second run will follow the final service car of the evening, making the tour the last ever departure from the Ferry terminus in its current form. This will be a very historic evening, and to mark the occasion the trams taking part will be given a civic send-off on the night!

Three trams have been hired for this special event; Brush Railcoach 627, Balloon 702 and Blackpool & Fleetwood Box 40. Whilst 702 is very rarely used in normal passenger service, the star of the show will undoubtedly be 627 which hasn’t carried passengers since November 2004, when it was one of many Brush cars to be placed in store. The tram is to be re-instated for this event due to the fact that it was the last tram to operate from North Station to Fleetwood in the days of operating through Blackpool town centre, so this will be a nice little nod to the past, whilst also creating another very important piece of tramway history. 627 carries an all-over advert livery for the Buccaneer Family Bar, a contract that was transferred shortly after 627 was withdrawn from service. During early October the tram was seen being shunted around the depot area a few times, and was spotted in the Electrical Compound on 10th October undergoing preparation work for its outing.

For further information on how to book your place on this special tour, please visit: http://www.freewebs.com/fyldetramwaysociety-blackpool/ - please note that this tour is not connected with Tramways Monthly or any members of our Editorial team. The first people to book tickets will be given the first chance to ride on the very last tram to leave the Ferry, whilst any additional tour participants will be able to ride on the tram in front of it.

Farewell to Fleetwood: An Update
The ‘Farewell to Fleetwood’ event taking place on the 7th & 8th November, organised by the Lancastrian Transport Trust and supported by TRAMS magazine, has expanded. Due to massive demand for tickets, extra trams have been added to two of the four tours that have been arranged for the weekend.

The first tour on Saturday 7th will now feature three trams - Fleetwood Box car 40 and Brush car 623 will now be supplemented with Sheffield 513.

The Sunday morning tour will also see the two Coronation cars, 304 & 660, joined by Balloon 700 to give a real taste of the 1950s.

Please note that the other tours remain unchanged.

Town End closes for trackwork
The Town End terminus of the Crich tramway has been closed temporarily, so that the trackwork, including a set of points, can be replaced. With effect from Monday 5th October all service trams are terminating outside the Red Lion pub, although as the attraction will be closed for winter from the beginning of November, this shouldn’t have a major impact on tramcar operations.

The Town End trackwork was originally laid in the early 1960s, and actually was purchased second hand from Sheffield. Bearing this in mind, the track has lasted exceptionally well! The sleepers and foundations beneath the tramway was renewed in 2005, but the original track remained in situ. The current track renewal work is being carried out by the same people who relaid the Wakebridge passing loop earlier this year, so we can look forward to a very high quality job being done.

Boat car 606 sold
Following some recent uncertainty regarding the future of Blackpool 606 - one of three open Boat trams preserved in America - we are delighted to be able to confirm that the car has now been sold to the National Capital Trolley Museum in Maryland, USA. 606 was moved to the US Trolleyville museum back in 2000 in exchange for Standard car 147, but the site has since closed down.

The Museum is now aiming to raise $50,000 as they need to move Boat 606, along with two other trams, to their premises before the end of this year. The other trams concerned are both PCC cars: Toronto Transit Commission 4602 and Massachusetts Bay 3334.

For further details on how you can help, please visit the Museum’s website: http://www.dctrolley.org/
Balloon 722 scrapped

On Thursday 15th October, Blackpool Balloon car 722 was moved into the BTS Body Shop to be scrapped.

Thankfully, despite rumours that the tram was to be the first of several to be broken up in the next few months, it has now been confirmed that this is not the case. Although inevitably there will come a time when Blackpool Transport will need to dispose of any unwanted vehicles, there is no great urgency to scrap any more trams at the present time.

However, whilst BTS are likely to receive some criticism for this decision, we must remember that the various museums and preservation groups have had plenty of opportunity to purchase the withdrawn cars. So far, the Lancastrian Transport Trust have taken several trams and hopefully more will follow -- whilst Heaton Park Tramway and the Rushden Historical Transport Society have so far acquired one tram each. If other groups wish to buy a tram, clearly the time to act is NOW!

For the record, 722 is only the second Balloon ever to be scrapped; the first was 705, and both were disposed of as a result of suffering collision damage. 722 last ran in autumn 2006 and advertised the Transport & General Workers Union at the time. The car had received a heavy overhaul back in the early 1990s, but was not stripped to the extent of other rebuilds from the same period and so was not in particularly great condition. Earlier this year it was reported that the tram had been offered to the LTT, but presumably the anticipated withdrawal of other Balloon cars in better condition by 2012 led to this being rejected. By the end of October, 722's top deck had been completely broken up with just the lower deck framework and underframe remaining, and this will surely not last much longer. Sadly, not everything can be saved and 722 has been one of the unlucky ones. It is also perhaps interesting to note that 722 is the first Blackpool tram to ever be scrapped whilst carrying an all-over advertisement livery.
Major award for illuminated Western Train
Blackpool Transport Services Ltd. have received a major prize for 'Team of the Year' at the third annual National Light Rail Awards, which took place on 7th October. The award was given to the company’s Engineering Department in recognition of the work carried out on the restoration of the illuminated Western Train, 733+734. Mick Perrett (representing the engineering section) and Bryan Lindop received the prestigious award from Chris Mole MP, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport.

BTS Managing Director Trevor Roberts said of the honour: “No other transport operator in the country has to work every day with vehicles that are 75 years old or more and it is only the tireless efforts of the Company’s Engineering Team, led by Engineering Director Dave Hislop that enables Conservation, Tourism and Heritage projects such as this, to take their rightful place alongside Blackpool’s wealth of outstanding attractions.”

