

# New Transport Museum for Beith

The number of Transport Museums in Scotland is set to rise when a new museum housing mainly but not exclusively buses opened its doors at Easter. Now an open weekend is set to take place at the end of August. PHILIP LAMB reports.



## Vehicle profile GCS 50V

This Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R was delivered new to Western SMT's Johnstone depot bearing fleet no JL50.

In 1987 it exchanged its red and cream livery for Western's new two-grey, black and white livery. In 1991 another repaint saw the Y-type in Clydeside 2000 livery. By 1996, and still with Clydeside buses, its then red, yellow and white livery was applied. The following year the bus was sold to Oban & District later part of West Coast Motors.

After ten years sterling service, the bus passed in May this year to Kenny Barclay for preservation.

Kenny was bought up in Kilmacalm, Renfrewshire during the 1980s and 1990s Clydeside Scottish was therefore his local bus company. Kenny therefore plans to return the vehicle to Clydeside Scottish red and yellow livery.



## Beith Transport Museum

**B**eith Transport Museum is a new 53,000 sq ft transport museum under development in North Ayrshire, some 20mins outside Glasgow. Although mainly displaying buses, other vehicles such as fire engines and breakdown trucks, an illuminated Blackpool tram and a Glasgow Underground car are also to be found at the museum.

Vehicles started arriving on site in mid-2006, many having previously been stored for several years in less than desirable locations, but a good deal of work on the building,

previously an industrial warehouse, has been needed too.

Girder frame supports for large water tanks used by the previous owner of the site were very effective wasters of floor space, but were useful vantage points for photographs. They also allowed volunteers to see just how much redundant piping, wiring and cable needed to be removed.

Getting rid of these girder supports became a priority, but the process turned into a very long and frustrating one which led to

severe delays in preparing the site. Following this, floor areas were cleaned and painted, before vehicles were positioned on the newly prepared floor in what was then being termed exhibition halls rather than sheds. All were placed to face in one direction with a clear passage of 4ft was left between each row of vehicles or adjacent wall, and a similar gap between the front and rear of each was allowed. This is to allow visitors in wheelchairs to get as close as possible to and all round the vehicles. A method of enabling reasonable viewing of the interiors, even if just for a selection of vehicles, is a matter still being considered.

Alongside RM759 in Glasgow City Tour livery is this Portuguese AEC Regal III  
Pictures: PHILIP LAMB







A

AA

A

AYR  
via Irvine, Barraslie & Troon

OKM 317



Withdrawn in September 1979 having completed over 690,000 miles, OKM 317 gave 36 years faithful service to AA Motor Services member Dodds of Troon. Dodds in fact still own the AEC Regent III with Saunders 56-seat highbridge body built as a demonstrator for the latter concern in 1949. The bus remained unregistered for the first two years of its life, so presumably only acted as a 'static' demonstrator on trade plates. In 1951 however it went on demonstration to Maidstone & District, and although not taken into stock was given the fleet no DH500 and registered OKM 317 so that it could be used in service for the first time.

Within a short space of time, the bus moved on to C. B. Law of Prestwick, initially on demonstration, but soon purchased. Dodds acquired the bus with its purchase of Law's business in 1953.



Recently in service with Wilbys of Leicester and now preserved by Laurence Hayward is Alexander-bodied Leyland Fleetline LMS i69W new to Alexander (Midland) in 1980 as its MRF169

The Transport Preservation Trust which manages the museum had originally planned an opening event over the Easter weekend of the 7/8 April 2007. However it became clear that delays from several and varied causes meant that some sections of the site were not going to be sufficiently complete. For a period serious consideration was given to simply cancelling the event completely. After further discussion it was decided to go ahead and let people come and see what had actually been achieved. Some limited advertising was therefore undertaken in the local area. One result of the decision to go ahead was that all the vehicles got out into the fresh air for a power washdown before going back into their new allotted positions in the further improved display areas.

There are several ideas being evaluated as to how to diversify the range of vehicles on show, and to explain to visitors the significance of each. Amongst the non-bus exhibits there are recovery trucks, Land Rovers, one car so far, an Austin Seven, six green Goddess fire engines, and an underground railway carriage.

Varied smaller items such as road signs, bus stops, ticket machines, uniforms, badges etc are to be displayed, this aspect developing as additional material becomes available. The most unusual vehicle unusual vehicle so far Blackpool 'Hover Tram' 735 arrived on site in June 2007.

Visitors will be invited to become volunteers or members and play an active part in the long-term development and in the day-to-day operation of the museum. They can then also join us on the various outings and visits that will be arranged during the year using museum-based vehicles.

Other local organisations, such as railway and model railway groups will be offered



Looking very smart outside the museum on the day of our visit was now partial open-top former Grampian Leyland Atlantean/Alexander URS 321X displayed in Glasgow livery.

space in a large side room to establish displays that promote their own project. It is expected too to supply vehicles in support of other organisations and various community events.

Our visit in early July witnessed a hive of activity, the makings of a first class transport museum were well in place, and we look forward to returning in the future to bring you further news of this exciting development.

### Vehicle profile LHS 747V

A Volvo Ailsa B55-10 mk2 with Alexander AV H44/35F LHS 747V was new in 1979 to Central Scottish at East Kilbride depot allocated fleet number AH23.

In 1989 the bus moved to Cumbernauld depot, Central Scottish had by now merged with Kelvin Scottish and was known as Kelvin Central and had been renumbered 1967.

LHS 747V has now been restored to the in service condition as it would have looked when operating from Cumbernauld depot. During its time with Kelvin Central it also operated from Kirkintilloch, Airdrie and Old Kilpatrick depots.

After being sold she passed via a number of smaller independent operators including Marbill Coaches, Allander Travel and finally Jay's Coaches to James Duncan for preservation in April 2007.

In the short time the bus has been in preservation, it has attended SVBM Lathalmond museum in May 2007 and the Stagecoach Kilmarnock Open Day in June 2007. James has also managed to repaint the bus to represent how it would have looked in service from Cumbernauld depot with Kelvin Central Buses.

