

Friends of Classic London Buses of the Fifties

For those actively involved in or supporting the preservation of London buses, coaches and trolleybuses of the past



The photo above shows RT 113 at RAF Coningsby in 2000 when we celebrated the vehicle's 60th, it having been taken into LPTB stock on 7th March 1940. I asked if the RAF Memorial flight would allow us to photograph their MKIIA Spitfire next to the bus, the aircraft having been built in March 1940. By coincidence "XT" is carried by both bus and fighter.

Photo and caption by Tony Beard

Newsletter 166

June 2020

Opening Lines

With the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of VE Day just over (as I write this) the arrival of this month's cover picture in my e-mail in-box seemed very relevant. There is no prize for spotting the RT somewhere in the photograph... I have long thought that the RT, the 1938 tube stock, the Douglas DC-3 Dakota and the Supermarine Spitfire were all classic examples of things designed to look right and perform right and I have yet to be persuaded otherwise. In many ways, no doubt, modern artefacts are more technologically advanced and "safer" however you choose to define that, but we appear, sadly, to have lost the ability to make things look attractive as well as functional. The latest double-deckers in particular as well as tramcars and multiple-unit trains, be they here or in other countries, all seem to have been designed (if they were truly "designed" in the real meaning of the word) to be visually offensive and as if that were not bad enough, to be adorned with inappropriate liveries in clashing colours and finished off with idiotic names used by their owners or operators. We could take some lessons from the 1930s today.

The mystery of RTL 180...

Brian Watkinson

It really is the mystery of RTL 174...

RTL 180 was badly damaged just before its May 1960 overhaul and was taken to Aldenham, where its Park Royal RT3/I body 4440 was due to be overhauled.

But when RTL 180 arrived at Aldenham on 30 March, the replacement RTL 180 was already on the paint line sporting overhauled Weymann RT8/2 body 7732, (that had arrived on 17 March 1960 with RTL 1375, and Leyland chassis CU 8345 that had arrived as RTL 1357 on 21 March). So RTL 180 went off back to service which left Aldenham with a badly damaged body and a Leyland chassis without a body.

It had been intended that RTL 180's body would be fitted to Leyland chassis 7123 off RTL 201, (this arrived at Aldenham 17 May) . The new combination was due to become RTL 174.

So it was RTL 174 that was written off. The un-overhauled chassis and damaged body were dismantled for spares and the body scrap sent to George Cohen in October 1960....

All this "detective work" has been possible due to the excellent work done by Alan Bond in creating the RT and RTL records and keeping a version that can be word searched.

The Mystery of RTL 180...

Peter Osborn

Ian Smith's history of RTL 180 covers the bonnet number, but not Camberwell's accident-damaged bus (which was body 4440 on chassis 7094). The 'new' RTL 180 outshopped on 5 April 1960 comprised (as usual) a different body and different chassis. We don't know when the accident was, but the bus was delicensed on 17 March 1960 and moved to Aldenham on 30 March. The committee discussed it first on 7 April, and on 21 April recorded the decision to scrap the bus. So what happened next?

Chassis 7094 was presumably not badly damaged as it was overhauled and outshopped with another body as RTL 1411 on 19 April 1960.

The records show that body 4440 was mounted on chassis 7123 on 17 May 1960 and given the fleet number RTL 174. But that bus never left Aldenham; the card relates 'Chassis dismantled and body scrapped at Aldenham 5/10/60. Remains to G Cohen'. This is where your deerstalker comes in handy. [See Newsletter 165 - Ed.] Chassis 7123 came from another Camberwell bus, RTL 201, which came into Works for overhaul on 17 May 1960. The Variation sheet for the day records 'Works Bo float to disposal: RTL 174, body 4527 off, CU 7079 off, body 4440 on, CU 7123 on, at Aldenham.' So why should the chassis be dismantled, rather than be used with a float body? Perhaps a whole bus had been approved for scrapping, here was the damaged bus, so it gets scrapped. But then, why mount the damaged body on a chassis at all?

Editor's note: The July Rolling Stock minutes will include a little more on this subject.

Spare Parts

Paul Fleet

Thank you to everyone who responded to my offer of bus parts from my garage. Everything went within the first 24hrs after the Newsletter was published and there were a small number of disappointed people.

It was nice to see a few 'old names' making contact, as well as some new ones - thank you all.

Wrong Tram!

Hugh Taylor

Newsletter 165, page 11. It was tram 1858 that was at Chessington not 1874. I expect others have brought this up already. [No, so far you are the only one, Hugh. Don't know how I missed it myself as I did know..... - Ed]

Peter Comfort

Thanks for including the photo of MB 90 and RT 1700 on the front page. The LCBS 50 event was truly superb, and thanks to all those at the EoR who made it possible, and similarly to Arriva at Harlow garage. The road run that followed the garage photo shoot took various of the vehicles on several circuits of Old Harlow, much to the bewilderment of the local population. With Keith Valla behind the wheel of the MB, I took full advantage of jumping on and off the bus for numerous photo opportunities until the light gave way. A great weekend out - and looking back this might be one of the rare chances we get this year for attending any public events. You just never know what lies right around the corner.....

Like I suspect many other owners, we have tried to keep busy by tackling the jobs that haven't been top priority when the rally season is usually in full swing. After 12 years of ownership we have at last stripped the MB's front wheels back to bare metal, primed and painted back into what we believe should be a correct shade of Lincoln Green. I am particularly pleased that the aluminium hubcaps have polished up well, with the colour of AEC centre badges revived by applying a coat of Polytrol Colour Restorer. I'm not sure if anyone else has used this before, but it has certainly transformed the previous very faded appearance of the centre badges - see photos attached showing before and after. The whole bus could frankly benefit from an external repaint, but so far the budget has been more than challenged by keeping on top of her mechanical needs and in generally improving the interior. Hopefully we will be able to consider a repaint at some point in the not too distant future. We've also been busy restoring the staircase on RM 1527, repainting, new treadmaster replacement step edgings etc., again all with very pleasing results. Next job is to replace the etched glass and sort out various of the quarter drop window mechanisms. Should be enough here to keep us occupied for a few more weeks of lock-down!



Above: The familiar sight of somewhat tired AEC badges on hub caps, while on the next page we see the results after treatment with Polytrol.



Continental Pioneer

Peter Comfort

I love the photo of RTL 1050 on page 7 from David Thrower's collection. Round about this time I was attending secondary school in Hampton, and during the summer months the highlight of our games and PE schedule was a trip to the local open air swimming baths. I say "highlight" in the loosest of terms as I absolutely hated the experience, I couldn't swim and the water was always freezing regardless of the outside temperature..... However, the highlight came in the form of the short bus journey from school to the swimming baths and return, courtesy of Continental Pioneer. RTL 1050 was a regular performer, although I remember her looking rather more uncared for than in the London to Brighton photograph, so am guessing my experiences might be from a year or so later. RTL 1023 also put in appearances from time to time. Another favourite were the ex BEA one and a half deck RFs - from memory there were 2 of them active, I think MLL 720 and MLL 747. These short trips made the hellish swimming experience more than worth it, and I can still recall the evocative sounds from inside the RTL sitting behind the driver with the bulkhead window removed. I never knew what became of the RTL in life post-Continental Pioneer until talking with David a few years back and hearing that she was in his good care. A real piece of nostalgia.