Dave Hislop proudly commented: “The skilled craftsmanship of my Engineers are exemplified by this latest win. From the tin smith to the electricians, body builders, fitters and painters; they all have played their part to achieve another magnificent restoration. They should all feel justifiably proud of their achievement.”

Western Train Project Coordinator Bryan Lindop said, “I am absolutely delighted that our Engineering Team has won this prestigious award. Few other transport operators throughout the British Isles employ the diverse skills that enable us to carry out such fine work as this. It’s true to say that the Western Train has probably been their greatest challenge and it is entirely fitting that our dedicated craftsmen have received the recognition that they so rightly deserve.”

Our congratulations go to BTS on this well-deserved honour; and our thanks also go to the company for providing a press release from which the above quotations have been extracted.

News in brief
Edinburgh’s first new tram expected next year
Tramcar operation in Edinburgh is expected to resume in 2010, albeit only for testing purposes, it has been announced. The first of the city’s new trams will hopefully arrive in April next year, and it is hoped to test it along a short section of track from Gogar to Edinburgh Airport later on in 2010.

A steel frame has also appeared at Gogar, which is the first stage of the depot which will house the new fleet of supertrams.

Supertram strike gets axed
A proposed strike on the Sheffield Supertram system over a pay freeze that was rejected by Union bosses has been cancelled after Stagecoach indicated that they would consider offering their staff a revised pay offer. The initial upset had been caused because Stagecoach employees elsewhere had been given a pay rise, and strike action was planned to take place between 15th and 17th October. Happily the Union are now encouraging staff to accept the new offer, so it is hoped that no disruption to services will occur after all.

Crich Exhibition Hall to get makeover
Crich Tramway Village have announced that they have been successful in their application for grant funding from two sources - the Wolfson Foundation and Derby & Derbyshire Economic Partnership - to pay for a refurbishment of their Exhibition Hall. Most of the displays have been unchanged since 1992 and are looking rather tired, so this news is most welcome and will hopefully make the exhibitions more appealing to the non-enthusiast visitor. It is not yet known what form the new displays will take, or if the trams displayed in the building will be moved around, however.
News in brief

Public allowed to drive Blackpool Standard!
The new Tram Driving Experiences being offered by Blackpool Transport Services Ltd. are proving increasingly popular. As reported recently, the usual tram offered for the courses is wartime liveried Brush car 623 - but on both 2nd & 4th October, Standard 147 was used instead! It’s thought that 147 was standing in for 623 due to the Brush car being unavailable, although BTS have stated that once someone has completed one driving experience, they may return to drive a different tram, with 147 being one of a number of potential candidates.

Please note that due to the imminent winter closure of the tramway over winter whilst the first stage of upgrading work takes place, no driving experiences will be offered over winter, but the courses will resume in 2010. Time to start saving those pennies now if you fancy having a go!!

Tramways Monthly Stats
During October 2009, we had 1468 unique visitors to the website, and 7.32 GB of bandwidth were used. The busiest day was the 20th October. Issue 9 had a total of 377 downloads during this reporting period. In total, there were 130371 "hits" across the site. Our forum had 836 unique visitors, 21601 hits and over 390MB of data was transferred.

Of these statistics:
*Unique visits, bandwidth, total hits and issue downloads were up on last month.
*Forum unique visitors, total hits and bandwidth were up on last month.

Latest News...

East Anglia update
This month we are delighted to bring you a round-up of the latest happenings at the East Anglia Transport Museum near Lowestoft, courtesy of the Museum’s own quarterly newsletter.

A record season for visitor numbers has seen two trams in service throughout the year, these being Blackpool Standard 159 and Amsterdam 474 (which is the only Dutch tram in the UK). Both trams have experienced problems with leaking roofs, but unfortunately a lack of resources has meant that they have had to remain in service. However, some remedial work has been carried out on Blackpool VAMBAC car 11, which was also suffering the effects of water ingress and has been re-sealed where necessary. The tram has also benefitted from some repairs to its braking equipment and the compressor now runs less often, resulting in a much quieter tram (and being a VAMBAC, it was pretty quiet anyway!).

Unfortunately, London Transport 1858 was absent all summer as the motor brushes and controllers needed urgent attention. However it is very much hoped that it will return to service before too long, as it is a very popular tram and has had quite a large amount of money invested in it in recent years.

As well as maintaining the operational trams, trackwork has also been in progress this summer which has seen the tramway’s woodland terminus re-aligned, which will allow car 11 to run to the very end of the line for the first time due to improved clearance. Blackpool 159 was the first car to reach the new terminus on 3rd June, but passenger services to this location will not resume until next year as the overhead has not yet been completed. In addition to this relatively large project, welding work has also been undertaken on the curve into the wooded section of tramway, and five sections of used track have been acquired from Crich which are suitable for further use at East Anglia.

Add in the completion of restoration work on Ashton-Under-Lyne trolleybus 87, continued reassembly of tramcar Lowestoft 14 and various other projects, and you can clearly appreciate that it’s been a very hectic summer at Carlton Colville!
Six trams run in one day at Birkenhead

Sunday 4th October saw the annual Bus & Tram Show take place at Birkenhead, and as usual the heritage tramway there put on a good show with a four car service operating throughout the day. The first trams to enter service for the day were Birkenhead 20 and Liverpool 762, which were joined by Wallasey 78 and Lisbon 730 in the early part of the afternoon. This meant that all four of the trams that have been restored to running order for use at Birkenhead by the Merseyside Tramway Preservation Society were operating together - but this situation did not last for very long!

