

How you can help:

Restoration of both the autocar and autococh is complete, though we want to carry out various improvements, such as installing heating. We are looking for people to work on maintenance as well as hosts or explainers, so passengers can learn more from their journey. If you can volunteer your time, you will be very welcome. By joining the Trust you will be part of one of the most important projects in railway preservation, bringing to life what was so long a 'missing link' in railway history. Now the two vehicles are restored to working order, they can be used as working examples of railcars and the origins of diesel-electric propulsion. As well as offering travel on heritage railways, the autocar and autococh can be used as educational tools available for school visits.

Black & white photos courtesy of the Ken Hoole Study Centre.

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY 1903 ELECTRIC AUTOCAR TRUST

www.electrictocarcar.co.uk

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Please complete in CAPITAL LETTERS marking boxes X where appropriate)

Title: (Mr./Mrs./Miss/Dr. etc.) _____

Forenames: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Tel. No. : _____

Membership Fees:

Adult Member £25 per year £60 for three years

Life Membership £175 Additional Donation: £_____

Junior/Senior Citizen £20 pa £50 for three years

Additional Family Members (please list full names)

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

£8 per member per year or £20 for 3 years

Gift Aid Please treat my subscription and any other donations I may make as GIFT AID until I notify you otherwise. NB. For this to be valid, you must be paying either Income or Capital Gains Tax.

Signed _____

Please make cheques/postal orders payable to 'NER 1903 Autocar Trust' and send completed application forms/renewals to:
Membership Secretary, 2 Lairs Crescent, Snainton, Scarborough,
YO13 9BQ.

Company No. 5171008 Registered Charity 1105829

NER 1903 Electric Autocar Trust

operating a railway pioneer



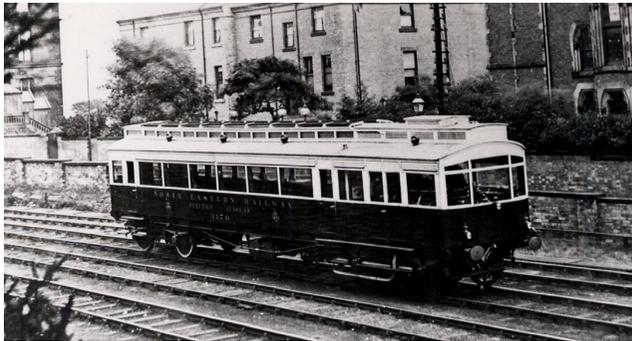
In 1903, when steam powered most things that moved on land and sea and many that didn't, the North Eastern Railway built a world first — a railcar powered by electricity generated from an on-board petrol engine. Now, this pioneer has been restored to run again.

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A brief history...

In 1902, electric trams were introduced to Tyneside and proved very popular with the public. The North Eastern Railway, which operated the railways in this area, was one of the more forward thinking and innovative railway companies and responded by developing the network of lines which is now the Newcastle Metro. They also built two experimental railcars, which they hoped would revolutionise urban rail travel.



Autocar leaving Scarborough

Railway engineers knew electrical motors were more efficient than steam engines, but wanted to avoid the expense and trouble of providing overhead wires or a third rail for power. Instead, they reasoned, why not provide an 'on-board' power source for electric traction motors?

These railcars were built at York Carriage Works in 1902-03 and were described as 'self-propelled railway carriages'. They looked like contemporary carriages, but had an engine room with a petrol engine and generator to power electric traction motors on a bogie. (At that time, petrol engines were more developed than diesel ones).



The railcars were based on electric trams and used some of their technology. Inside, they had reversible upholstered seats, curtains and radiators. There was a driving position at each end of the railcar, very useful for urban journeys, with frequent changes of direction. Thanks to their electric motors, acceleration was brisk, ideal for urban travel and passengers liked the comfort and cleanliness. The railcars were called 'autocars', after the steam 'autotrains' already operated by the NER.

The autocars worked in the North-East and in Yorkshire between 1904 and 1931. They were popular with passengers but suffered from technical problems and from being pioneers a generation ahead of their time.

Withdrawn in 1931, the body of one autocar was sold for use as a holiday home in Kirbymoorside in North Yorkshire. This allowed it to survive until a chance conversation led to it being offered to carriage restorer Stephen Middleton who formed this Trust to restore it.



The autococh

In 1923, one autocar was given a more powerful engine, enabling it to pull a coach. This was usually a coach fitted for 'push-pull' working, doubling passenger capacity whilst allowing the train to be driven from either end.