



Left: A similar photograph was published last month but this time it is of first generation B.U.T. 22 parked outside the entrance to Kilbirnie depot. These lantern-windscreen styled trolleybuses were numbered 11-48. Introduced between 1951 and 1956 they were all gone by 1983. 39 and 48 are the only two survivors from this batch and neither are operational. 22 is also carrying the *Not in Service* plates.

Right: Forming a nice study outside in the yard is fellow class member 35. Once again, Lion Brown beer is prominent. T & G Life Insurance has their message on the near side. Onepu Road can be seen outside the fence.



Left: Graeme Bennett was standing in Rua Street, Lyall Bay for this view. From out of Queens Drive comes what appears to be someone pushing B.U.T. 82. Behind is 35, probably the following service and clearly not disabled as its poles are still attached to the overhead.

Right: 350 is at the same location, running smoothly and heading for Lyall Bay on 23 February 2017. The old shop on the right (no longer used) links the two photographs. Today, other than the pole identifiers, there is nothing to suggest that trolleybuses ever visited this neighbourhood.





Left: "Too heavy for me to push, mate". Clearly the assistance of the WCC shift truck was needed. Service vehicle 995 turned up, a 1969 Austin. Taking up plenty of Rua Street, the crew went about their business of recovering the errant trolleybus. The driver with his long side-burns watches as the tow bar is attached. However, 82 later went on to greater things, becoming one of the pride of place working exhibits at Sandtoft Trolleybus Museum in the U.K.

Right: Taken from the other side of Rua Street, 386 heads for Lyall Bay terminus on 10 May 2010.



Left: Returning to Kilbirnie depot we find B.U.T. 95 entering the old No.1 barn from Ross Street. This scene is now all built over with the Rita Angus Retirement Village standing in its place. Nineteen of these buses were built for Wellington and were new in 1964. Most had a life of just over twenty years. Four of the class survive, the most notable being 82.

Right: This location was also seen last month (the rear of Kilbirnie depot), but this time the subject is 111, a representative of the last batch of trolleybuses brought to Wellington. The nineteen vehicles were similarly introduced in 1964 but had bodywork by NZ Motor Bodies and the trademark lantern windscreen of the earlier buses. 111 lasted like most until 1986. Three of this type were saved; 103 at Ferrymead Heritage Museum is probably the best example.



Left: This feature closes with a line-up of B.U.T.s inside No.1 barn. Where 96, 104, 78, 95, 105 and 113 stand is part of the Rita Angus complex. Do the ghosts of old trolleybuses roam the facilities as none of these old-timers survived?

**Black and white photos: Graeme Bennett.
Colour photos: Alan Wickens.**

HERE AND THERE



Left: This is Tranzurban's BCI double-decker 3502, previously seen in Pulse netball all-over livery. On 11 November 2020 it was at Wellington Station on evening train replacement duties standing in for Hutt Valley trains. 3502 displays its new appearance, a promotion for the Interislander ferry, which plies between Wellington and Picton. With the current Covid-19 travel limitations on international travel this could be a winner for the ferry company as Kiwis stay at home and travel around their own country. Ironically the bus was standing at the Interislander stop (out of sight) where the ferry shuttle pulls in. Hopefully no-one was confused!

Right and below: Looking as close as you will ever get to a former Wellington trolleybus in action, in Wellington. 366 is one of seven Designlines currently stored at the NCS depot in Taita. Two others, 339 and 347 have also had their poles raised ostensibly to prevent damage to them should another bus reverse too close. Hopefully you will excuse the small piece of artistic licence that completes the scenes!



Right: The Yutong battery bus is still on loan to Newlands/Mana (a Transdev company). On 15 November 7000 was being used on train replacement duties on the Johnsonville branch line and was photographed at Wellington Station at what is now referred to as Platform 10.



Left: Bus drivers will no doubt relate to this cartoon I spotted that concerns the use of cell phones. This could well be Lambton Quay one day soon.



SOLARIS DELIVERS ITS FIRST TROLLEYBUSES IN NORWAY

According to the order placed in 2019 by the Keolis Norge AS operator, Solaris will provide 10 Solaris Trollino 18 articulated trolleybuses to Bergen this year. The first four of them have just arrived to Norway's second largest city. The official launch of all the new trolleybuses is planned for the beginning of December. The same city of Bergen will have as many as 102 Yutong battery-electric buses in Operation. First Solaris trolleybuses in Norway will be used to service the only maintained trolleybus line in Bergen, whose length is currently 7.5 km. The Trollino 18 ordered by Keolis Norge AS are powered by a 240 kW electric motor and equipped with 55 kWh traction batteries, thanks to which it is possible to cover a distance of over 11 kilometres without the need to connect to the catenary system, Solaris points out. The batteries are charged while driving with the use of 'in motion charging' technology, through current collectors mounted on the vehicle, which are connected to the overhead catenary. As many as 42 seats are fitted on board, all equipped with seat belts. 10 seats is available from the low floor level, which will make it easier for passengers with reduced mobility to take up their seat. Interestingly, one of the seats behind the driver's cabin has the option of folding, thanks to which a place dedicated to the guide dog accompanying the blind will be created. For those travelling on wheelchairs or with prams, two bays with straps are provided, as well as a folding ramp located at the second door. The trolleybuses are of course be fully low-floor and have the so-called kneeling function, further lowering the right side of the vehicle by 7 cm when stopping at the stop. Solaris highlights it has used a number of solutions in its vehicles to increase the comfort and safety of travellers. Among them there are air conditioning for the driver's cabin and passenger compartment as well as passenger information system with two large screen monitors and voice announcement of stops. Trolleybuses are also equipped with CCTV system consisting of cameras monitoring the interior of the vehicle, door area cameras, a reversing camera and one on the roof, watching the pantograph. Above each of the doors, mounted in a 2+2+2+2 system, there is a passenger counting system installed. The trolleybuses ordered by Keolis Norge AS have a built-in breathalyser to check the driver's sobriety before starting the vehicle. They are also equipped by the manufacturer with a special Scandinavian thermal insulation package, which improves the thermal comfort of passengers and reduces energy consumption at minus temperature. It includes, among others additional insulation of the side walls, the ceiling and the chassis in the area of the wheel arches, as well as double side windows. The vehicles are also adapted to the use of snow chains. "I am delighted to welcome our first Trollino trolleybuses in Norway. This is the most modern type of trolleybus in Europe to date. It is easy to handle and has a hybrid solution that means that it can