Continental Pioneer's BEAs

David Thrower

As has been commented before, the former independent Continental Pioneer of Richmond, also sometimes called Pioneer Coaches, was one of the most interesting independents in the South East in the 1960s and 1970s. It operated a mixture of RTs, RTLs, RFs, oddments such as an ex Tilling Group Bristol L type, two ex-BEA deck-and-a-halves, plus a couple more bought for spares, and gradually, a few rather more modern coaches as long distance tour work was taken on.

A few interesting photos have recently come to light of a trip (we think it was one of several trips) with one of the BEAs to Holland. These are enclosed. Apologies for the poor colour reproduction, due to their age.

Continental Pioneer also had a couple of ex Manchester City Transport airport-shuttle buses, and

photos of these are included here, for interest. A brief anecdote. They weren't exactly noted for their power to weight ratio, having heavy bodies but only Leyland 350 engines, so they struggled. The Pioneer drivers far preferred the BEAs, with their big AEC engines. Well, one of the latter was booked out on a tour, to Finland. But it had some sort of mechanical fault before departure, and so one of the Manchesters had to be substituted, literally the night before the tour was due to commence. Needless to say, the two weeks round Finland, with a load of passengers and camping gear and luggage, taxed it to the utter limit. It just about made it, only to blow up its engine a few days after its return, on a local trip around Richmond.

The rear-ends of the Manchesters looked quite presentable, very similar to the BEAs. But the front ends completely lacked the beauty of the BEAs.

Needless to say, the very active bus preservation movement in Manchester would have dearly liked to have preserved one of these vehicles, and so in retrospect it's a real shame that neither of the Pioneer pair survived.





Above: One of the Manchester “BEA lookalikes” with Burlingham bodywork and sporting a driver’s mirror that appears to have come from a red RT. On the next page we see the same vehicle from the rear and if it isn’t at the Mont St. Michel in Normandy, northern France I may be tempted to manger mon chapeau!



This photo shows one of Pioneer's BEAs arriving at a camp-site in France or possibly the Netherlands in the late 1960s (Photo by Continental Pioneer).

Finally, as Peter Comfort referred to RTL 1023, here is a shot of that bus showing the unashamed luxury of the facilities on offer to the happy travellers.....



Pinewood Studios

Michael Dryhurst

During a 52+ years career in the movie industry, I worked at all of the major UK studios, including Pinewood.

I started there in February 1956, as a Clapper Loader, in these more politically-correct times known as a 'Second Assistant Cameraman'. Until the advent of High Definition videotape and its replacement of 35mm celluloid film, nevertheless, the Clapper Loader's job remained the same. Load the magazines with film, log the amount of raw negative passing through the camera, log the takes printed, the amount of film exposed and any waste ends. And, at the beginning of each take, stand in front of the camera and announce the scene/take numbers while banging down the clapstick, which gave the Editor the synch point, as at this stage both picture and sound negative were separate (they didn't come together until a Married Print...).

At the time I was in digs in Acton, but within walking distance of Ealing Common tube station. From here I caught Piccadilly Line train no.156, at 0715, to Uxbridge; it arrived there around 0750. A run into the snack bar, breakfast of a cheese and tomato roll, a large cuppa and the first 'oily rag' of the day. Then outside catch the 0800 route 457C bus to Pinewood, which arrived at the studio at 0815. In those days we worked a 44-hours week, 0830-1830 Mon/Tue/Thurs., 0830-1800 Wed/Fri., and departures were timed accordingly. There was also a 457C departure for Uxbridge at around 16.15. And if one missed a 457C, it was a mile walk between the 'Crooked Billet' bus stop at Five Points (457, 457A) and the studio. Until the advent of a Golden Miller service, there was not a direct bus service to Shepperton Studios, although later the studio provided a shuttle to/from the railway station, operated by Conway Hunt of Ottershaw. Before all that, it was a 218 and then a lengthy walk up Squires Bridge Road.

My pic of RT 1426 on the cover of Newsletter no. 162 is at the turning circle outside the Double Lodge, taken immediately after arrival at 0815 one snowy morning in February 1956. Actors and Technicians (Art Dept., Camera, Editing, Production, Sound, etc.) were permitted to enter here, while the Trades

(Carpenters, Electricians, Grips, Hairdressers, Make-up, Painters, Plasterers, Props, Riggers, Screen Extras, Stagehands and Wardrobe) walked up to the Workmen's Entrance (next left), where they were required to clock-in. I believe that subsequently this latter became the only entrance.

Of the other main film studios, ABPC, MGM and National (Boreham Wood), Denham, Ealing, Merton Park, Nettlefold (Walton-on-Thames), Southall, Twickenham, Warner Bros. (Teddington) and Worton Hall (Isleworth), all were served directly by public transport. Trouble is, both Pinewood and Shepperton had the best bars and best restaurants.

And in the U.S.A., I've worked at Goldwyn, Twentieth-Century Fox and Warner Bros., studios, all of which, believe-it-or-not, are served by public transport, sorry! I mean *transit*.

Newsletter 165 - RLH 53

Bob Martin

The discovery of RLH 53 and the other two RLHs 69 and 71 was due to a piece of luck which I sometimes had looking for London buses in the USA. In 1994 I was on holiday in San Jose, California and made a visit to Irv Perch and his Hill Country Wagons to Wings Relic Collection museum at Morgan Hills not far from where we were staying. Two of the three RLHs were used to take visitors round the museum the third was an "eyecatcher" The bad news was they had been sold in November 1993 at auction and he had no idea where they had gone.

Fast forward to 1996 this time on holiday in Laguna Niguel in southern California and a visit to Las Vegas when I had to decide on a trip to the Grand Canyon or Lake Havasu. When I realised there were two RTs 3193 and 3768 and RLH 39 it had to be Lake Havasu - the Grand Canyon would always be there, the RTs/RLH might not. RT 3768 was an Ice Cream parlor at the London Bridge Resort which was celebrating the 25th anniversary of the London Bridge in Lake Havasu, RLH 39 (depicted below) at the north of the town and RT 3193 at the south as "eyecatchers" for McCulloch Realty. I called into the office and met the President and Vice-President of the company who were interested in the history of their buses. In conversation John Stacey the Vice-President happened to mention that a friend of his, Don Vierstra in California, had three RLHs. He rang him and arranged for me to meet him on my return. Parked at the rear of Don Vierstra's house in Murrieta were the three RLHs I had missed two years earlier. Don had bought all three at the auction to use on a proposed tour of the Murrieta Temecular Valley. For various reasons this was not proceeded with. RLH 69 was the only one to be used with a California license. There they stayed until rescued by Steve Mcfadden in 2007 and the rest is history.





Editor's note: It was Shaun McFadden, not Steve, and at that time his partner (in modernspeak) was Melissa Walton who was English and running her own fashion-related business. It was largely through her influence that she and Shaun bought all three buses, and they discovered the "Friends" soon afterwards. Several of us helped with all manner of things including parts, colour samples, literature and advice and RLHs 69 and 71 were both restored and put into service. Melissa recruited many of her staff to work on the buses and years ago we did publish a photo or two of a crowd of American girls busily restoring the interior of one of the buses. Sadly Shaun and Melissa split up, which led to the sale of the buses, amongst other things; luckily all three found their way home. Melissa herself was last heard of in Spain (I think) with a different partner and another business. Her parents were formerly "Friends" members but with the buses finding new homes and their daughter doing the same, they let their membership lapse.



Above: Melissa with RLH 69 from memory; the light coloured roof was to deflect the heat, and was in fact Chiswick cream or the nearest they could get. I cannot now locate the photo of the girls restoring the interior so I suspect it got deleted.

