

Metrolink

Having lost its last original tramway in 1949, Greater Manchester was the first conurbation to introduce a modern generation light rail system when the first Metrolink route from Bury to Altrincham opened in 1992. With extensions, the network now consists of six routes running over 69km of network. It has featured on two previous LUPTS bus tours. In 1992, we travelled on the Manchester-Bury line, and in 2000 on the recently opened Eccles service.

The extension to Rochdale opened on 28 February 2013. Today, in addition to the Rochdale line, you have time to do other new routes as well. Trams from Rochdale travel through to St Werburgh's Road (opened July 2011). Back from St Werburgh's Road, and changing at Market Street, you can also do the Droylsden line, which opened in February 2013. Half of the original Italian-built trams (1000- and 2000-series) have already been withdrawn as the fleet standardises on the Bombardier M5000 type (3000-series). Whatever you intend to do today, Deansgate-Castlefield is the Metrolink stop closest to where the bus will pick up. The schedule lists recommended latest departure times from remote parts of the network to get you back in time.

Manchester City Centre and MOSI

You may wish to spend time in Manchester City Centre where you will find a multiplicity of food and drink emporia. The Manchester Museum of Science and Industry on Liverpool Road opened in September 1983 and incorporates some of the buildings of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway terminus dating from 1830, amongst the oldest railway buildings in the world. In addition to displays relating to the city's textile industry and municipal engineering, there are railway, aviation and automotive exhibits. A steam train may be in operation today. Entry to the museum is free (although LUPTS will make a donation based on the number of participants who visit) but please note that you have to pay extra if you wish to travel on the train. The bus will pick up in Liverpool Road, immediately outside the museum.



A57

Our route back to Liverpool takes us along the A57 for the whole journey. There are a number of interesting things to view as we travel along. We follow the route of the Eccles Metrolink route as we head along Eccles New Road. We pass the former Salford Corporation tram depot in Weaste. The trams finished in March 1947 and the building became a bus depot until it closed in that role in January 1986. In Hessle Street, alongside the depot, is a stretch of the surviving municipal tramtrack. We pass through Patricroft, former home of a significant steam engine shed and diesel engine manufacturers L Gardner and Sons. A new by-pass skirting Irlam runs alongside the Manchester Ship Canal and is on the trackbed of the canal railway. It takes us under the two bridges which were built in 1893 to elevate the CLC above the canal. A Peckett 0-4-0 fireless loco is plinthed near the derelict bridge towards Partington which closed to passengers in 1964 and completely in 1982. Also visible is the spindly Warburton toll bridge, whose weight limit precludes us using it today.

Our Head of Chips has negotiated with the Plaice Station in Padgate regarding food on the return journey. Thereafter the A57 takes us back through Rainhill (over the historic Skew Bridge), Prescot and Knotty Ash before we get back to Liverpool. The bus is returning to Burscough at the end of the day and drop offs can be made along the A57 for those who need it.

Contact details

You can contact me on my mobile (07712 834035) during the day if you need to. I hope you have an enjoyable time.

CHARLES ROBERTS

THE ATLANTEAN STRIKES BACK

**LUPTS TOUR
2013**

**Saturday
4 May 2013**

Welcome

Welcome to today's LUPTS tour, the 37th since the series began back in 1977. Today's trip takes us on a round trip to Manchester and back taking in road and rail, old and new.

With over 15,000 Leyland Atlanteans having been built, and them having been part of the Merseyside bus scene from 1958 until the last Arriva examples were withdrawn in the early 2000s, it's surprising that they've been so poorly represented in LUPTS activities over the years. In fact we have to go back to 1979's tour to find the last time we used an example. That trip, in MPTE (ex-Southport) 82, had to be re-routed on the day because of a snow drift over the Snake Pass. Hopefully we won't be plagued by that sort of weather today, although on the planning trip a few weeks ago, there were still signs of snow on the hills above Rochdale, so you never know.

Vehicle

Today's main tour vehicle is one of the earliest surviving examples, preserved ex-Liverpool City Transport L501 (501KD). It represents the 380 examples delivered to Liverpool between 1962 and 1967 with stylish Metro-Cammell bodies. The earliest examples, including L501, entered service in the city in February 1963, but this particular bus had already had its moment of fame through being exhibited at the 1962 Commercial Motor Show at Earl's Court, London, and being featured in Leyland's contemporary adverts.



Along with all the other L-series Atlanteans, it passed to the Merseyside PTE on its formation on 1 December 1969, and it was also one of the last to remain in service until withdrawn in 1981. Because of its historical significance, it passed into preservation and has been restored to its original condition, with the reinstatement of the chrome skirt and three-aperture destination display.

Merseyside Transport Trust

From Liverpool, our route takes us along the A59 to Burscough to the site of our first two visits.



The Merseyside Transport Trust (MTT) was set up to preserve historic vehicles and associated items from the Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive, its constituent corporation fleets and other operators within the Merseyside area. After many years in cramped hangars on the old aerodrome site, the Trust moved into new accommodation a couple of years ago.

The Burscough premises house over 40 buses from the Merseyside area, in varying states of restoration. At least two have LUPTS connections. Unpainted, Saunders-Roe bodied AEC Regent III A40 (NKD540) was hired by LUPTS on 12 June 1966 to take the society over to Manchester on the occasion of a trip to mark the

imminent closure of the Manchester and Ashton trolleybus systems. Older Mark III A544 (HKF820) – a very recent arrival at Burscough – was used for a special tour on 5 December 1987 to mark the society's 600th meeting which had taken place the day before.