also function as a fully electric bus. Soon 10 trolleybuses will start passenger service enlarging at the same time the zero-emission Solaris fleet in our country. Bergen and Keolis are investing strongly in emission free solutions in public transport and better life quality in our cities", said Sverre Skaar, Managing Director of Solaris Norge AS.

Source: **Sustainable Bus**. 2 November 2020. <https://www.sustainable-bus.com/trolley-and-tramway/the-first-trolleybus-from-solaris-has-landed-in-norway/>

MEANWHILE, OVER IN SOLINGEN...

Solaris and Kiepe Electric are the winning bidders in a tender held by operator Stadtwerke Solingen in Germany. Pursuant to this commission, the manufacturer will deliver 16 Trollino 12 trolleybuses. This means that, including previous deliveries, a total of 36 trolleybuses of the Solaris Trollino make will be deployed on the streets of Solingen. The commission will be divided into two batches. The first 8 trolleybuses will be delivered in 2021; the second part of the order is to arrive by the end of 2023. At the same time, Solaris is working on the completion of an order for 16 articulated trolleybuses for this German operator. Aside from a conventional electric drive, the trolleybuses for Solingen will additionally feature traction



batteries with a capacity of 45 kWh owing to which the vehicles will be able to cover a substantial distance without the need to be attached to overhead wires. The energy will be replenished en route and will be fed through the traction lines, by means of the in-motion charging technology supplied by Kiepe Electric. The 12-metre trolleybuses have been designed for 22 seats on deck. Thermal comfort will be ensured by high-efficiency air-conditioning of the whole vehicle. The carrier has opted for an enclosed driver's cabin which allows for comfortable and safe work conditions. A modern monitoring system will ensure control over the situation on board of the bus. By now, the manufacturer has already carried out a contract for four Trollino 18.75 with a double-axle drive supplied to SWS in 2018. At present, the Solaris factory is preparing for the launch of deliveries under the order for 16 Trollino 18 units. In the weeks to come the German city of Solingen will receive the first of the articulated trolleybuses, whereas the delivery of the remaining 15 vehicles has been staggered over two years, ending in December 2022. In Germany, a trolleybus transport network is currently deployed in three cities: Eberswalde, Esslingen and Solingen. In each, passengers benefit from safe and comfortable travel on trolleybuses made by Solaris, the Polish producer points out. However, the newly commissioned Trollino will be the first 12-metre vehicles of the type in Germany; so far, the producer



has supplied nearly 30 articulated vehicles to that place. "Our goal is to continuously improve the quality of life and transport in Solingen. For years, SWS has been investing successively in new vehicles and replacing combustion engines with quiet and emission-free electric drives. Thanks to the procurement of 16 new Solaris Trollino 12 trolleybuses, city traffic in Solingen will be even safer and more comfortable" says Conrad Troullier, CEO of Stadtwerke Solingen GmbH. "We bear witness to an extraordinary dynamic of modifications regarding the exchange of fleets of more and more European operators, for Solaris-made ultra-modern vehicles that limit the impact of transport on the environment. Next to electric and hydrogen buses, trolleybuses are a crucial item in our zero-emission portfolio. The experience stemming from the production of 1600 vehicles of this type has been once again appreciated by SWS which has once more opted for our trolleybuses and for an investment in the improvement of the life comfort of the residents of Solingen," declared Petros Spinaris, Deputy CEO of Solaris Bus & Coach. "With Solaris as a strong partner, Kiepe Electric has already successfully completed numerous projects. Now we will equip

the Solaris Trollino 12-meter trolleybuses for the Solingen municipal operator with our innovative IMC® technology and electric equipment. Thanks to this, in Solingen local transport more diesel buses can be replaced by electric buses – an important step to further advance the already exemplary environmentally friendly public transport in Solingen", said Alexander Ketterl, CEO of Kiepe Electric GmbH, Düsseldorf.

Source: **Sustainable Bus**. 27 October 2020. <https://www.sustainable-bus.com/news/solaris-has-won-a-tender-for-16-battery-powered-trolleybuses-in-solingen-germany/>

AND CLOSER TO HOME ON WAIHEKE ISLAND...