Routes of my Roots

Peter Gomm

I was born in Berkhamsted in 1937 and we, the family, moved to Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead, in early 1939. Even in my early years I showed an interest in the transport around me including the LMS main line. The double deck buses were dominated by STs, including, at that time operating the 316, the route some twenty years later I was to use to get to work at Bovingdon as I reported previously. During the war and afterwards the USAF operated there which necessitated double deckers. The main route along the A41 between Watford and Aylesbury was the 301 which also had STs and one abiding memory is going on an ST with a gas trailer and the conductor getting off at Pendley Beeches to liven it up as we slowly climbed the hill. I wonder how they got oncoming up Tring Hill from Aston Clinton which was, and still is, quite long and steep.

My family ties were with Berkhamsted and Tring, hence the experience with the gas trailer above. After the war my mum worked in a shop in Berkhamsted and after school my sister and I would join her by catching a 301 from the Princes' Arm stop just before Boxmoor station. Now Country STs didn't have rear blind displays and one day we ran to catch the bus, ran across the road and round the back and hopped on. When it turned into the station forecourt I realised we were on a 316 not a 301 which stopped on the main road. A very kind conductor gave us our money back for the tickets we had bought and we went down and got on the right 301 which followed.

From 1948 I attended Berkhamsted School having won a scholarship so my daily journey to and from in school time was on the 301. Readers who know their RT history will know that Tring (TG) had the first green versions. HH for a very short time had a front entrance STL, which I think came from Amersham and quickly went back, but for just one journey to school I travelled on it sitting above the rear nearside wheel arch, no seat there (next time you see 971J check). However I came home on a nice shiny RT and

we passed another going in the opposite direction at the White Horse at Bourne End.

What has brought all this on? Blame EFE models. Recently they have issued a model of STL 1605 with route details for the 314, Hemel Hempstead to St Albans. This is another route I travelled on, not to be confused with the later Town Service. This one used the old road which meandered a bit and entered St Albans via Verulam Road, Chequers Street and St Peters Street before terminating at the bus garage. It was the fact that they chose to model an STL rather than an ST or even an RT3 which had me delving into my library and consulting Alan Bond. Lo and behold STL 1605 was repainted from red to green in December 1951 and allocated to HH for just four months in 1952. So it could have happened even though RTs were holding sway at HH by this time.

My thanks to Alan for his help. If anybody has photographic evidence of an STL on the original 314 perhaps they could share it with us, or give me a book reference. Incidentally the 314 was swallowed up and rerouted in St Albans by the 330 on the 17th October 1956.

"Ghost" buses

Peter Gomm

I'm afraid I can't help John Gray very much with his quest. RF 13 was with Quantock Motor Services and kept just up the road from me. I was a bit surprised when a picture of it appearing in Amersham was in the Newsletter. I have checked the garage and it isn't there so did it stay in Buckinghamshire or any other home county? RF 308 is shown in Harlow garage on page 9, it looks as if it has been through the wash. That would have pleased Vic Chivers as it was his favourite transport for staff runs whilst it was allocated there. You [Peter refers to me here - Ed.] were witness to our acquiring it all those years ago at Hoddesden. When I moved to Somerset I left it in the care of Geoff Hudspith and he arranged the sale (with my blessing).

Editor adds: Peter's purchase of the RF was one of those things arising from a casual remark. Someone, I can't remember who now, had asked me if I knew anyone who wanted to buy an RF because 308 was for sale by its owners, Forres County Primary School, Hoddesden who had acquired it from London Country in March 1973. In those days both Peter and I were among those who attended regular monthly meetings of the Omnibus Society, Herts and Beds Group, at Luton and at one of those meetings I asked Peter in turn if he happened to know anyone who wanted an RF. "Yes," was the reply, "Me" and the rest as they say, is history - 37 years' worth of history which could so easily not have happened at all or turned out very differently.



Above: Alan B Cross writes: "A & W Coaches. The "official" photo on page 6 of Newsletter 165 showing 159 route "blind" being affixed to the window is a fake, presumably for publicity purposes. A & W Coaches were only allocated to AE EW, HD and W. The W allocation could be used on routes 2, 13, 16 and 60.

My photo (previous page) of No 33 "Lady Mary" was taken in July 1949 at Victoria Station on route 16. For some reason the slipboard is upside down. This is the same coach as in the publicity photo mentioned above.

The group photo of A & W coaches appears to have been taken in Chiswick Works when the coaches were first delivered there. As an aside, LT 21 mentioned as being in the line-up was an oddball. LT 1-150 were originally all petrol-engined, open staircase buses. LT 21 was rebodied with an internal staircase body and fitted with an oil engine before the war. The caption describes the other bus as "Tilling ST 92". This cannot be as the Tillings were numbered in the range 837 - 1027 in the fleet." [Sorry, it should have read ST 928; I don't know where the final '8' went - must have got lost in the cut-and-paste from Michael Wickham's e-mail. - Ed.]

**From the Archives - material supplied by Tony Beard
From the Minutes of the Rolling Stock Technical Committee Meeting held on 7 June 1960**

Underseat Saloon Heaters Introduced

Code Affected: RT8/2 (28 Country Buses)

Saloon heaters are to be fitted to 28 Country Buses Code RT8/2 (similar to the conversion on double-deck Green Line coaches Code RT8/1).

When the heaters are fitted the buses will be converted to coaches Code 1/3RT8/1 by painting in standard Green Line livery and fitting of "Bulls Eye" motif and relevant transfers.

Action: Full application at overhaul.

Rear Emergency Door Escutcheon Plate

The recent Alteration Advice is to be revised to include RF buses Codes RF2, RF5, RF5/1, RF5/2, and RF 5/3.

Escutcheon plates and handles are to be painted as shown on LT drawings.

Rear Axle Dust Shields - Removed

It has been agreed with AEC that rear axle dust shields will no longer be fitted to new production Routemaster vehicles. The dust shields are to be removed at garages from RM vehicles already delivered and displaced shields are to be forwarded to the Works for disposal.

Cab Heater Fan Motor - Fan Fixing Screw Changed

Reason for Alteration: To obviate loose fans

Codes Affected: RT, RF, RLH, TI3 and TD2

The heater fan fixing screw is to be changed from a slotted grub screw to a hexagon socket grub screw to ensure that the fan will not become loose on the spindle. Stocks of fan assemblies are to have the screw changed and the assembly renumbered.

Action Full application at overhaul. Material to be made available for garage requirements.

Summer/Winter Charge Rate: Dynamo Control Panel

Note for Garage Action: Change to Summer Charge Rate to commence as from the first week in April and the changeover to Winter Charge Rate to commence the first week in October.

Coaches in New Green Livery

Reason for Alteration: Improved appearance

Code Affected: RF2/1 (14 vehicles)

Fourteen Green Line coaches code RF2/1 are to be painted in the new Green Line livery during overhaul at Aldenham. One vehicle has already been completed and is in service.

Action: Full application at Overhaul (14 vehicles)

Rear Frame Nearside Pillar Interior Mouldings - RT

Mr Stone advised the Committee that it is estimated that 100 sheets of "Lamiplate" size 8ft x 3ft will be required per six months for approximately 3 1/2 years.

Mr Crawley stated that he had written to the Principal Purchasing Assistant on 3 June 1960 requiring the issue of a N.R. enquiry for this material in 16 gauge aluminium sheet covered on one side with PVC to shade and grain as sample Rexine forwarded to traders Messrs Huntley Bourne and Stevens.

RF Rear Door Escutcheon Plate

The Chairman stated that the C.M.E. had agreed to the recommendation outlines in the earlier statement. Following a query from Mr Lloyd concerning the introduction of revised colour schemes, it was agreed that they would be implemented at vehicle overhaul and on replacement of the escutcheon plate.