The Friends of the 502

Stored in the MTT's premises are the two remaining Class 502 cars which formerly ran on the electrified lines from Liverpool to Southport and Ormskirk. They are in the care of The Friends of the 502, a representative of which will be available to talk to us about restoration work. It is suggested that we split into two groups on arrival – half to view the 502 cars with the other half looking at the bus collection.



The 502s were built by the LMS in Derby and ran from 1940 to 1980 on the electrified lines out of Liverpool Exchange. They were formed into 2-car and 3-car sets with the facility to form longer combinations at peak times. On their replacement by the 507s that are still used today,

all of the 502 vehicles were scrapped apart from two formed into a unit – driving motor M28361M and driving trailer M29896M. Because of the important landmark they represented in electric multiple unit development, these were claimed by the National Railway Museum.

Initially they were kept at Steamport in Southport where they were restored to their original LMS maroon livery and ran on the Merseyrail network for special events. When Steamport closed in the late 1990s, the unit was moved to the MoD base at Kineton, Warwickshire for open storage, during which time a significant amount of deterioration took place. With the unit in danger of being scrapped, The Friends of the 502 were formed to take over responsibility for its restoration. It was moved in May 2009 to Tebay and then to Burscough in March 2012 where a significant amount of work has already been undertaken.

East Lancashire Road

After a short stop in Ormskirk, we take the A570 down to the East Lancashire Road for our journey across to Manchester. From the elevated position of the top deck, it is possible to see current and former railway lines as they cross below the road. The West Coast Main Line is obvious shortly after we traverse the M6 junction. Shortly afterwards we cross over the trackbed of the Tyldesley Loop, a diversionary route off the L&M as it crosses Chat Moss. This line was a surprising closure in 1969 as it isolated some reasonably large population centres from the rail network. On the approach to Swinton, we again cross the alignment of the Tyldesley Loop as it curves south.



We loop round the north of Manchester, passing the site of Agecroft Colliery, the site of several LUPTS trips when it was renowned as one of the last outposts of industrial steam in the North West of England. We then pass through the leafy suburb of Prestwich on the approach to Heaton Park.

Heaton Park

Heaton Park is one of the largest municipal parks in Europe, containing the Grade I Listed neoclassical Heaton Hall. The Park was sold to Manchester City Council in 1902 which extended

its tramway, ya da ya da ya ... Until 13:46 yesterday, that was where we were going to visit. I then got a text from the Operations and Commercial Manager of the restored tramway. "The contact I have seems to ne [sic] a won't [sic] number! We will not be able to open for the visit and bedded [sic] to get this information to the right person!" The rival attractions of a Heritage Weekend on the Blackpool Tramway, coupled with some acceptable excuses, has deprived them of enough members to open up for us. Heaton Park thereby joins the Midland Railway Centre on my list of locations I will devote my life to telling people not to bother with their custom. A couple of slightly off topic attractions were considered as urgent replacements – the Astley Green Colliery Museum and the Fire Service Museum in Rochdale – but neither of those was able to open at short notice. However, a nice man at the latter suggested ...



Bury Transport Museum

We'd ruled out the East Lancs Railway because they're having one of their Thomas the Tank Engine™ Weekends, which is a good reason to avoid the place. However, across the road from Bolton Street station is the Bury Transport Museum. I'm reliant on their website for details, which says it has "... an ice cream vendors bicycle painted in the livery of local established firm Granellis Ice Cream. You can also see a 1936 Ford Car, a 1950's Dennis fire engine and a post office van. You can also gain a new perspective on the museums Holden and Sons van which has been raised to a higher level." Mind you, the Heaton Park website said they were running every Saturday when I checked recently, so don't believe everything you read on the interweb.

Rochdale

From Heaton Park we travel to the northernmost point on today's itinerary – Rochdale. The town rose to prominence during the 19th century as a major mill town and centre for textile manufacture. It was amongst the first industrialised towns in Britain and the birthplace of the Co-operative Movement. The town is proud, to differing degrees, of its connections with such people as Gracie Fields, Lisa Stansfield, Mike "The Rochdale Cowboy" Harding and Cyril Smith. It was on the itinerary of the first LUPTS bus tour on 5 February 1977, which was obviously a quiet news day as a reporter and photographer from the local paper dashed out to find out what an MPTE (ex-Southport) PD2 was doing in the town.



time for the journey to Liverpool. As a general guide, trams run every 12 minutes on all routes.

You may wish to have a look at the Metrolink construction works in Rochdale which will take the network into the town centre in 2014. Simply follow the tramtracks into town, which should take you about 15 minutes to walk. In Drake Street, you should be able to see some remains of original Rochdale tramtrack, abandoned in November 1932, which has been unearthed during Metrolink works.

Today's bus tour will drop off by the railway station and current Metrolink terminus. It will next pick up from Liverpool Road, Manchester. **Passengers will be issued with travel passes for Metrolink and are wholly responsible for finding their own way there and for ensuring that they are travelling with the appropriate ticket. If you have a group ticket, you must stay with that group for all journeys. LUPTS cannot be responsible for any problems you have, or any failure on your part to arrive in Manchester in**