Due to to problems with its wheels slipping on the wet tram lines, 762 was taken out of service and replaced by Hong Kong car 70. Rain led to the open-top tram Birkenhead 20 was also pulled from service and Hong Kong 69 took over. This gave a very rare chance to see all six trams in the operational fleet out in service in the same day, which was certainly an unexpected treat for the enthusiasts who attended this event.

In addition to the trams mentioned above, Liverpool 'Baby Grand' 245 was on display inside the main tram depot at Taylor Street along with Liverpool horse tram 43, currently housed on the upper level of the same building. Visitors could also see the latest progress on the current MTPS restoration project, Warrington 2. As well as all the tram action there were a good number of buses on display and in operation. So, if you haven't yet attended this event, a visit in the next few years is highly recommended!

Heaton Park news update

The MTMS are gearing up for the last big event of the year at Heaton Park - an event to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Leeds' last trams, which will be held on Sunday 8th November. This promises to be a spectacular day, and the star of the show will obviously be Leeds 6 which will be fitted with platform doors on one side only, to enhance its appearance for this occasion. There will also be a chance to see all four trams in the Heaton Park fleet in action, including horse tram Manchester L53 which will hopefully be in service between 12:45 and 3:30pm. It is also expected that some of the trams will be in disguise for the day! There will also be a mini-procession at about noon featuring car 6 pushing L53, and some preserved Leeds buses which will be on display, and at least one of these will be giving rides during the afternoon. A Leeds tram model competition will also take place during the day, and a plaque inside car 6 is to be unveiled in memory of Alex Brown, one of the enthusiasts who ensured that this tram was preserved, who has sadly passed away recently.

As is usual practice for such events, please note that all advertised happenings are subject to change and the advertised programme may be amended if unforeseen circumstances arise.

Also at the park, the siding at Lakeside terminus has now been closed to trams. This is because the loop will partly be blocked as it is to become a temporary permanent way yard during construction of the extension. The orange fencing erected here shows the site of the preparation work for the extension. The end stop post has been moved about 2 metres to allow for the rail ends to be exposed. This means that the cars will not be able to operate in tandem on Leeds day.

News in brief

Twin cars return with a vengeance on October 3rd

Anyone who believes that the glory days of the Blackpool tramway are long over, should really have paid a visit to the seaside town on Saturday 3rd October. Despite strong winds, this was a classic illumination Saturday with some little-used trams in action; admittedly the number of tram specials used may not have been as high as it was a few years ago, but the evening certainly had the feeling of ‘the good old days’ about it, with the promenade reportedly packed with people.

The highlight of the day was undoubtedly the use of no less than three Twin sets - 672+682, 673+683 and 675+685 - on specials during the evening, and amazingly, all three of them ran to Fleetwood! This may have been helped by the poor weather which prevented open cars from running. The vintage flag was also kept flying by Standard 147 and Fleetwood Box 40, the latter making a rare appearance in public service.

Unfortunately considerable disruption was caused to the evening tram service when the illuminated Western Train 733 sustained damage to its trolley whilst operating an illumination tour. Although this was repaired on site, allowing the Train to complete its tour, this had dire implications for the timetabled service, and this may well have been what led to the three Twin cars running to Fleetwood that night.

On a more positive note, Balloon car 718 did a private tour for the Fylde Tramway Society which took the form of a ‘rare track tour’, including use of the Broadwater crossover. Although 715 may not have seemed like an obvious choice for this enthusiast event, the unrefurbished Balloon seemed to prove a big hit as it was virtually full to capacity!
Lowestoft 14 is a four-wheel open top tram which is currently being extensively rebuilt by volunteers at the East Anglia Transport Museum for eventual use on their short tramway line. With the underframe fully assembled, attention has been turned to the main body structure which is finally beginning to resemble a tramcar again. The lower deck saloon has now been largely assembled and will soon be ready for canvassing. The outer roof supports have all been replaced, but the inner ones were salvaged with only minor attention required. Ensuring that all parts join together and are level has not been an easy task with very little workshop space around the tram available, and for this reason two new steel dash panels have already arrived to check the alignments, despite the fact that these will not be fitted for quite some time. Original Lowestoft tram beading will riveted in place onto the dashes at a later time. Meanwhile, away from the museum, a contractor has produced some steel reinforcements to strengthen the canopy bends, whilst further work has been carried out by local organisation, Special Objectives for Local Disabled. Whilst there is still an awful lot of work to be done the tram is progressing well in view of the limited resources available, and the museum deserve huge praise for carrying out what will surely be one of their most ambitious restoration projects so far.

Blackpool Boat 600 has now vacated the Body Shop and is currently sitting on the Body Lift at the back of the main tram shed at Rigby Road. The car has been reduced to nothing more than a shell, and as there is not much on a Boat car to begin with, one can imagine just how little of it remains! The underframe is currently receiving major renovation, in particular the centre platform area. Although the underframes of the open Boats are in far better condition than other trams of similar age due to the low mileages they operate, quite a bit of work will still be required.

Blackpool Balloon 720 has also transferred to storage in Rigby Road depot as its rebuild is now virtually complete. This has included the fitting of power doors to its new centre porches will considerably change the appearance of the car, although they do not look as obtrusive as some people have suggested they would. The tram has not yet been painted as the increased width of its centre platform means that 720 cannot operate on the tramway yet, as the tracks need to be re-aligned on certain sections, with a wider gap between northbound and southbound lines in order to allow the modernised cars to pass.

London United Tramways 159 continues to progress steadily at Crich Tramway Village. Recent work has largely focussed on the lower side body panels and the fitting of seats to the upper deck.