Paint Condition of Exterior of Vehicle Roofs

Mr Lloyd reported that statements were periodically being prepared and forwarded to the CME for discussion at monthly Technical meetings. Discussion then ensued on damage to roof panels caused by low tree branches. The Chairman requested all concerned to report, where possible, to instances of the foregoing so that appropriate action can be taken to obviate further vehicle damage.

Finally, the Chairman stated that the paint condition was not as bad as at first thought and therefore there was no justification to undertake special action.

RT Rear Platform Covering in Treadmaster Material

The Chairman stated that it was uneconomical to introduce the above on RT vehicles. This decision had been arrived at following discussion on cost figures submitted at the recent CME Technical Meeting.

Mr Stone anticipated that trouble encountered at garages due to rubber mats lifting at joins will be largely overcome by use of a strap plate and Bostic B sealing compound.

Underseat Saloon Heaters RT 8/2

Mr Stone stated that the Operating Manager (Country Buses and Coaches) had confirmed by letter that the 28 RT type buses to be fitted with heaters should be painted in standard Green Line Double Deck livery, similar to the vehicles already allocated to Romford and Grays Garages.

Mr Charles stated that the change in livery would not entail any additional expense. However, discussion ensued and it was pointed out that the cast Bulls Eye motif, one per side on the upper saloon, is fitted to the existing Green Line Double Deck vehicles and the 28 conversion vehicles would require this fitment or alternatively the RM coach transfer plus base plate.

Mr Charles was requested to prepare a cost estimates for the foregoing alternatives.

Destination Blind - Tell-Tale Marking RF and GS Vehicles

Mr Charles suggested that a trial should be instigated as soon as possible with markings in "Arnold Metal Stamp" ink that would be applied direct on cloth in order to resolve present difficulties in reading tell-tale markings. Mr Lloyd drew attention to the fact the "Arnold Metal Stamp" ink appeared to be subject to smudging and was obviously not waterproof. He felt that this aspect should be borne in mind when a final decision is made.

In conclusion the Chairman requested Mr Lloyd investigate the possible use of this type of ink as a means for marking all blinds and thus dispense with the use of tabs on RT vehicles.

Experiment No S8181 and S8143 - Driver's Emergency Window Seal

Mr Stone stated that six months service experience had been gained with plastic and felt strip when fitted in the above position in lieu of rubber. He pointed out that both of these materials were not considered entirely satisfactory due to the fact that the plastic strip tended to take up a permanent set and there was a tendency for the felt strip to pull out of the channel section.

A windscreen wiper blade was then submitted for comparison purposes and it was suggested that similar rubber as used on the blade construction could be tested for draught sealing purposes in the driver's emergency window.

Discussion ensued on the feasibility of the foregoing and it was agreed that Mr Stone should investigate the possibility of obtaining and fitting high quality single ply or, if necessary, laminated rubber or neoprene for the above purpose.

List of Proposed and Existing Alteration Advices: RM Vehicles

Mr Lloyd queried whether any further advices were likely to be added to the present list in the near future. In reply Mr Stone stated that the list in question was in the course of revision and would be extended and reissued in due course.

Failure of RT Air Pressure Signal Pipes

Mr Stone submitted a combined bracket and clip for securing the air pressure signal pipe on 6RT and 7RT vehicles and proposed to extend Alteration Advice G586 (at present affecting 3RT vehicles only) to cover this modification on Leyland vehicles. This was agreed.

Continuing he proposed that all pipes made from "Tungum" material at present used on Leyland RT vehicles with Westinghouse equipment should be replaced by nylon pipes as and when failure occurred. It was estimated that approximately 1,000 Leyland RT vehicles were now fitted with Westinghouse equipment. Discussion ensued and it was agreed that an alteration advice introducing nylon pipe should be issued to cover Leyland RT vehicles only with Westinghouse equipment.

Premature Failure of RT Engines

The Chairman stated that he had discussed the above subject with the Works Manager and from records available it was apparent that there was a higher preponderance of premature failed RT engines in the Country Area than the Central Area relative to fleet size. He queried whether retrospective reason for each engine removal could be ascertained. In reply Mr Butler thought that this information could be provided and agreed to investigate.

Inhibitor for RM Cooling System

Mr Styles explained that difficulty would be encountered in maintaining the correct quantity of inhibitor at all times in the cooling system due to very variable water losses. Whilst on average half the specified initial quantity appears to be required at three weekly intervals, some vehicles lose their inhibitor at a much greater rate and vice versa. The Chairman confirmed from failure reports that leakages were present and largely overcome by tightening the hose jubilee clips.

With regard to the standard of protection of parts employed in the cooling system required when re-issued after overhaul, Mr Charles stated this information had been provided by Inspection.

Repair of Rubber Platform Nosing - Q Class Trolleybus

Mr Padley stated that on the Q class trolleybuses which are fitted with platform rubber mats and nosings, a condition has arisen where the front nosing becomes badly worn although the condition of the remainder of the mat and nosing is generally satisfactory. He suggested that in the interests of economy the worn studs along the edge of the nosing should be cut away and a standard trolleybus 3in wide hard rubber nosing be fitted in lieu. This nosing is to be fitted in two lengths only, on either side of the platform centre stanchion commencing from the bulkhead.

This was agreed, but the Chairman questioned whether the depots should be provided with a cutting template to ensure an accurate fit. This would be clarified.

RF OMO Vehicles Cab Light - Foot Operated Switch

Mr Lloyd queried whether an Alteration Advice had been issued to cover the introduction of a foot operated switch for the cab light in lieu of a hand operated switch on the cab panel. In reply Mr Stone stated that Advice No BD306 had been issued in March 1960 to cover this modification.

Suggestions

Number	Description	Remarks
53461	GS Stoptlight switch wiring - two-pin terminal block under floor	No award
53688	Coach Destination Blinds - Tell-tale markings as on RT type	Extension award
53752	Bonnet support spring - method of adjustment	No award
54095	Battery crate clamping bolt RF - to have square shank	No award
54130	Lower saloon seats rearranged	No award
54175	Shot blasting of brake drums - Alteration to frame	Adopted, award
54193	RT 3995 experimental bus to be painted "silver" etc.	No award
54253	RF vehicles, short hand strap as on railways	No award
54258	Bell cord - use of saddle in place of cleat	No award

From the Minutes of the Chief Mechanical Engineer (Road Services) Meeting No 290 held on Thursday 2 June 1960

Losses of Material - Muswell Hill Garage

By a memorandum dated 31.5.1960, Mr Wicks reported loss from Muswell Hill Garage of plant material at an estimated value of £90.15s 0d. the matter had been reported to the Executive's Police and confirmation of the value involved was awaited from the Audit Officer.

The CME stressed the necessity for every effort to be made to guard against the losses of material and ensue that whenever possible, material at garages should be placed under lock and key. When this was not practicable, Mr Shave was to be informed in order that suitable precautions might be taken.

Authority to Withdraw Redundant Assets

- (a) Cl6/I93; Six AEC Mercury Tower Wagons; Total Book Value £6,518

Will become redundant during 1960 in consequence of the Trolleybus Conversion Scheme.

- (b) Cl6/I94; One Wolseley and one Ford Consul Private Car,
Total Book Value: £2,152.

London Transport Police cars which are in poor condition and unsuitable for police work; being replaced.

Both approved for submission to the Executive.