ADL today announced that it has delivered six electric buses to Fullers360 for Auckland Transport services on Waiheke Island and that it is renewing its partnership with New Zealand manufacturer Kiwi Bus Builders: from now on, leveraging on this deal, electric buses will be assembled in the country. The delivery follows the order signed in September 2019. ADL will supply an additional two electric buses to Fullers360 subsidiary Waiheke Bus Company before Christmas, allowing half of all buses on the island to be converted to zero emission operation. The Auckland Transport Waiheke Island bus network connects communities with Fullers360's frequent ferries to the mainland. At the launch event, attended by the Mayor of Auckland and the British Consul General in Auckland, ADL announced its renewed partnership with local manufacturer Kiwi Bus Builders. This will now include the assembly of electric buses, which for the New Zealand market had until now taken place overseas. In addition to two-axle models like those for Waiheke Island, the partners will produce 12.6m long, three-axle electric buses, which ADL has designed for the specific requirements of bus operation in New Zealand by carrying 78 passengers without the requirement of an overweight permit, a first for New Zealand. As the country prepares to fully transition its bus fleet to zero emission vehicles by 2035, their local assembly will support up to 100 jobs at Kiwi Bus Builders. ADL's electric buses for New Zealand are part of the BYD ADL Enviro200EV range using latest BYD iron phosphate battery and driveline technology. ADL's General Manager for New Zealand, Tony Moore, said: "We have been a major supplier to New Zealand for almost ten years and during this time have already supplied 500 vehicles with the help of our friends at Kiwi Bus Builders. As Auckland Transport and other transport authorities prepare to move to a zero emission fleet, we are renewing this partnership in a clear sign of our support for New Zealand jobs and our commitment to this market." Richard Drummond, Managing Director of Kiwi Bus Builders, said: "The Enviro200 range of electric buses are not only designed for our local requirements here in New Zealand, but are also built in this country. With investment in updated build techniques, we will be able to scale up our production to meet demand from Auckland and elsewhere in New Zealand as the fleet transformation gets under way ahead of the 2035 zero emissions target."

Source: **Sustainable Bus**. 10 November 2020. <https://www.sustainable-bus.com/electric-bus/new-zealand-adl-delivers-e-buses-waiheke-island-partnership-with-kiwi/>

TRAMS WITH A DIFFERENCE

Phil Waters reports:

On Saturday 24 October 2020, I braved the weather and Covid-19 travel restrictions to visit the Lancashire coastal resort of Blackpool for the world famous illuminations (it's said you can see them from outer space on a clear night). This involved operation of the heritage tram fleet but this time it was scaled down and with a very controlled system in place; still enjoyable to all ages for different reasons. On the day, I travelled on a pre-booked hour tour of the lights and witnessed the use of two other tramcars. Illuminated car F736 Frigate "HMS Blackpool" (right) was built in 1965 by using an English Electric pantograph single-deck car from 1927. 700 is an English Electric Balloon double-decker from 1934 and refurbished to be in the reserve fleet of the modern trams. 717 is also an English Electric Balloon double-decker from 1935 and has been thoroughly restored to original "art-deco" condition and named Walter Luff, after the forward-thinking General Manager of the 1930s. It was this tram I rode on from Pleasure Beach to Little Bispham and return - wonderful stuff!



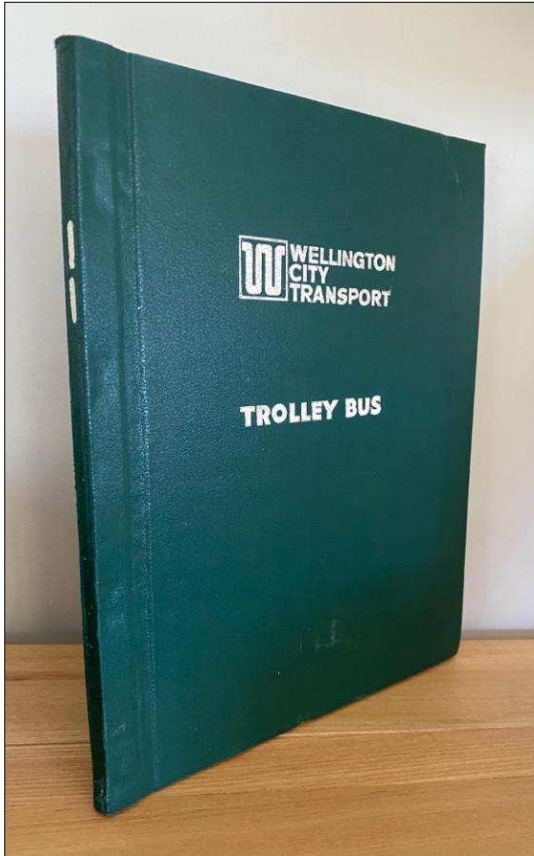
Left: Balloon tram 700 and 1965 "Frigate" tram 736 rumble along the Blackpool seafront on an evening that looks to be best suited to riding **inside** a tram. However, for the enthusiast photographer these are moments not to be missed.

Photos: Phil Waters.

Right: Balloon tram 717 and named "Walter Luff" was built in 1935, very much in the art deco style. This was the tram that reader Phil Waters rode on during his Blackpool Illuminations tour. Since taking these photographs the trams have stopped working again due to the Covid-19 pandemic that is sweeping the U.K. The well-known waterfront illuminations have been turned off until at least 2 December but the lights on Blackpool's world famous tower remain lit at night. The local council said Blackpool Tower, which has become a "symbol of hope and optimism throughout this pandemic", would still shine. The B.B.C. reported that the Tower was lit up with an SOS message for Prime Minister Boris Johnson last month as businesses in the town said they had "mass cancellations" on an "unimaginable scale" since moving into tier three Covid-19 restrictions.



WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT... B.U.T. 11



B.U.T. 11 was the very first of this marque to arrive in Wellington. British United Traction was responsible for supplying the lion's share of trolleybuses to New Zealand with 109 to the Capital, 129 to Auckland, 4 to New Plymouth and 79 to Dunedin.

Usually few details are known about individual vehicles but probably unbeknown to most people is that each trolleybus had its own record book into which various checks and repairs were entered. From these can be gleaned additional minutiae. A number of these

green record books were kindly given to me by NZ Bus once trolleybus operation had ended and this month we take a look at some of 11's records. This trolleybus was the first of a batch of 38 buses (11-48) built by Leyland Motors with Comeng (Australia) bodywork in kitset form; this was finished at either NZ Motor Bodies or by Wellington City Council. The electrical equipment was supplied by Metropolitan-Vickers in the U.K. Like the earlier ten Crossley trolleybuses, this batch of B.U.T.s had the interesting lantern windscreen; useful for drivers to see down as well as ahead.