Blackpool Pantograph car 167’s overhaul is progressing very well, and the bogies are at an advanced stage. However one of the axles has been found to be defective; it is very fortunate that this has been discovered, as it could have led to a potentially major incident had the car not been lifted when it has, proving the worth of the eight yearly overhaul programme undertaken by the Crich workshop team. The bogie bolsters and air brake pipes will also require attention, whilst new motor armature bearings will also be needed. The tram will also receive an external repaint before it is returned to service.

Leeds 180 has moved to the Paint Bay at the front of the Crich workshop as it is nearing the end of its overhaul. Some minor paintwork touching-up has been carried out, including repainting of the steps which will actually make its appearance more authentic than was previously the case. The tram is expected to rejoin the running fleet next year.

Paisley 68 has become the latest tramcar to be withdrawn from the running fleet at Crich Tramway Village. The car has been looking in need of some TLC for a while now, and is thought to require a body overhaul and repaint; however, its demise has actually been enforced by problems with worn wheel profiles. This leaves just two open cars in the current operational fleet - these being Blackpool & Fleetwood ‘Rack’ 2 and Southampton 45 - and unfortunately this situation looks unlikely to change for 2010. Hopefully once current restoration project LUT 159 is completed matters will improve on the open top front.
Leeds: The Preserved Tramcars
By Andrew Waddington and Jack Gordon

Leeds 180 is the sole survivor of a once 100-strong class of ‘Horsfield’ trams, which took their name from the tramway’s manager of the time. Originally painted blue, the tram was later modernised with the fitting of platform doors and a bow collector in place of the traditional trolley pole, and in 1952 it was repainted red and off-white. 180 was meant to be withdrawn in 1957, but was soon reinstated to service after sister car 189 was damaged in an accident, and even assumed 189’s fleet number as well as receiving its truck and a few other parts. This ensured its survival until the tramway closed in 1959, and it moved to Crich one year later. Now numbered 180 once again, the car has been a regular performer at Derbyshire and during 2009 it has received significant workshop attention, including a major truck overhaul, in order to ensure that it remains in good condition for many years to come.

Leeds 6 was originally Hull 96 - a four wheel open topper built in 1901. The tram was gradually modified over the years; first it acquired a ‘Bellamy’ top cover with open ends, then it was totally enclosed. The car was later cut down to a single-decker and sold to Leeds Corporation for use as a works car, where it was repainted 6 and painted grey. This enabled the tram to survive long enough to be preserved, and following an overhaul it eventually began operating on the Highways Department, Manchester in 1988. Due to the low height of the depot building it was possible to return the tram to its earlier guise as a double-decker, so instead it was restored as a single-deck enclosed car, but still painted in Hull livery. A further overhaul followed in 2008, after which the tram was painted grey to portray its latter day guise as a Leeds works car. This has been extremely well-received, so much so that it is hoped that it may be loaned to Beamish Museum for a special event next year.

Leeds 107 is the current major restoration project of the Leeds Transport Historical Society. It is the sole survivor of a class of twenty horse cars built for Leeds by G. F. Milines of Birkenhead in 1898. It is also the only known surviving Leeds horse tram. 107 cost £160 in 1898, and only operated for three years, withdrawn in 1901 following the completion of the electrification of the system. Following withdrawal it was converted for use as a mess hut by the council Highways Department, and was later given to a council worker for use as a summerhouse. It remained as such until 1977, when it was discovered and acquired by the LTHS and moved into a garage. 107 then sat in that garage for nearly 30 years, before in 2005 it was “rediscovered” and restoration work began in earnest. The restoration is now in full swing and is starting to look like a tram once more. It was displayed earlier this year at a transport show at Elland Road Stadium. More can be read about the project on page 13.

Leeds 2 is a self-propelled tower wagon that was built in 1932 using parts from other vehicles. Effectively it is a second hand inspection tour mounted on a four wheel truck, with a driver’s cab at each end. Interestingly, its original truck has been rebuilt and is now used under Sheffield 74 at Crich. After withdrawal it was acquired by the Leeds Transport Historical Society, who restored it to working order and presented it to the Tramway Museum Society. It arrived at Crich in 1970 and has stayed there ever since; for many years it saw occasional use, but this seems to have ceased in the last few years and the car is currently stored in the main depot complex. No 2 is unusual as it is the only tram at Crich to be fitted with a trolley pole and a bow collector, and may even be the only such tram in existence!

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Leeds 602 was by far the most sophisticated tram to ever operate in Leeds. Built in 1953, it entered service in the month of Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation, and was painted in a stunning purple and cream livery to mark this occasion. Externally 602 looks similar to car 600, but with more stylish curved ends, however its main difference besides the paintwork is electrical. 602 was the only Leeds tram to be fitted with Variable Automatic Multinotch Braking & Acceleration Control (VAMBAC) equipment which was housed in a tower underneath the bow collector. A similar tram numbered 601, also painted purple, was also built, and both cars were supplied by Charles H Roe - the only trams ever built by this company. Sadly 602's complexity led to it being somewhat underused and like Leeds 600, it had a very short working life. Thankfully it was preserved as an example of what might have been had Leeds and other British cities decided to invest in, rather than abandon, their tramways. The car has operated at Crich in the past and is undoubtedly one of the Museum's most popular exhibits, but disappointingly despite being fully repainted in 2006, it was retired at the end of that year and hasn’t run since.