RM Vehicles

- (a) General

The general position of defects on RM vehicles was reviewed in connection with which it was noted that the more onerous nature of the routes on which these vehicles were in service would inevitably influence the extent of the failures. The CME again commented that many of the defects arising could not be regarded as peculiar to the RM vehicle and were not to be expected on new vehicles.

- (b) Electrical Failures

Mr Purves reviewed the present position in this regard and said that no diode failures had been experienced during the preceding three week. Investigations into the cause of previous failures of this nature were continuing with the object of taking firm steps to prevent a repetition at Stage 7 of the Trolleybus Conversion Scheme on 20 July 1960 of the electrical failures experience at the introduction of Stage 6.

In this connection Mr Purves said that the Westinghouse Company had requested the loan of an RM bus for a short period for the purpose of conducting static tests.

This was agreed.

Engines

Mr Shave said that with the object of decreasing the input of engines for repair, he had ruled that engines be changed only with express permission of the Divisional or Assistant Divisional Engineer.

From discussion regarding fuel oil consumption in relation to engine life, the CME referred to a memorandum regarding fuel consumption which, in conjunction with the Director of Research, was in course of preparation for submission to the Executive.

Public Letters

Communications upon the following subjects had received attention:

Name	Comment	Action
Mr Lane	Destination blind incorrect on off-service bus - Stockwell	Man concerned interviewed and instructed to see "Private" blind displayed when off service.
Mrs S Bell	Fumes inside bus - RT 2445 ex Hendon	Fuel pump leaking and fuel dropping on to exhaust pipe
Mrs R Irwin	Children causing damage and loose blind - Forest Gate Garage	Passed to Estate Agent

Chiswick Tram Depot

The CME referred to a copy of a memorandum dated 31.5.1960 from the Estate Agent and Rating Surveyor to the Public Relations Officer in which reference was made to the eventual availability of the Chiswick Tram Depot for disposal. Bearing in mind the use of the premises was linked to Chiswick Works and the replanning thereof, it was considered that the probable date of release of the Chiswick Tram Depot could not at this time be indicated,

The CME said he would inform the Public Relations Officer accordingly.

RM Buses Deliveries

The delivery position of RM buses was noted as follows:

Vehicles Delivered	W/e 4.6.60	Cumulative Position
Park Royal to AEC	8	374
AEC to London Transport	9	359

The CME referred to the continue short-fall (-63) in the supply of mechanical units from AEC to Park Royal Vehicles Ltd. Furthermore, units being delivered were deficient of certain items which had subsequently to be fitted at the expense of London Transport.

The CME directed Mr Wicks to draw the attention of AEC to the position.

Accident RTL 1385 8 May 1960

Reference was made to a memorandum dated 23 May 1960 from Mr Purves regarding the circumstances which had resulted in an accident to RTL 1385 due to inadequate brakes. The cause of the failure was that half of the RP Adjuster concerned comprised the latest Leyland design, the other half being the early pre-war Leyland design. In consequence the unit was inoperative and expansion of the shoes did not take place.

Action which has subsequently been taken to prevent a recurrence included specially marking the pre-war type and drawing the attention of all staff concerned to the matter.

Use of Fire Extinguishers

During discussion at the CME's Technical Committee Meeting, Mr Shave had said that the proper maintenance of CTC fire extinguishers on buses presented some difficulty and was expensive, it not being readily possible to ensure whether an extinguisher was full or partially used. Replacement of these extinguishers by one-gallon CO₂ extinguishers had been suggested; these would be effective in dealing with fires likely to occur on the Executive's vehicles but not dealing with petrol fires on private

cars. Subsequently Mr Shave had reported that during the past 18 months there had been 30 occasions when extinguishers had been used on London Transport premises or vehicles and 40 instances of their use in connection with fires on vehicles not owned by the Executive.

The CME said the Executive Member had ruled that, provided that CO₂ extinguishers would be more effective and economical in dealing with fires of the Executive's concern, consideration should be given to their adoption. For this purpose the CME directed that:

- (a) in consultation with the Central Laboratory, an experiment of suitable magnitude be undertaken, for which purpose a number of appliances were to be selected for trial with full advantage being taken in this connection of the experience of the CME (Railways).
- (b) consideration also be given to the most suitable location inside the vehicle for the extinguisher, bearing in mind that the great majority of the fires now occurred in the interior.

British Trade Week: Linz

The CME said a request had been received for a loan of a bus in connection with British Trade Week to be held in Linz, Austria, in November 1960. This had been agreed and arrangements to be co-ordinated by Mr Wright, would be made to send an RM bus accompanied by three men, on bases similar to those employed on previous occasions.

From the Minutes of the Chief Mechanical Engineer (Road Services) Meeting No 291 held on Thursday 30 June 1960

Works Output

Engines

Mr Wicks said the availability of engines had appreciably improved.

Gearboxes

The supply position continued to be difficult.

Brake Drums

A supply of brake drums had now been received from AEC

RF Cardan Shafts

Mr Wicks said that a number of these cardan shafts had been passed to Mr Shave, but thereafter availability would depend upon deliveries from AEC and these were not expected for some weeks. Mr Shave said it was essential that supplies be available before commencement of the Works Holiday period on 18 July.

GS Fuel Tanks

Mr Shave stated that three tanks of the float of four of this type were under repair at Chiswick Works. Mr Wicks said the matter was in hand.

RM Body Parts

Mr Wicks said the availability of RM body parts was the subject of investigation by the Supplies Officer, the previous schedule of requirements being inadequate. A revised schedule based on a longer term and taking into account requirements to cover accident repairs and stocking of garage spares would be passed to the manufacturers.

RM Vehicles

Mr Shave reported that RM buses were being delivered without fans. Mr Purves said that this was due to a manufacturing difficulty at AEC which was being overcome. The CME directed Mr Purves to pursue the matter urgently with AEC.

Fitment of Flashing Light Indicators - 68% Completed

Supplies of material had improved and Mr Wicks said the manufacturers had undertaken to provide a realistic programme of deliveries of material to complete fitment and to replace failed items.

High Bay - Aldenham Works; Four Standard Scrap Glass Trucks - £188

The present cylindrical bins used for stage of broken glass in the Aldenham high bay are not the ideal shape or size for accommodating large pieces of glass and there is a risk of accidents occurring. Approval was given to purchase four standard scrap glass trucks.

Public Letters

Communications upon the following subjects had received attention:

Name	Comment	Action
Sutcliffe	RF115 alleged to be out of line	A thorough examination revealed no defect. Memo to PRO
G Dawson	Dispute with members of staff at Chelverton Road Garage	Staff advised
Mrs H A Northcott	Difficulty in entering Routemaster	Memo to PRO
B Stanley	Ventilation of lower saloon of RM	Memo to PRO

Hammersmith Trolleybus Depot

The CME said it was essential to avoid any delay in the adaptation of Hammersmith Trolleybus Depot to accommodate BEA coaches and also staff of the Chief Electrical Engineer. To this end the Architect had said that requirements would be met provided that plant work was suitably phased in in conjunction with his department. Mr Wicks said that difficulty in this connection was not anticipated.

Closure of Bus Windows

Mr Shave referred to the desirability of conductors closing bus windows on the run-in, in order that vehicles could pass directly through the washing machine. Failing this it would be necessary to employ men at garages especially for this purpose, thus nullifying to a considerable extent the savings in labour derived from the installation of washing machines.

Mr Shave said that as a result of further tests that had just been undertaken, the time to close windows has been found to be as follows, assuming all windows to be open, which was rarely the case when vehicles returned to garages at night.