Licence No: EV6686

Chassis: BUT 494929

Body: ETB.1

Unladen weight: 8-15-3-0

Laden weight: 13-1-0-9

Seating capacity: 43

Standees: 21

First registered: 3.9.1951

Date of withdrawal: Not recorded but thought to be 31 August 1981.

The bus received a complete repaint – recorded 6.10.1970

Last Government Vehicle Inspection was performed on 30.9.1980 – mileage completed at this date was 675,618km.

Above: B.U.T. 11 in Carlton Gore Road, Roseneath and heading for Wadestown.
Photo: NZ Bus Collection.

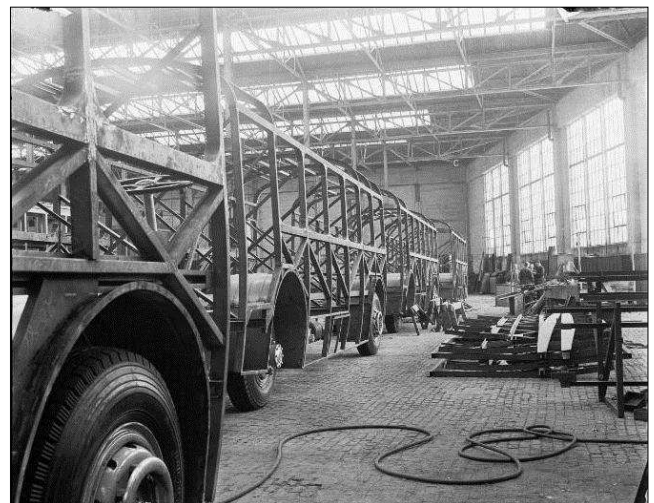
Right: At Kilbirnie depot on 2 July 1977.
Photographer unknown.



Left: This photograph of 11 was taken on 27 August 1951 at Kilbirnie depot standing above a tram inspection pit. Staff were busy getting the trolleybus ready to begin service.

Right: Maybe 11 is amongst these B.U.T. trolleybuses receiving bodywork completion at Kilbirnie on 15 December 1950. This is a view towards the south end wall where in latter days redundant Designlines were stored.

Photos: Evening Post. National Library collection.



INCIDENT ON ROSS STREET



Graeme Bennett was on hand in Ross Street near the corner with Coutts Street at the rear of Kilbirnie depot when this collision occurred between a truck and trailer unit and B.U.T. 41.



The absence of any ambulance suggests that there were no injuries just damage to the vehicles.

41 went into service on 9 February 1956 and was withdrawn on 9 March 1983.



DOWN IN DUNEDIN



Above: 9, a B.U.T. introduced by Dunedin City Transport in 1951 is pictured leaving the Opoho terminus in the north-east of Dunedin and heading back to turn left onto Signal Hill Road and out to St Clair in the south of the city. The eastern hill suburbs of Brockville and Halfway Bush can be seen in centre background.



Above: Another rear view. From the same batch of buses is 21 entering the Andersons Bay Road entrance to the workshop at McBride Street depot. 21 didn't have that long a life; introduced in 1952 it was withdrawn in 1966. The staff member looking towards the cameraman doesn't look too happy for some reason; perhaps he's camera shy. Photos: Graeme Bennett.

With thanks to **Allan Steel** for providing some background information for the captions.

MOSCOW MEMORIAL

By Grant Fletcher

I thought I should start my contributions with a brief update on trolleybuses following the September edition that reported the system's final closure in August this year. The writing had been on the wall for some time with the closure in 2017 of the remaining central city routes leaving radial routes running mostly outwards from Moscow's inner ring road. However, the English Russian press had announced that a museum route would open, which occurred on 4 September. The 4 km route runs from Komsomolskaya Metro station northeast of Red Square in a clockwise direction connecting with Elohovskaya Square and the site of the new Moscow Transport Museum (not yet open) on Novoryazanskoy St. The service runs from 8:30 in the morning till 8 at night with service at either 10 or 20 minutes intervals depending on the time of day. According to the notice on the route, ticketing is fully integrated with the Moscow transport system. You can pay with the Troika transit card, or contactless bank cards or smart phones. Fares vary depending on which journeys you are taking in the day but are around the 50-55 rouble mark or just over NZ\$1 per ride.

Sources:

Travel Together: Московский троллейбус. Музейный маршрут «Т» | Moscow trolleybus. Museum route "Т" posted 6 Sep 2020 at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6C_ZDroNy5g&t=340s

In Memoriam: Moscow's Trolleybus System 1933-2020, The Moscow Times, 25 August 2020

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/08/25/in-memoriam-moscows-trolleybus-system-1933-2020-a71242>



Left: BKM-21 3866 arriving in at Kievskaya Station. The lower message indicated that the bus was on Route 7 that passed through Kievskaya Station headed west towards "Park Pobedy" or "Victory Park."

Right: 1434 heading north on Leningrad Highway. The route not recorded but it is most likely Route 43K northbound for Pribrezhnyj Proezd.

First some good news: Moscow has emerged as a European leader in the number of electric buses in use, having recently launched its 500th e-bus running on routes, the Moscow Department of Transport (MDOT) confirmed recently. Last month marked only 24 months since Moscow's route e-bus use started. Its 500th e-bus milestone means the city now has one of the largest fleets of passenger electric buses in the world. Purchases of vehicles continue, it should be noted, and by the end of 2020 another 100 electric buses will arrive in Moscow, MDOT confirms. Source: Australasian Bus & Coach. 14 November 2020.



Below: 1722 heading south along Leningrad Highway on route 43K bound for Voykovskaya Station on 4 July 2017.





Left: Bus 1906 northbound on 3 July on Leningrad Highway. Again route and model not recorded but most likely 43K as this was the main route north of the Vojkovskaya Station.

