



## Hong Kong launches new tram

The first of the production run of new trams for Hong Kong, car 171, stands in the sunshine on the day of the official public launch, 28 November 2011. Although very similar in appearance to the previous Hong Kong trams, they are an all-metal construction instead of having wood frames and use AC motors, regenerative braking and emergency magnetic track brakes. However, following Hong Kong tramway tradition they are re-using the trucks and some other equipment from withdrawn cars. Three have so far been constructed (171, 173 and 174) and the whole fleet will be renewed over the next 8-10 years.

(Text John Prentice, Photo Joseph Tse)

## Karlsruhe precedent for Sheffield order?

Karlsruhe has broken with tradition and ordered 25 tram-trains from Vossloh (in place of Siemens) with an option for 50 more. The vehicles will be built at Vossloh's Valencia plant in Spain, with electrical equipment from Vossloh Kiepe (Düsseldorf). This is the probable type that will be ordered for the Sheffield – Rotherham tram-train trial, as Vossloh has been declared the preferred bidder. The light rail vehicles are 37.20 metres long and 2.65 metres wide, resulting in a total passenger capacity of 224 persons. The maximum operational speed of the three-part vehicles is 80 km/h. The bogies are equipped with pneumatic secondary suspension which provides superior dynamic characteristics as well as comfortable and smooth ride.



Vossloh



Founded 1938

# Tramfare

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### On the cover

**Breaking new ground:** Blackpool Flexity 2 001 moves forward to the crossover at Fleetwood Ash Street (Fisherman's Walk) on 16 November 2011, after its first run beyond Little Bispham for gauging trials. A new substation is being built near Fleetwood Ferry which will be ready in time for the new service to start along the full route on Good Friday, 6 April 2012.

James Millington

## Happy New Year!

It's an exciting time for British tramway enthusiasts. The year sees the long-awaited revival of the pioneering Blackpool tramway with its mix of modern Flexity 2 trams and modernised heritage cars. Manchester's Metrolink promises to reach Oldham by the Spring and Rochdale and Droylsden by the Summer.

Croydon will have its extra fleet of Variotrams, some diverted by manufacturer Stadler from Bergen in Norway. Midland Metro should have nominated its preferred supplier for a new tram fleet, while work should get under way to extend in Nottingham. We may even see some decisions over the tram-train project for Sheffield and the tram-titution of the Watford – St Albans Abbey Line, where the consultation period has been extended and new specifications issued.

On the other hand, apart from the deeply troubled Edinburgh project, there is nothing in the pipeline.

Despite the hype about bringing forward "shovel-ready" projects, the Autumn Statement was not good for light rail. Amid a preponderance of road schemes, and the welcome Trans-Pennine electrification, only the Rochdale Interchange alongside Manchester Metrolink's extension and four trams for Sheffield made the shortlist. The Chancellor approved a £12.4 million contribution (less if local funds are available) for four new trams for Sheffield, to be delivered by November 2014.

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