RT (Average): 3 minutes 47 seconds

RM (Average): 1 minute 40 seconds (without quarter drop front windows in upper saloon)

RM (Average): 1 Minute 51 seconds (with quarter drop front windows in upper saloon)

For information of the Operating Manager (Central Road Services)

RM Buses Deliveries

The delivery position of RM buses was noted as follows:

Vehicles Delivered	W/e 4.6.60	Cumulative Position
Park Royal to AEC	9	396
AEC to London Transport	7	379

Damage to Bus Roof Paintwork

Reference was made to a memorandum dated 8 June 1960 from the Director of Research to Mr Shave reporting places where roof contact with trees was evident. Mr Shave said that appropriate action had been taken.

Breakdown Lorries: Permanent Way (Railways)

Mr Purves said it was proposed to replace four existing Permanent Way breakdown lorries, for which low loading height was essential. The CME said he did not favour the use of chassis from the Executive's resources and directed Mr Purves to consult with AEC or Leyland as to suitable low chassis which might be available.

Use of Fire Extinguishers

Following discussion at the previous meeting, consideration was given to the most suitable location inside vehicles for the one gallon CO₂ extinguishers which were intended to replace the CTC appliances. Insofar as the RM bus was concerned, it was physically possible to accommodate the new extinguisher under the lower half of the staircase but this would be an expensive modification not justified by any advantage to be derived from necessarily housing the extinguisher in the interior of the vehicle. The CME therefore directed that:

- (a) on RM vehicles the CO₂ extinguisher be installed in the driver's cab on the offside as far forward as practicable, and
- (b) repairs to existing extinguishers be discontinued, the latter to be replaced to that extent by an equivalent number of CO₂ extinguishers on an experimental basis, subject to review in one year.

It was also agreed that:

- (c) the CO₂ appliances be content-tested each three weeks to overcome the possibility of unreported use.
- (d) the water be changed annually and an inhibitor added to avoid corrosion
- (e) the appliances be pressure-tested as vehicles passed through overhaul.

[Editor's note: CTC is of course carbon tetrachloride, an extremely efficient solvent and the best degreaser available then, and maybe even now. It was also known as "Pyrene" after the firm who made the extinguishers. Being such a useful commodity, it was frequently abstracted from extinguishers, not least to clean brake linings which had become oil-contaminated. This is undoubtedly what lies behind the various minutes relating to loss of fluid from these extinguishers and the inability to know whether they were partially empty. I was told this quite often in LCBS days when we had to deal with contaminated brake linings, our only solution being to replace them as the CTC extinguishers were long gone by then and we had no suitable alternative to remove oil and grease effectively.]

RT 3123

David Thrower

Michael Dryhurst mentions in Newsletter 165 that the famous Saunders RT 3123, that is currently in California's version of Aldenham for a body overhaul, has he assumes the body of one of the original batch of 250 from Beaumaris, and not one of the 1950 follow-up order of a further 50 buses. He is quite correct. Records published by Lawrie Bowles, Alan Bond and John Hambley confirm that RT 3123's body (LT number 2668) started life on RT 1389, one of the original batch that was turned out in the old livery with cream upper-deck window surrounds.

But in fact it was still built in 1950, as Michael speculated, despite being from the original batch. I checked the records, and the very last bus of the original batch (RT 1401) and the very first bus of the second batch (RT 4218) were both first licensed on the very same day, 1st September 1950, the two batches thus arriving as one continuous delivery.

So Unitrans can legitimately put the bus in the red and cream livery, Michael, if one turns a blind eye to the bonnet number!

On the subject of Saunders, John Hammel's and my RT 3955 has the body that started life on RT 4264, the fourth-from-last of the later batch to be built, assuming that they emerged from Beaumaris in strict numerical order, which of course might not have actually occurred; we will never know now. I also

assume (and please do correct me if I am wrong) that this now makes it the youngest-surviving roof-box body, licensed in December 1950 and of course turned out in the all-red livery. Restoration is proceeding, albeit held up by the national situation.



RT 3241

Paul McOwan

I thought this item might raise a smile in these troubled times.

I enclose 3 pictures of RT 3241. The first (above) shows the complete ex Green Line RT stored after withdrawal pending restoration. The second and third (next page) show the RT now rebuilt for its new role as a sightseeing bus with a lot of replacement clear glass panels and still carrying its Green Line transfers although they're rather worn.

Seriously, my greenhouse suffered extensive damage during the recent gales, not to mention the attention of some idiots playing football in an adjacent field, needing a lot of replacement glazing. As I was unable to obtain the required materials during the present lockdown I did what any preservationist would have done and improvised! Why are people so keen to discard old aluminium panels when they have so many uses?



By the way, while on the subject of raising a smile, look out for and avoid the vehicle in the next photo.



Yes, it's a Corona Karrier! (Photo from the internet - probably gone viral(!) - forwarded by my friend Mike Edmunds of the now-defunct British Bus Preservation Group).

Coronavirus Update - 2RT2s affected

Tony Beard

The 2RT2 Group were aiming to celebrate RT113's 80th Anniversary of its entry into service on 1 May but the regulations regarding Covid 19 put paid to that. By coincidence RT 8 also entered service on the same day, the vehicle was taken into stock on 25 February 1940 followed by RT 113 on 7 March despite there being a gap of 105 between the two bonnet numbers, their body numbers 339 and 347 are much closer. A calculation I did many years ago shows that the lower the RT2 body number, the earlier the vehicle was taken into stock, therefore RT 44 with body number 286 was taken into stock on 29.12.1939. And just to complete the quartet of survivors RT 54 with body number 296 on 12 January 1940. As I have mentioned previously in this newsletter, RT 44 is a unique vehicle having entered service in the first week of 2RT2 operation on 2 January 1940 and 15 years later withdrawn from passenger service on 31 May 1955 when 2RT2 operation in the Central Area ceased. In addition, it was one of the few that remained in service when most of the class was withdrawn in the summer of 1940 due to air pressure problems (RT8 and RT113 were stored in Reigate).

NEWS FROM THE FEDERATION OF BRITISH HISTORIC VEHICLE CLUBS

Legislation Dave Daniel

General Welcome to the new non-EU Britain! (Although at the moment it feels very much like the old EU one.)

This quarter brings further developments which have an impact on historic vehicles, and again a period where there is little clarity about the future.

Clean Air Zones & Low Emission Zones

Clean Air Zones, Low Emission Zones or Ultra Low Emission Zones, which I am increasingly referring to as CAZ/LEZ remain proposed for many areas, and the future seems to include a myriad of road user

restrictions all enforced by Automatic Numberplate Recognition [ANPR] and civil penalty charges [PCNs].

No further significant developments to CAZ/LEZ have been published. York has claimed a “voluntary LEZ” as a result of agreeing with all local bus operators to use low emission buses in the historic city centre, and Harrow, currently outside the North Circular and therefore outside the planned extended London ULEZ have indicated their interest in extending the ULEZ to their borough, subject to getting funding to do so. Bradford has published an early-stage proposal to introduce a Low Emission Zone but excluding cars and motorcycles. We are currently looking at this and will be responding.

There have been several on-line checking systems introduced.

Transport for London have a checking system for their ULEZ although this is known to be inaccurate at times, and doesn't include some London Authorities plans to introduce “school run” car bans around London schools, or to impose raised charges for having resident's parking permits where non-compliant older cars are parked on the street.

There is a national CAZ checking system, newly introduced, which seems to check CAZ zones in Leeds and Birmingham (neither of which exist yet) but ignores London's ULEZ. There have been queries about its accuracy too.