Right: Bus 3876 on Route 17 Ветеринарная академия - Шарикоподшипниковская улица Veterinarnaya Akademiya - Kievskaya Station arriving at the Kievskaya Station terminal on 4 July 2017.

And now some bad news: "Despite the triumphant reports that electric buses have successfully replaced the good old trolleybuses, this is absolutely not the case." The report below claims that in the freezing Moscow temperatures the batteries on the new e-buses are not holding their charge and becoming inoperable!

See:
<https://en.newizv.ru/news/city/20-11-2020/don-t-go-electric-buses-in-moscow-massively-stopped-due-to-the-onset-of-cold-weather>



3117 on Route 34K Kravchenko St - Kievskaya Station on Kutuzovskaya Avenue about to turn into the terminal at Kievskaya Station on 4 July 2017.

The photos were taken by Grant Fletcher during a visit to Moscow in 2017.

Grant continues: *Moscow uses a modern integrated ticketing system with its Troika Card, for contactless payment. St Petersburg and Moscow both have trams. I didn't see Moscow's trams except out of bus windows. The system is split in two. The smaller northern section did touch the route we took daily into the City but the rest are out in the outer suburbs. St Petersburg has a line that now skirts the City Centre and there is one line that crosses that City that although out of use for passengers is used*

for trams heading to and from the depot. We also travelled along some of the routes in the outer city. Both cities are reinvesting in their tram networks which is good to see. I was rather surprised to see Moscow's system close given that there had been reasonably recent investment in new buses (well maybe about 13-15 years ago) but the mayor was very much against the trolleybuses. I also suspect that the OLE was in urgent need of replacement as it looked quite old and in poor condition.

THE DAVID JONES COLLECTION – PART 3

This month we examine a selection of the third batch of B.U.T. trolleybuses, **82 to 100**, that entered service in 1964.



Above: Nineteen B.U.T. RETB1 trolleybuses built by Leyland Motors and assembled by Scammell Lorries were introduced in 1964. They were numbered **82-100**. By the time Wellington had placed this and its final order (for trolleybuses **101-119**) direct to British United Traction, B.U.T. were no longer manufacturing trolleybuses. They sub-contracted to Scammell Trucks Ltd, the only English firm to respond to BUT's request. Their lifespan was a little over twenty years on average, with the first withdrawal in 1984 and the last in 1987. Sister **82** joined the fleet on 13 March 1964. It ran until 1986 and following withdrawal was one of several of the batch saved for preservation. It is operational, now residing at the Sandtoft Trolleybus Museum in the U.K. **83** is recorded as being the first of this batch to enter service – on 4 March 1964 and running until 1986. Here it is turning from Lambton Quay into Stout Street, although the destination is misleading as the bus is heading to the Railway Station.



Left: **88** bursts out into the sunlight from Hataitai tunnel into Pirie Street with a 5 from Hataitai to the Railway Station. This trolleybus, together with **91** were unique amongst their peers in that they were rebuilt at the W.C.C. workshops and NZMB respectively and were prototype for a refurbishment programme for the older trolleybuses that in the end never eventuated. This was due to the decision to buy the fleet of twenty Ansaldo trolleybuses no longer required by Auckland on their decision to close their system. **88** was saved for preservation but is non operational. It is currently stored in the NCS yard in Taita.

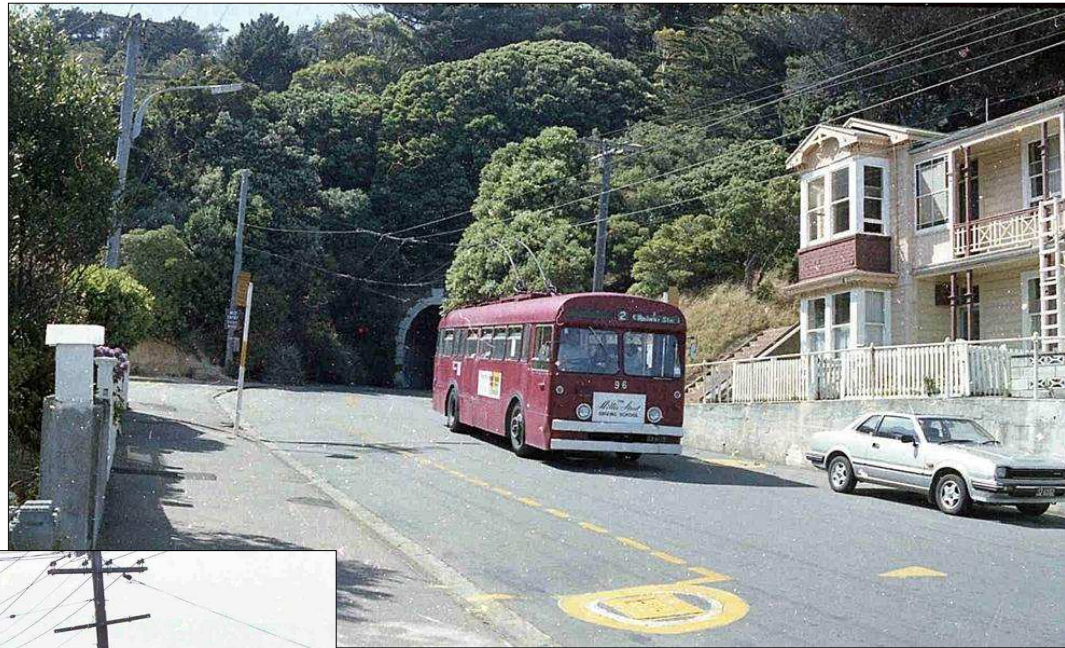
Right: **90** awaits departure from Karori Park terminus outside the Write Price supermarket. Both trolleybuses and the supermarket are part of history. A block of town houses now fills the site. **90**, however, survives in preservation but hasn't been operational for many years.





