

Ipswich Transport Museum

Dave Carson

Our July speaker was Dave Carson, a front of house volunteer at Ipswich Transport Museum. He gave us a slide show presentation of the collection, varying from horse-drawn carriages to trams, buses, coaches and a fire engine. Over 100 years of Ipswich transport and engineering is on display at the Cobham Road former trolley bus depot. A similar large collection can be found near Lowestoft at Carlton Colville.

Some exhibits had been brought in as wrecks to be restored by the skilled team of volunteers. In the Restoration Zone visitors can see the transformation of historic vehicles and the workshop areas. An Ipswich Co-operative Tramways tram had taken four years to restore to its former glory.

The exhibition rooms contain examples of locally designed and manufactured items from companies such as Cranes, Ransomes Sims and Jefferies, Ransomes and Rapier and Reavell and Cocksedge. Ransome and Rapier built trolley buses from 1933. Buses were not introduced into Ipswich until 1950.

A timetable board in the entrance advertises fares of 5d! There is access inside some of the vehicles where old transportation films are shown. There is also a Trolleybus Cinema showing locally made old films of transport around Ipswich. Dave told us about an old trolleybus being used as a mobile toilet at Southend and another at Colchester. During a visit to Harrogate Dave saw new style electric buses which could be rapidly charged in 20 minutes for a 3-4 hour range. Last year was the 110th anniversary of Ipswich buses. Each year the Museum holds an Open Day when visitors can experience free rides around the town on the historic vehicles.

Many questions from the floor followed and we agreed that it had been a fascinating topic.

Ann Sanderson

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