Leeds 399 was the last tram to be painted in the very early Leeds colours of primrose yellow, brown and white. It was built in 1925 and was something of a hybrid, being of very basic design, but being fitted with air brake equipment to help it get uphill on some particularly hilly routes. It was also an early example of a completely enclosed tramcar. By 1930, 399 had gained a rather less striking dark blue livery and led a fairly uneventful existence until withdrawal from service in 1951. It was retained for shunting purposes at Kirkstall Works, then Swinegate Depot, and finally it moved to Crich in 1959. This is another tram that has benefited from the invaluable support of the Leeds Transport Historical Society - however it wasn't until December 1990 that it finally joined the running fleet at the Museum. It was also used to inaugurate the traverser (a railed platform used to move trams sideways to access the Exhibition Hall at Crich), which was very appropriate as the original design plan of the new Exhibition Hall had depicted 399 on the traverser! Since then 399 has proved to be a very popular and reliable member of the core operational fleet and will surely remain so for many years to come.

Leeds 600 started life as Sunderland 85 - an experimental single deck tram built in 1931. By the mid 1940s however, it had been withdrawn due to being a one-off, and had been sold to Leeds Corporation who were investigating the possibility of introducing tram subways in the city and wanted to try out some experimental single deckers. After receiving various alterations over a lengthy period, 85 finally re-emerged bearing the fleet number 600 in 1954. Amongst the most notable changes were the installation of centre entrance doors, whilst the driver had the luxury of a cab area separate from the rest of the tram. A paltry 34 seats were offered along with considerable space for standing passengers, but the saloons were arguably the tram's most pleasing feature. However, for all of its strengths, 600's days were numbered as soon as it had entered service due to the decision to abandon trams in Leeds, and after just three years of service in that city car 600 was deemed surplus to requirements, once again due to it being non-standard. The car was duly preserved at Crich and did briefly operate there, but is now stored at Clay Cross and cannot run due to cracks in the bogie frames.

Leeds 345 dates from 1920 and was built as a double deck tram with open balconies. However, by the mid-1930s the balconies were enclosed and it was fitted with upholstered seats, becoming known as a 'Convert', ensuring that it was not left in the shade by the newer Horsfield cars (such as 180). It last ran in its native city in 1948 and was then used as a store room inside the tram shed at Swinegate. Despite being only the third tram to arrive at Crich in 1959, 345 had to wait a long time for its chance to shine, and was taken off site for storage in 1980 due to its appalling external condition. Eventually it was completely taken apart and rebuilt in the Museum's workshop, being launched into service on 1st April 2006. It was also the first car to be restored following the opening a new viewing gallery in the extended workshop building. 345 is currently off the road with a number of defects, but is expected back in the works for attention over the coming winter.

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‘The Others’!

In addition to the Leeds trams in preservation listed above, there are also four other trams still in existence which ran in Leeds after being sold on by the cities they originally operated in.

As mentioned above, Leeds 6 at Heaton Park started its career in Hull - and another preserved tram had a similar history. **Hull 132** was one of 43 trams to be sold on to Leeds where it was renumbered 446, entering service there in 1942, continuing in service there until 1951. It ran there in both dark blue (similar to car 345) and wartime khaki livery. There, 132 and its sisters gained the nickname of 'Kipperboxes' due to their origins, a name which still haunts 132 to this day. The car was actually one of the first to be obtained by the Tramway Museum Society and spent many years stored at Crich, but in the 1980s it returned to its native city where it has been restored for static display in Hull livery, and can now be seen along with two other trams in the city’s excellent ‘Streetlife’ Transport Museum.

Another batch of trams to be bought by Leeds Corporation where London ‘Felthams’; however, two of these were damaged by fire and subsequently had to be substituted. One of the replacements was **London County Council 1**, an experimental car which had seen little use in London due to it being unique, and therefore drivers had to be trained on it specially. The tram had been painted in a striking blue and white livery when new, earning it the nickname ‘Bluebird’, but in later years the car had been painted in the more typical London Transport colours of red and cream. In Leeds it received a much darker shade of red, and became number 301 in their fleet. Upon withdrawal it was moved to Clapham as part of a transport collection, but after this closed the tram went to Crich where it was subsequently repainted in London Transport livery. The car has never run there and will require a huge amount of work in order to be made operational again, but it does make a very nice static exhibit.

Two Felthams that did make it to Leeds have also survived. Car 501 was accepted as part of London’s Transport Museum Collection and has been returned to its original guise as **Metropolitan 355** - sadly a recent reorganisation of the museum saw this splendid tram moved to the Museum’s storage depot, which is only open to the public on selected dates. **Leeds 526** remains in its final Leeds livery and is preserved in the USA, but it has never run there and is thought to be in a poor condition. It should be noted that both of these are normal Feltham cars, unlike no. 331 at Crich Tramway Village which is unique because of its centre entrance doors. This tram never went to Leeds and instead owes its survival to use in Sunderland.
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Whatever you call them!
Picture courtesy Mal Rowe

If you like European Trams then this is the group for you!
Picture courtesy David Beale

eurotrams discussion group

http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eurotrams
Cold Wednesdays
The Story of Leeds Horse Car 107

By Jamie Guest

In the mid 1950’s a group of Leeds Tram enthusiasts realised that the trams were disappearing and decided to try and preserve some of the remaining cars. They formed a society called the Leeds Tramway Historical Society (LTHS) and largely through their efforts most of the Leeds cars that still exist today were saved. Secure storage was always a problem and not all the cars that were initially saved have survived to the present day. Most of the ex-Leeds cars that are now at Crich were saved as a result of the efforts of this band of enthusiasts.