Left: Trolleybuses usually only displayed one fleet number on the front of the bus but 91 clearly wants to be different!. The photograph was taken inside Kilbirnie's open air yard. Volvo 261 stands behind. With 91 withdrawn in 1987 and 261 into service in 1986 this gives a clue to the era of this photograph.

Right: We are back in Pirie Street again for this shot of 96 coasting down the hill towards the city centre. This street was (and still is) the domain of route 2. 96 survived until its withdrawal in 1986.



Left: 97 heads south along Grafton Road towards Hataitai. This route closed to trolleybuses in 1987. 97 was withdrawn in 1985.

Right: The highest number in this batch was 100 and here it is stopped briefly outside Kilbirnie depot. Another non-survivor, 100 ran its last in 1986.

Next month we look at the last batch of Wellington B.U.T.s - numbers 101-119.



UNDER CONSTRUCTION



A feature looking at N.Z. trolleybuses during their stages of construction.

Left: Looking back seventy years at the bodywork for a new B.U.T. trolleybus on a rather unusual truck and trailer unit and photographed by an Evening Post photographer on 6 December 1950. Photo: National Library.

Right: On 15 December 1950 the photographer visited Kilbirnie depot to record progress being made on construction of roof sections for the new trolleybuses. Photo: National Library.



Below: Jumping ahead to the early 1980s and Volvo trolleybuses are witnessed taking shape at Hawke Bros prior to delivery to Wellington City Transport. Photo: Garth Stewart.





Above: We are past the stage of “under construction” to almost delivery time with Volvos 213, 202, 212, 211 and 206 lining up for inspection at Hawke Bros in Auckland. Photo: Garth Stewart.



Left: To the modern era and a photograph of 301 under construction at Designline in Ashburton in 2002. This particular rear view is of interest when you look at the final result below... Photos: Graeme Inwood.



Left and below: Two further prototypes were built by Designline, 302 and 303. Both were photographed in their latter stages of construction by Graeme Inwood on 12 April 2005.





How things have changed! It is thought that about fifty-five years separate these two photographs. **Graeme Bennett** took the superb cameo in Lambton Quay at the intersection with Stout Street where Fiducia tram 249 is seen turning into. Together with two diesel buses, an early model B.U.T. in silver livery completes this transport scene. The comparative view shows (now preserved) 384 turning into Stout Street on battery power on 4 January 2017 when part of Lambton Quay was closed for re-sealing. The wires came down in Stout Street in 2003 when the Railway Station interchange opened so this would be one of the last photographs ever taken of a trolleybus working in this once busy tram/trolleybus/bus thoroughfare.

SERVICE VEHICLES AND TOWER WAGONS

It's all very well having trolleybuses but without the powered overhead and its associated fittings they wouldn't be running anywhere! Maintenance staff and their specialised vehicles were an essential part of the scene as this selection of photographs shows.



Left: 1968 Bedford TK 911 and c1935 Daimler 'Y' 15 pose for a photograph in this undated view at Cable Street depot.



Right: No doubt taken on the same day, 15 (in the background) is joined by another of the four Daimlers while one of the staff members proudly poses beside his workhorse. Photos: NZ Bus collection.



Left: Nearest the camera is 1977 Bedford TK 908 with linemen working on the overhead in Cuba Street. In the background are two further service vehicles.

Below: A view further along Cuba Street with 1983 Bedford cherry picker 961 at the kerbside. Photos: NZ Bus collection.





Left: The colour scheme for Wellington City Transport service vehicles later changed to white. 966, an Isuzu NKA is parked in Wakefield Street depot on 13 April 1987. Photo: NZ Bus collection.



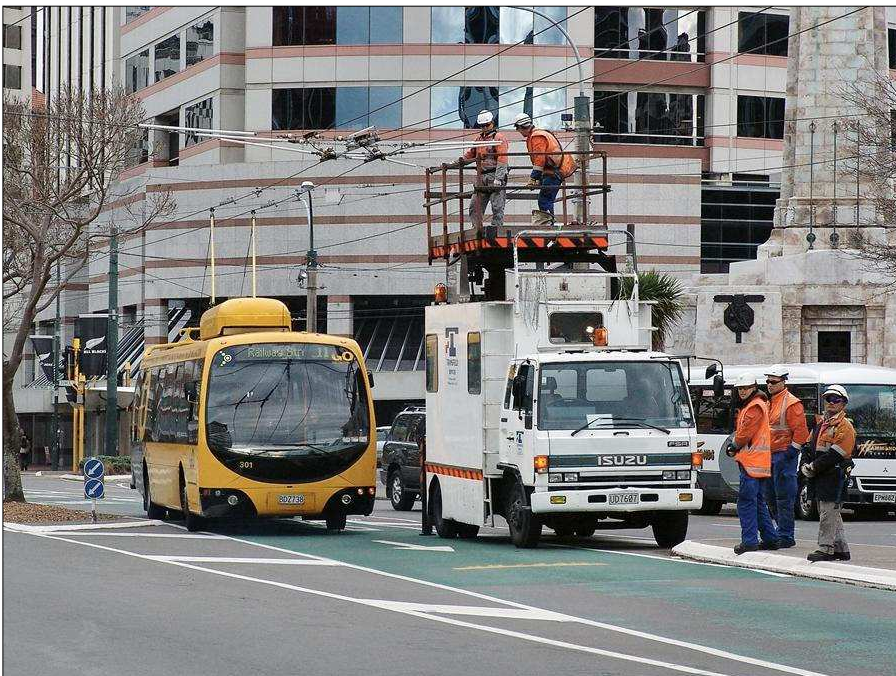
Right: The unique Overhead Test Bus, ex AEC Reliance 312 and numbered 901 when photographed in 1989.