Clearly there is some way to go before your Satnav will advise you of any upcoming zones and direct you to avoid them or find you a car park where you can stop while you pay all the charges online!

At this stage however, apart from the central London ULEZ the establishment of all of these zones is on hold pending implementation of the ANPR systems, which seem to need an increasingly complex set of variable parameters to manages all the zones, and a huge interfacing increase with the DVLA systems. The current target for completion of this work was July 2020 but has now been extended to August.

A Legal Conundrum

When the London ULEZ was introduced, this was done by a Local Authority Traffic Management Order made in 2014, and with variations confirmed by the then Mayor of London in 2015.

Under this variation, a ‘non-chargeable vehicle’ included a vehicle which is...

“an exempt vehicle within the meaning of paragraph 1 A of Schedule 2 to the 1994 Act [i.e defined as a tax-exempt Historic Vehicle] and particulars of the vehicle are for the time being entered in the register.”

A vehicle also qualifies for exemption “if it was constructed before 1st January 1973 and particulars of the vehicle are for the time being entered in the register.”

You will see that for both exemptions there is a requirement for the vehicle to be registered with Transport for London to qualify for the exemption.

However, what TfL's website says is somewhat different:

“If your vehicle meets the above criteria and is registered in the UK, it is automatically exempt and you don't need to register with us. If your vehicle meets the above criteria but is registered outside the UK, you are also exempt, but will need to register with us. Details on how you can register will be available closer to the time.”

The disparity is that TfL's guidance claims that UK historic vehicles are ‘automatically exempt’ and do not need to register, which contradicts the legal Order, but does seem to be how the ULEZ actually operates.

My predecessor, Bob Owen, had noted this and made enquiries, but never received a satisfactory explanation.

More recently, the draft Orders for the Birmingham and Leeds Clean Air Zones contain similar wording and appear to have the same requirement - namely that to obtain Historic Vehicle status exemption,

you would have to register the vehicle with the Local Authority concerned. In both cases however, council officials have been adamant that this is not how the schemes will operate and that Historic Vehicles will be automatically exempt.

Later proposals by other councils where a draft Order has been published do not contain this anomaly.

In the past few weeks, the Federation has been looking at a new Direct Vision standard and permit system for lorries entering London, introduced by Transport for London. The TfL website outlining the scheme clearly states that tax-exempt Historic Vehicles are exempt, however in looking at the legal Order made by TfL, no such exemption could be found, although TfL had awarded itself powers to make further unspecified exemptions. An enquiry with TfL to clarify this remains unanswered at this time.

This does create a serious conundrum. Technically if you were to drive your historic vehicle into one of these zones without registering, you would not be exempt from charges and could face receiving a PCN. In practice however, it seems you would not because you are effectively invited participate in a scheme with diverges from the apparent legal requirement by the Local Authority who wrote the Order.

On this basis, a 'cautious' approach to the London, Leeds and Birmingham systems would be to register your vehicle irrespective of whether it was claimed to be necessary, in strict compliance with the legal Order.

This remains an issue which is unresolved and one where we continue to seek clarity. Clearly it leaves our members in a rather uncertain position when driving in these areas.

New Cars

Readers will have seen the widely-reported proposals to ban the sale of new liquid-fuelled cars after 2035 or 2032. This is of course outside our field of interest, but will have a bearing on the take-up of non-liquid fuelled vehicles such as electric cars, and in the long term, the availability of fuels.

Tyres

We continue to monitor the proposed '10 year tyre ban' for commercial vehicle tyres. No more has been heard. We will continue to work to find out the Government's decision on a way forward. We believe with the size and scale of the various transport and environmental schemes being considered, the 'tyres' proposal is somewhere near the bottom of the priority list and may remain there for some time

Roadworthiness

There have been no changes in Roadworthiness testing arrangements, nor any apparent issues arising.

Transport Trust

Last year, I led on organising a Transport Trust Red Wheel plaque for the Ace Café. They are currently looking for more potential sites. If you are aware of any more, applications can be made directly to Transport Trust by visiting www.transporttrust.com/nominate-red-wheel-site/nominate ["Friends" Editor note: These are the equivalent in transport terms of the better-known blue plaques and indicate sites of significant transport interest. The Ace Cafe, apart from being a transport cafe, was a well-known meeting-place for motorcyclists in bygone days.]

I have included in the past excerpts which the Federation publish from the journals of member-societies. Here are a couple more:

Technical jargon run wild... a statement in the newsletter of the Vintage Horticultural & Garden Machinery Club to the effect that an engineer was working on 'Aqua-thermal treatment of ceramics, aluminium and steel under a constrained environment' can be translated as 'washing the dishes with hot water under his wife's supervision.'

A member of the Panther Owners Club reflects upon all the machines he has owned over the last fifty years and makes the observation that life is like a toilet roll. The nearer you get to the end the faster it goes!

Membership Renewals

June renewals: Dan Cranefield and Peter Comfort.

July renewals: David Gliddon and Philippe Grit.

In an edition which has included some of “our” buses going overseas, here is a bit more on the same theme.



RTW 421

Michael Wickham

I enclose two pictures of RTW 421, one of the 'GB-plate' buses that were always a good 'spot' for us enthusiasts in the 1960s. The first shows the brand-new bus on a goodwill visit to Berlin in September 1950 and the blind translates as "Special Bus to the German Industry Fair". It has been cleverly parked on the left-hand side of the road by the tram reservation so that the door is next to the pavement. The driver is stretching his legs between trips and observing the ancient Berlin double-deckers (are they Büssings?) passing by while the conductor with his bell-punch machine leans against the side of the bus and chats to some locals. A penny for their respective thoughts as the enemies of only just over 5 years before now meet in peace. It's poignant to remember that both cities had suffered heavy bombing at the hands of the other country not so long before.

LT was justifiably proud of its ambassador buses that went far afield in the 1950s/60s and always arranged for the 'GB' plates to be retained in London service and for the vehicles concerned to retain their identities at each overhaul. The second picture shows the same bus in December 1963 with its 'GB' plate still in position. Three years after that picture, the plate might have come in useful again as the bus ventured overseas once more, this time on a one-way trip to Ceylon (today's Sri Lanka) along with many of its fellows.

[Ah, remember those Wallace Heaton adverts? There was a whole range of them, some of them being puns or jokes, and when eventually and sadly the firm closed down, LT fitted valedictory adverts to some of its buses. - Ed]



What was the first PSV you drove/conducted?

John A Gray

It stands out for me: RTW 76, or was it 67? A long time ago, August 1966, from memory. But I'll leave it there for now and return to this one another time. Let's go back earlier still, to 1957, to recall the *really* first bus I drove: Q 105. At least, as far as I could tell, it was Q 105. Some two and a half thousand miles distant from the Country Bus Division it had been largely been used to, after Green Line work early in life.

In June 1955, Her Majesty had written me a nice 18th birthday letter compulsorily requesting me to join her armed forces in the following November for two years, starting at Merebrook Camp just outside Great Malvern. There I was to learn both self-discipline and how to fire the Army's sub-machine gun (and take it apart: easy - putting it all back within the time limit was the hard part). After much faffing about, being shouted at, and baked beans, I should be so lucky as to find myself posted to Malta GC to help the logistics (Army term, that, long before current civilian popular use to mean transport, sorting and storage) of Army personnel, equipment and personal effects (= belongings).

Ten minutes' walk from my barracks happened to be the two bus stations serving the capital, Valletta. You can sympathize that being bored most evenings and Sundays - pay was 3/6d a day - you went on a walk of discovery, once let out.