Some of this founder members were also heavily involved in the founding of Crich and one in particular, Jim Soper, has also made a huge personal contribution to Crich using his professional skills as an architect. He is responsible for preserving and rebuilding The Red Lion pub and the Bowes-Lyon bridge and still acts as adviser to the TMS. As well as his building works he is an active historian and has written the multi-volume work ‘Leeds Transport’ which is a monumental history of Public Transport in Leeds. Volume 4 has been published and volume 5 is in preparation.

During this time the LTHS has become the Leeds Transport Historical Society is now a registered charity. It is the LTHS that has taken the financial risk of publishing Leeds Transport.

So how does all this relate to the last Leeds Horse tram. In 1977 a member of the LTHS, the late Alex Brown, was working in the East End Park area of Leeds, when he saw a summerhouse in a garden that had, what he described as ‘Tram shaped windows’. It was initially thought that this was an early Leeds Electric cars but enquiries revealed that it was a Horse car built by G F Milnes and Co in the late 1890’s. Leeds had bought 20 of these garden seat double deckers in 1897 and 98.

The owners of the summerhouse, Charlie and Stella Wilson, were contacted and said that they wanted to get rid of the car as they had plans for that part of the garden. Charlie who was a panel beater and coachbuilder, worked as a restorer of historic cars, in particular Rolls Royce’s. He didn’t want the tram to be scrapped but as he was building a new wall it had to move fairly quickly otherwise it could only have been taken out in pieces.

A group of LTHS members then turned up with a drop side transit, a set of bogie wheels from the Crich quarry, some angle iron and various baulks of timber. The car was carefully manhandled onto the Transit and driven away up York Road for storage. It was estimated to weigh 1.5 tons which was just within the Transit’s capacity, but Bernard Donald, the driver and engineering guru, had not allowed for a lot of damp and several layers of roofing felt. He later commented that “The steering felt a little light”

The car was then put away in the depths of a garage and stayed there for nearly 30 years.

Some work was done to measure the car and Jim Soper rubbed down the number panel to reveal the identity of the car as 107. This had been built in 1898 at a cost of £160 and withdrawn in late 1901, following full electrification of the Leeds system. It had been converted into a mess hut for the council Highway Department and had then been given to a council employee for use as a summerhouse.
The society talked about restoring the car over the years but were quite rightly concerned that they did not want it to become a kit of parts that never got put back together, like so many other restoration projects.

This state of affairs finished in 2005 when two new society members, Paul Brearley and the author, attended the LTHS AGM. Alex Brown asked what was happening to the horse car and as the committee seemed reluctant to answer the question. I asked “What Horse car”. A visit was later arranged to the garage and Paul prodded the structure and announced “We could do something with this.”. Paul had spent his working life in the joinery trade and his opinions on woodworking need to be respected. As a result of this a meeting was held and a team was formed.

We decided to work 1 day a week and to treat it as a job. Wednesday was the most convenient day so in early September 2005 we started work.

The first job was to clear the garage and gain some working space. In the piles of transport related equipment we found 2 Leeds bow collectors and a controller as well as several canopy switches that had come from Leeds trams. One of the Bow collectors has now been donated to Heaton Park for fitting to their ex Hull works car that worked in Leeds. We also we much time rubbing down the 10 layers of paint to confirm the original livery and lining details. The outer layer was apparently British Rail Blue that had come from York Carriage works. Below that was a dark Green and then Highways Department dark Brown. Finally we got to the yellow that the car had carried in service together with an undercoat and primer. Jim Soper, who is a key member of the team, worked inside the car removing a layer of thick white Anaglypta to reveal the varnished woodwork of the monitor roof. We also stripped out the lining that had been put in the car.

The working parties progressed and over the course of that cold winter we came to appreciate the natural air conditioning of the workshop, that had been responsible for preserving so much of the original timber. The garage faces North and the doors have to be left wide open for light. Thus the title of the article.

We gradually dismantled the car to assess the condition of each piece of timber and metalwork. This became an archeological dig as no plans exist for the tram. We became adept at telling the various pieces of workmanship apart. These were

a) G F Milnes original work. (Very good)
b) Kirkstall road works conversion work. (Excellent workmanship)
c) Summerhouse conversion (rough and ready with nails instead of screws).

When we eventually got to the underframe we discovered that the remains of the coachbolts that had held the running gear on had rusted and expanded so unfortunately we had to condemn the solebars, headstocks and cross members. We did save the four diagonal corner braces. The Society was happy for restoration to take place and a project plan was written. The first timbers ordered were for the underframe and these came in Douglas Fir which was lovely to work on. Bernard Donald then put his surveying talents to use and designed new corner brackets, using the remains of the originals together with the various marks on the solebars. These were manufactured in Batley and by the end of 2006 we were able to make a test assembly of the new underframe.

As well as working on the car the team have got to know other groups involved in Horse car Restoration on Merseyside, Ipswich, Edinburgh, Heaton Park and Beamish. We have either hosted visits or been to see their own efforts ad much useful interchange of ideas and material has taken place. Membership of ASTRO (The Association of Tramcar Restorers and Operators) has proved to be valuable.

Whilst all the joints were being cut in the various underframe pieces Bernard used Photogrammetry to design the missing platform and staircase. This process was helped by making a mock up using parts of the old underframe, some serviceable end frame timbers, various bits of demolition timber and old wardrobe.
doors. These were held together by lengths of threaded rod, so for £11.68p we got a design mock up. At the second attempt we got the proportions of the stairs correct and also marked out the crown boards.