Left: 901 with its rear observation area. Note the trolley pole hooks on the roof and the retrievers. Can someone explain their purpose?



Above: Moving to the Stagecoach era and here is an Isuzu tower wagon at the Railway Station terminus with not an overhead wire in sight. The photograph was taken on 29 April 2002 just under a year before the new interchange was opened. Photo: Graeme Inwood.

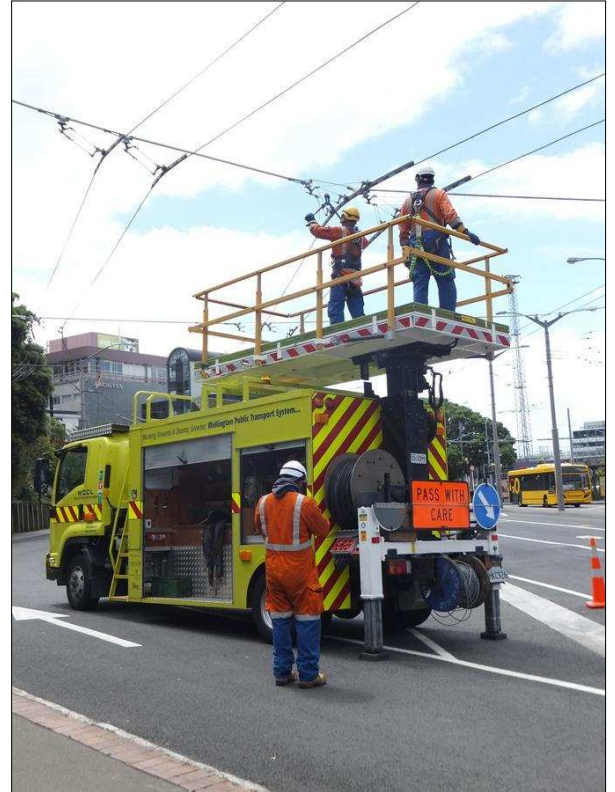


Left: During the latter days of trolleybus operation in Wellington the overhead was the responsibility of Wellington Cable Car Ltd and contracted to Transfield Services which later became Broadspectrum. On 1 September 2006, 301 slowly passes 1996 Isuzu F Series tower wagon in Lambton Quay by the Cenotaph working a service from Seatoun to the Railway Station terminus. The Transfield linemen seem to be interested in me recording the event. The switch ahead of 301 enabled placement of trolleybuses in the various layover roads.



Left: Tower wagon TS1, a 2014 Isuzu FRR, was photographed in Courtenay Place with staff working on the switch at the eastern end that separated the routes taking trolleybuses through Hataitai (left) or Newtown (straight ahead).

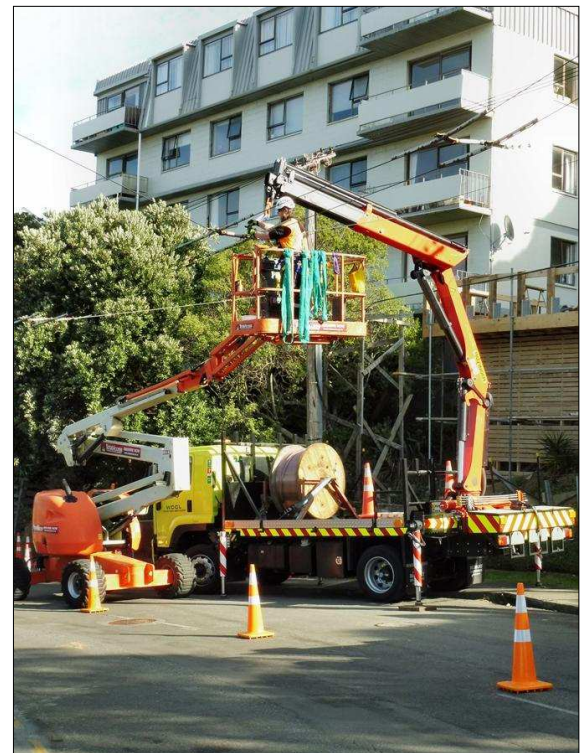
Right: Wellington Cable Car Ltd had a small fleet of service vehicles bearing the wording “Working towards a cleaner, greener Wellington Public Transport System”. Unfortunately, it wasn’t to last. On 11 January 2016 the overhead team were fixing a fault at the Railway Station terminus. Compare the safety standards and equipment to staff in earlier photographs in this feature. The vehicle is TS2, a 2013 Isuzu F Series.



Left: TS4, a 2001 N Series Isuzu cable truck was photographed inside WCCCL depot on 22 November 2017; its days of renewing overhead over. At that date the wires were being removed around the city.



Right: TS5, a 2014 F Series Isuzu hiab truck used in conjunction with supporting traction poles and their installation and removal. On 16 May 2016 it was at work in Hataitai Road as decommissioning staff removed the overhead on the recently closed section. I believe all WCCCL’s vehicles were eventually on-sold for use by other operators.