Kingsgate Bus Station was the busier of the two. Buses based on lengthened ex-US Army Fords, Chevrolets, Dodges, abounded. Other normal-control delights purported to be Internationals, Diamonds, Federals, Willys's, Whites, Reos, Indianas; even British Fordson Thames, Bedford OWBs and a few new Kew Dodges with a single Leyland *Comet*. No double deckers, you'll notice. Some were now re-engined with Perkins' diesels. Soon I realized just how adept the bus men were at altering their vehicles to suit their perceived purpose in Malta by lengthening not only the chassis but also their operational lives. Many of the buses seemed to have originated in the late 'twenties, early 'thirties.

Then came one from 1935 - blimey, an AEC side-engine. Sloping roof body looks familiar - Birmingham Railway Carriage and Wagon Co., though livery certainly not London's: now scarlet main body side, white window framing and roof. This was the scheme for buses on the Valletta-Hamrun-Birkirkara route. In those days, buses for each group of routes wore a dedicated livery: white uppers, then a choice from three shades of green, two of blue, red, brown, yellow, orange - colourful!

I went for a ride on Q 105. Another evening, another ride, and back. And so it went. The driver, through his grandson conductor/interpreter, asked why it was I came for a ride every so often. I spoke of my interest in London buses - even then, aged 20. The boy conductor hadn't known his grandad's bus had once been London's. 'Haddidu' was the name of the driver/owner: various members of his progeny took turns in conducting.

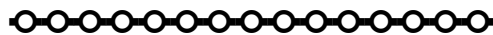
One Sunday Haddidu invited me to his home, an urban "farm" in Rabat. No address was given - look for his Q, he'd be there, cleaning it. I found it, and him, easily enough. I did a tiny bit of cleaning - he left me on board to open the garage gates perhaps 100yds ahead. In an ambient temperature in the mid 90sF, the engine was (sort of) idling.

Should I? Dare I? Yes! - why not? - he can see me, and I'll take it very easy . . . Climbed in and sat on driver's seat, selected what I thought was second with that long gear lever, and pumped the ops pedal, releasing the (token) handbrake. A shudder and a nudge forwards and we progressed at less than walking pace. "Zamm hemmek", Haddidu screamed from the roadway - "Stop there", pointing. I obeyed, never before having driven any kind of motor vehicle.

At least I'd confirmed there was still the preselector gearbox. Haddidu, bless him, didn't seem to understand it, using it as best he could as though it were a crash-box.

I still enjoyed my occasional evening trips on Q 105 thereafter, sometimes free if no ticket inspectors were about . . .

[It was apparently Q 103 according to current research in Malta itself, and was scrapped at Msida some time between 1969 and 1973. You can buy a Corgi model of it in Malta condition if you wish - I did! - Ed]



Editorial Matters: Mike Lloyd, 42A Moss Lane, Platt Bridge, Wigan, Lancs. WN2 3TL I am always pleased to receive notes, news, comments and corrections as well as complete articles, etc., for the Newsletter and these should be sent to me at the above address or by e-mail to bream.coaches@talktalk.net Please **do not use any other address** for Newsletter contributions.

Membership enquiries and subscriptions (*but not Newsletter material*) to:
Robin Hood, The Grange, 61, High Street, Northwold, Norfolk, IP26 5NF. Home phone 01366 728761
Mobile for messages only, 07767 898789 E-mail, rhood@arrowpak.co.uk

Subscription rates are U.K. £20 per annum, EU countries £30 per annum and overseas, non-EU countries £40 per annum. UK e-mail only £5 per annum with overseas e-mail customers free because of costs to collect this small amount; subscribers to the paper copy are entitled to a free e-mail copy if required.

Cheques should be made payable to "Friends of Classic London Buses of the Fifties" (IN FULL) and not to individuals.

Subscriptions may be paid by bank transfer, saving postage and time, but *please ensure that we know who you are if you use this method*. Bank details are: International bank account number GB21MIDL40452472223309
Sort code 40-45-24; Account number 72223309; Branch identifier code MIDLGB2112F



And now for a little bit more of Jim Andress's tale of life with RF 366.

1995

1995 started with the regular trip to Cobham Open Day on 9th April, held once again at Apps Court, Walton on Thames, and on the 16th we attended a small rally held in Bournemouth including a few trips between Poole and Bournemouth. On 21st May we crossed the Severn Bridge and attended the Barry Island event in South Wales; then on 11th June we went to Southsea once more, parked on the grass near the D-Day museum. On 1st July we attended a small event at Blake Hall in Essex. On 30th July we provided a round the site service for the Science Museum store Open Day at Wroughton. The 10th September saw us at an event at Royal Victoria Dock in the Docklands area of London and on the 8th October we operated all day at another event based at Staines. The 21st October we operated at the first of our visits to the Running day in Warminster, Wiltshire, which became an annual outing for many years during which it grew from 3 or 4 buses to several dozen with feeder services covering a large part of the county. The very next day, 22nd October saw us at Kingston again operating services in conjunction with Cobham Bus museum, bringing the season to a close.

Runs on the motorway did however confirm the tendency for 366 to get hotter than usual, and a study of this led to various experiments to determine the possible cause, or causes. These continued through the summers of 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999, and form a story in their own right. The principle problems which have been overcome are corrosion deposits in the engine block and water system and accumulated grease and dirt partially blocking the air flow through the radiator, which is located under the floor and has multiple offset tubes. The return pipe from the header tank was restricted to limit the flow by-passing the radiator.

The by-pass pipe from the thermostat has since been removed, (The cab heater circuit provides a substitute.), to increase water flow through the radiator. In 1998 the investigation centred on possible aerodynamic causes arising from the flat front. To this end, in early 1998, an additional radiator with twin electric fans was fitted under the rear. The outcome was that by late summer 1998 she would run without overheating, and without the electric fans operating. Experiments with the mechanical fan drive temporarily removed showed that without it there was insufficient natural air flow to maintain the correct temperature, under all conditions, without the electric fans operating. For 1999 the additional radiator circuit was clamped off, and as no heating problems arose during the year, the extra radiator was removed in late 1999.

The only mechanical work done during the winter 1995-'96 was the replacement of the steering pivot pads supporting the king pins, the old ones having become scored over the years, leading to somewhat heavy steering, no power assistance remember.

1996

The 1996 season began with a trip to a Rally at Weston Super Mare on the 8th April then the annual Cobham Open Day on the 14th. On the 5th May we attended the Halifax event having travelled up the day before and ran trips up into the hills, returning the next day, making this the longest trip so far.

As a contrast our next outing was to Wroughton once more, only some 20 miles from home. We then attended the annual Seaton bus rally in the car park adjacent to the tram terminus from where trips on these small scale models can be made up the valley and back. On the 23rd June we attended Auto-Motion at Crowthorne Government test track near Bracknell organised by Cobham Bus Museum. On the 6th July we drove up to Carlton Colville and stayed overnight at the Tram and Trolleybus museum before operating a feeder service for visitors to the Open Day on the 7th. It was a very interesting experience having the opportunity to travel on electric road vehicles, having attended school in Wimbledon where both types were still in operation. The 22nd September saw us once more operating services around Warminster while 6th October we were once again at Amersham for our usual trips around the Chiltern lanes, enjoyable as ever. The event year was brought to a close with an event operating services between Shepperton and Cobham bus museum for their last event of the year.



RF 366 at Halifax Piece Hall 1996.

Author's Collection



RF 366 at Chenies, Amersham, October 1996.

Photo by Hugh Ramsey