By early 2007 we were able to start to erect the underframe. This was done upside down and all the various straps and bolts were added after the solebars had been drilled for the truss rods with an 18” long drill bit. The frame was then accurately surveyed and four steel plates attached where the axlebox assemblies will be bolted on. These were again checked for alignment and the various holes for bolts and spring rods drilled. Finally after a coat of paint the frame was turned the right way up and paced on four sets of blocks. These were in the same positions as the axles and the frame was again checked for sag and twist and the truss rods (repaired originals) adjusted. This process will continue throughout the cars construction so that all the necessary stresses needed to keep the car in alignment will be built into it.

Once the frame was the right way up trial fitting of the corner pillars (all new) and the window pillars (3 original 3 new) took place. This revealed a problem; there isn’t a straight line on the corner pillars so we had problems getting them square. This was solved by putting the door pillars up first with a false door that was square, wedged tightly in the door opening. The pillars and end framing were then measured off the door frame. Once the end frames were on we were able to start work on the waist and rocker rails and the fitting of the ribs. Lots more mortices to cut!

The floor was also fitted and we were able to reuse 10 of the original 12 boards. Whilst these were being trial fitted a chance ray of sunlight showed a shadow near one of the wheel openings. We checked it and thus solved the problem of how the brake hangers were fixed and where. The answer was ‘above the floor bolted from underneath.’

Whilst work then continued on fitting and aligning ribs and cantrails we started looking at the roof structure. We knew that we need three new roof sticks out of the 12 originals. These had rotted around the chimney for the stove that had been installed in the summerhouse. After examining the roof we felt that the other roof sticks were too brittle to be reused and so we started the task of steam bending new ones to the correct radius. (11 feet 11 5/8 inches to be precise). Research on the web showed us how to make a steamer out of drainpipe. We also needed some old knitting needles, a wallpaper steamer, a piece of angle iron and 1 barrel nipple. This assembly was then put to use and eventually, after 2 attempts we came up with a formula that worked. Two roof sticks were then produced per week and after setting for a week were transferred to a keeper frame to preserve the radius.

Jim Soper spent many days cleaning the remains of the anaglypta out of the various parts of the roof and I then started marking and cutting the various gunstock mortices in the new roof sticks. 2009 dawned and we now had what looked like a tram again. It was 20’ long again for the first time since 1901. The platform bearers and crown boards were fitted and all the rails along both sides as well as the end bulkheads and cantrails. The ends were paneled and then Jim started checking the ribs for alignment. This took several months as the ribs were carefully scraped and sanded to give and even support for the waist and rocker panels.

Meanwhile we continued with procurement of other materials and Google again came to the rescue, enabling us to source stocks of new Pitch Pine for the saloon seats. We had been told that this was unobtainable but we eventually found some and by July the seat latts, as well as all the other long timbers we need for the project, had been delivered. We also managed to source a supply of imperial size feather edge bar from a rolling mill in the Black Country. This is to go round the rubbing strips.

In the early part of the year we were invited to take the tram to a Transport Extravaganza at Elland Road, in Leeds. This was to be held on the site of the old tram scrapyard opposite the East Stand of the football
This meant a lot of extra work making track panels and bogies but was worth the effort. On the 18th July 107 emerged from its garage for the first time in over 30 years. There was only a few millimeters clearance through the doorway. It metaphorically blinked in the sunlight and was then loaded onto a skip lorry for transport to the show. This was a great success and as part of the job of placing it in the hall it traveled on rails for the first time in well over a century.

When it was returned to the tram shed we took the opportunity to turn it round for easier access to C side and D end. Since then the roof sticks have been finished and machined but the main change is that the waist and rocker panels have been fitted. These are made from 3 layers of thin ply pinned and laminated that it doesn’t get bruised by the hammer and the pins are removed once the glue is dry. This has made a major change in the appearance of the car.

The other major milestone is that the wheels have been commissioned from a foundry in Huddersfield. A lot of research as gone into producing a CAD drawing that satisfies modern safety requirements and track standards but still preserves the integrity of the original Millers Patent design that had Board of Trade Approval. The wheels will be in chilled cast iron, a process that produces a very hard and wear resistant running surface. The wheels should be cast in the next few weeks.

As to the future, we have found a venue to do the final assembly of the tram, as the garage is too low to allow us to wheel the tram and fit the upper deck seats and handrails. It is hoped that the tram will be ready to move to the assembly venue at the end of 2011 with its stairs and dash fitted and the interior complete. There is a lot of work to do but every week it looks more and more like a tram and not a garden shed.

In the past few weeks we have also made contact with Charlie and Stella Wilson who generously donated the car to the society. It was an marvelous experience to show Charlie the car and on the way back home he commented “I'm glad to see that you’re doing a proper job”. Praise indeed from a man of his expertise and experience.

Progress with the project can be followed on a very amateurish website that I have struggled to create at http://leedshorsecar107.squarespace.com. Also if any group or society would be interested in an illustrated talk about the project I am willing to come and deliver one in return for a donation to the project fund and a contribution towards traveling expenses from Leeds.

Finally can I thank the members of the Leeds Transport Historical Society for their foresight in preserving the car and their tolerance towards an enthusiastic amateur who they have allowed to enjoy himself restoring the tram. Hopefully one day soon it will be seen being pulled by two or three horses and carrying a full load of 34 passengers. We are however a little bit short of 110 year old horse to restore.

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I know it’s hard to believe but it is time to turn our attention to the now annual contest to find the “Tram of the Year”. This is the seventh consecutive year that British Trams Online has run the contest which was originally launched as a bit of fun at the end of a year to find a UK based tram which had done “something special” in the previous 12 months.

Over the past six years seven trams have won the award with the latest tram to collect the accolade being Blackpool Balloon 717 in 2008 after a return to service following a major heritage overhaul. Previous recipients have included Blackpool Brush 623 (2007), Leeds 345 (2006), Trampower Tram (2005), Blackpool Frigate 736 & NET 203 (2004 – joint winners) and Leeds 602 (2003).