FAREWELL TO THE 'FLYER'

A familiar sight in Wellington for over twenty years has been the orange buses servicing the Airport for travellers. Originally called *Stagecoach Flyer* when part of that company's bus fleet, the name changed to *Airport Flyer* when Stagecoach sold the company to what became known as N.Z. Bus. Several vehicle types were used during this time, ranging from Volvo B10M, M.A.N 17-223, Scania K280UB6 and Designline Citybus trolleybus 361. The route originally ran between Queensgate, Lower Hutt and the Airport, a run that often shadowed the railway as far as the city. In 2003 it was extended as far as Upper Hutt Station. It was cut back to Queensgate in 2013 and then with the advent of Covid-19 in 2020 when air travel all but disappeared, buses only ran between the Airport and Railway Station terminus. With N.Z. in lockdown, the service ceased on 25 March with operator NZ Bus reintroducing the commercial service at the start of July albeit with a heavily pruned timetable. Several of the *Flyer* Scania's were found alternative work as they had become surplus to requirements. NZ Bus announced on 9 November 2020 that its *Airport Flyer* service would cease operations at the end of November, in line with the expiry of its licence agreement with the Airport. The final runs took place on Friday 27 November. The new operator, Tranzit, intends to resume the service in the first few months of 2021. They aim to return buses to the seven days-a-week basis and with greater frequency. Meanwhile, airport users will have to find alternative arrangements for their travel, although Route 2s to Seatoun does stop in the vicinity of the airport. Tranzit have not announced if the *Airport Flyer* name will be continued or any details of fares or frequency of the new service.



Left: Two former *Airport Flyer* buses, M.A.N. 2490 and Scania 2501, no longer needed for the pruned service stand inside Kilbirnie depot on 18 November. These two buses and the remaining buses servicing the *Flyer* became redundant from 27 November due to the cessation of the service by NZ Bus. They are parked in Kilbirnie depot where the once withdrawn Designline trolleybus fleet were stored for nearly three years prior to the last examples being removed in August this year. Rails from the days of Wellington trams run underneath the buses. Photo taken during an authorised visit.

Buses dedicated to the *Airport Flyer* route in the closing days were; 2502, 2503, 2509, 2510, 2511 and ex-trolleybus 361. 2490 and 2501 remained out of service awaiting re-use. 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507 and 2508 were decommissioned from *Flyer* duties, re-liveried (to some degree) and put to work on other routes.

When the greater part of Wellington's buses were under the auspices of Stagecoach's ownership the company introduced a dedicated fleet of buses (understood to be in 1998) to run between Wellington Airport and the Hutt Valley, via the city centre. Designated Route 91 and liveried as *Stagecoach Flyer* the five imported 1993 Volvo B10M single door twin-axle buses were numbered 22-26 and based at Waterloo depot. They had previously served with Citybus in Hong Kong. In 2003, when the route was extended as far as Upper Hutt Station, the fleet was supplemented by two 2003 M.A.N. 17.223 twin rear-axle buses, 1421-2. Three new 2005 M.A.N. 17-223 buses numbered 2494-6 joined the *Flyer* service together with M.A.N. 1422 and 2492-93 with the withdrawal of the Volvo B10Ms. In 2008 two M.A.N. 16.240 buses, 1011 and 1013 made an appearance on the route and it was around this time that the name was changed to *Airport Flyer* with Stagecoach having sold its bus interests to NZ Bus. Finally in 2009 the most recent fleet of *Flyers* were introduced. Numbered 2501-11, these were Scania K280UB6 twin rear-axle buses and were among the most luxurious buses in the Wellington fleet, fitted with leather seats and equipped with on-board wi-fi. Oddly these buses were only fitted with one access door. 2490 was transferred to the fleet in 2014. In 2018 the unique trolleybus battery conversion, 361, joined the *Flyer* fleet; however, this bus never travelled beyond Wellington to Lower Hutt and never wore the *Flyer* orange livery. Other buses were pressed into use from time to time on *Airport Flyer* duties however only those that had the permanent livery have been mentioned here (with the exception of 361). The last *Flyer* operated by NZ Bus ran on 27 November 2020 – the final bus working the 6.30pm service from the Airport.



Left: 1996 Volvo B10M 22 turns into Molesworth Street on its long run to Upper Hutt on 9 May 2003.

Right: 2003 M.A.N. 17.223 1421 at Upper Hutt Station. Behind is 1997 Volvo B6LE 64 wearing early Ridewell (later Metlink) style livery. Sixteen of these buses were used on dedicated routes – "Going Places every 15 Minutes" read the wording on the side. In the background is a pair of Mercedes 709D buses in Stagecoach livery.





Left: 2494-6 joined the fleet in 2005. This is 2496 turning into The Esplanade, Petone on its way to Upper Hutt on 30 August 2006. In 2014, 2490 was painted into Flyer colours and joined the fleet.

Right: 2002 M.A.N. 16.240 1013 was one of two new additions to the Flyer fleet in 2008. Note the Designline body and the similarities to the trolleybus fleet. 1013 waits for custom at the Railway Station terminus on 28 November 2008. By this date the Airport Flyer livery had been applied.



Left: The eleven Scania K280UB6 buses were introduced in 2009. They were designed with the airport passenger in mind with leather seats, on-board wi-fi and luggage storage. Built by Kiwi Bus Builders in Tauranga they featured only one access door which tended to slow up exiting and boarding. The class leader, 2501 is pictured at the Airport on 1 August 2009, not long after being introduced. The roofline of the Scania fleet featured the main places along the route it connected with.

Right: In 2020 Covid-19 times Route 91 was pruned again, only running between the Railway Station and Airport. For several months it didn't run at all! Here is 2510 in Lambton Quay approaching Wellington Station and the end of its run on 10 August 2020. Note that the roof line still showing Lower Hutt and Petone, places it once connected with.



Left: Former trolleybus 361 continued to put in an appearance on Route 91 although it wasn't seen on the last day - 27 November 2020. It is pictured leaving the Airport at 11.00am four days earlier.

TAILPIECE



361 was chosen by NZ Bus to be its battery powered experiment. By September 2016 it had been withdrawn from service and preparations had started for its conversion. The power unit and roof equipment and poles had been removed by 16 October when photographed over road 16 and former tram inspection pit at Kilbirnie depot. The tram rails were a testament to much earlier electric traction in the city. However, it would be another sixteen months before serious work started on fitting 361 with its new power source and battery power.