So now it is over to you! We are looking for nominations to go on the shortlist for the British Trams Online Tram of the Year 2009. What is something special? In reality that is up to you although if you look at the past winners it is normally a tram entering (or re-entering) service or a special repaint. To nominate a tram please email gareth.bto@hotmail.co.uk giving details of why you think the tram should be on the shortlist and nominations will remain open until Saturday 28th November 2009 before the shortlist is revealed on British Trams Online the following day. Voting will then remain open until early January 2010.

To find out more about the Tram of the Year contest visit http://www.britishtramsonline.co.uk/tramofyear.html where there are full details on the 2008 contest.

Most readers will no doubt be aware of the huge selection of books that detail the history of Blackpool’s famous tramway. However, Tramways Monthly are proud to reveal details of a publication that we believe is rather different from any of the other Blackpool tram books on the market.

A Guide to the Blackpool Tramway has been designed to help people get maximum enjoyment out of a visit to Blackpool for its tramway. Therefore, as well as the usual background information on the current tram fleet, this guide contains lots of handy hints on the best times to see certain trams in service, best locations for photography, and much more. Also included is helpful information on buying a Travelcard, which will hopefully prove very useful to the first time visitor. The booklet is also superbly illustrated with many excellent colour photographs showing the various types of tram that can be seen at the town.

For any readers who want to learn more about trams in general, a list of interesting web links is included, as is brief coverage of the various former Blackpool trams preserved in museums across the country. Finally, no guide to Blackpool tramway would be complete without a fleet list – and this is laid out in a way that is easy to understand, with colour coding used to distinguish between operational tramcars and those which are currently in store.

Hopefully this booklet will be something that tram fans can refer to and enjoy again and again. One reader who received a preview copy has already said that it ‘will make a great gift for those that love their Blackpool Trams as well as being an essential read for those wanting to know what trams will be spotted’, whilst another stated that ‘it’s hard to think of much in the way of improvements’. The booklet has already been hailed ‘unique’ and ‘refreshing’ – we hope that you’ll agree!

‘A Guide to the Blackpool Tramway’ is available to buy directly from us at a cost of £3, plus an additional charge of 50p for postage. Please click HERE to purchase a copy.

Introducing a new range of tram photo CDs, available from early November...

Available now to pre-order, are a selection of CDs containing superb tram photographs. All of these discs have been produced to a very high standard with images printed onto the discs, and all profits from sales will be donated to the Manchester Transport Museum Society. The following titles have been produced:

*Blackpool Tramway Summer 2009* - 150 photos including the restored Western Train, rare appearances from Stockport 5 & Sheffield 513, and all the latest advert liveries

*Blackpool Tramway Autumn 2009* - 150 photos including the last weekend of trams to Starr Gate pre-upgrade, Standard 147 on tour, 706 with Radio 2 adverts and previously unseen pictures taken inside the tram depot

*The Restoration of Manchester L53* - A special double CD set featuring over 300 photos of the Eades horse tram under restoration, being launched and in operation at both Heaton Park & Beamish Museum, as well as images from the MTMS archives and much more

All of these CDs will be available from the Heaton Park Tramway gift shop from 8th November, and by mail order by contacting andrew.waddington@tramways-monthly.com
Leeds 602 heads a line-up of tramcars towards the site of the present Bowes-Lyon Bridge at Crich.

Richard Lomas

An undated view from the archives showing Leeds 602 in service at Crich. Richard Lomas
A rare view of Leeds 600 standing on the depot fan at Crich, some years prior to transfer to storage off-site. Richard Lomas

Enthusiast’s Day 2006 is believed to have been one of the final service outings for Leeds 602 prior to its withdrawal. Here we see the immaculate tram at Town End alongside Grimsby & Immingham 14, which had been positioned on the siding for the day. Tony Waddington
It may seem hard to believe - but this is Leeds 399! Here the upper deck and truck are seen in the Crich workshop undergoing major restoration. Richard Lomas

In recent years, Leeds 399 has been of a few trams in the Crich running fleet to receive wartime-style window netting for 1940s themed weekends, as illustrated in this August 2008 view of the car returning to depot at the end of one such event day. Jason Cross
28th October 2006 saw Leeds 345 in service for the annual ‘Starlight Halloween’ event, when it was captured here in the late evening at Crich Town End, along with MET 331. Jason Cross

Horsfield car 180 arguably represents the era of Leeds tramways that most people remember. This timeless scene shows the tram posed outside the Red Lion pub at Crich Tramway Village during a private photography charter. Jason Cross
A mid-1990s scene of Leeds tower car 2 together with the Blackpool electric locomotive, then painted in red livery, outside the depot at Crich. Tony Waddington

London Transport 1 parked on the siding at Wakebridge, Crich (which has since been removed) during Enthusiast's Day, September 2004, in very poor weather conditions. Tony Waddington
And Finally...

A shorter than normal ‘And Finally’ this month, but I still hope that you find it useful and informative! Readers may be aware that my favourite Blackpool tram in Blackpool is Twin Set 672 + 682 – despite the fact that I have never seen it out! However, during a recent trip to Blackpool (my second!) I did see, photograph and ride on Twin Set 675 + 685 – ironically my least favourite tramcar out of any! Nonetheless, it was a good experience and I can now say that I’ve done a Twin! To keep with the Sets, I’m going to end this month’s Issue of Tramways Monthly with two photographs of Set 2 as Bispham few weeks ago. Both are courtesy of Jason Cross... Enjoy!