

# 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



RLH 71 has been mentioned in recent Newsletters; it is one of the three repatriated from the USA some years ago, the others being 53 and 69. On Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October last the bus was taken for a run in the Upminster area to recharge its batteries. Paul Van der Hulks sent us this shot of the rarely-seen bus at Moor Lane. The Chiswick-cream roof was applied during its time in the USA to help alleviate the heat. On the original photo the legend "LI0" can be made out on the panels just behind the cab. This was in connection with shipping the bus home via Liverpool. The nearside (UK) mirror is a splendid affair fitted 'over the pond' where of course it was the offside one. More photos later in this edition.

**Newsletter 172**

**December 2020**

## Opening Lines

Another year, and another opportunity to wish all readers a happy whatever they celebrate at this time of year, or indeed a happy nothing at all if that is their preference. It hardly seems twelve months since the last time. New members, mostly London Bus Museum ones, may perhaps not realise that the Editor is not "Christmas-minded" and finds three months of compulsory jollity and false sentiment somewhat annoying, and please don't even mention all that dreadful music that we suffer year after year. I was once asked what my favourite Christmas record was, and I replied "Here Comes Summer" by Jerry Keller, from 1959. Cold, dark and wet days I can do without, thanks!

As I write this we find ourselves in a position where mass testing for the wretched COVID virus is upon us but we are now told there is a vaccine which looks likely to make life better once it gets into the population - we hope. Maybe 2021 will prove to be a bit better than the current offering. Indeed, it could hardly be worse.



Just sorting some seat frames out, and have found that this one, which looks like any other RT frame, but certainly isn't. If one tries to attach it to the wall of an RT, either the low cushion-level brackets will line up, or the higher handrail-level hole will line up for bolting into the wall, but not both. The frame back is of a more upright pitch. I was very surprised to find this out, and not very pleased either as it leaves me one offside RT frame short for Saunders RT 3955.

Anyone any ideas what this might be off? You would certainly have to know your seat-frames! My guess is maybe a GS, but it could be anything. Anyone any thoughts?

[The Editor doesn't know, but someone will. Of course, it just could be an RT one that someone has seen fit to bend for some reason, but that seems highly unlikely. Here is a chance for one of our experts to solve another of the puzzles that come our way.]

J. H. Bride's Photographs.

Last month's two photos from the J. H. Bride canon certainly allowed the experts free rein and we know more now than has ever been the case with previous examples of his work. Pride of place must go to

LBM member Nigel Horder who has pinpointed exactly where the photographer was standing to take the shots and even supplied a street plan! Never before have we had this level of detective work. He writes:

I expect you have been inundated with explanations of the two trolleybus pictures in the November edition but in case not I have researched both photographs extensively and provide the following comments:

Photo 1 on Page 1

This is of Leyland K1 class 1118 allocated to Isleworth depot on route 657 at Shepherds Bush Green, the terminus for the 657. It had just turned left from the Goldhawk Road, at the junction with the Shepherds Bush Road/Shepherds Bush Green Southern side, on to the Western side of the Green. It was on its way round the first of the three sides of the Green (Western, Northern and Southern) to its terminus on the Southern side of the Green.

I attach a copy of the OS 1:250 map from 1952 downloaded from the National Library of Scotland website (it should print out full page A4) [see page 5] where I have marked the exact place where the photographer stood - it was hard to identify the exact location as the footpaths on the Green have been extensively changed but the map shows the footpaths as on the photograph. The photographer was standing on the pavement just outside the Bush Hotel (now renamed as the 'Sindercombe Social!'), the Shepherds Bush Empire (later the BBC Television Theatre and now the O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire) is just out of shot on the left. I have also indicated the approximate position of 1118 on the right hand side of the one way Western side of the Green going North after turning left from Goldhawk Road

Until Stage 7 of the trolleybus conversion scheme on 20 July 1960, as it turned left onto the Western side of the Green 1118 would have first crossed the northbound wires of the 628/630 routes from Hammersmith. The 628/630 came from the Shepherds Bush Road and went straight along the Western side of the Green to Wood Lane and onwards to Harlesden (Nr Willesden Junction!).

Until Stage 8 on 9 November 1960 it would then have immediately crossed another set of wires, the westbound wires of the 607 route from its terminus on the southern side of the Green to the Western side of the Green. At the end of the Western side of the Green the 607s turned left on to the Uxbridge Road - predictably on their way to Uxbridge.

The wires for the 657 would always have been to the right of the wires for the 628/630, and for the 607, on the Western side of the Green but by the time of this photograph there would be neither of these wires to cross and 1118 would have just taken a simple left hand turn from Goldhawk Road on to the Western side of the Green. The wires would have taken 1118 to the right hand side of the one way Western side of the Green in order to continue round the Northern side of the Green, and then to its stand on the Southern side of the Green (shared with the 607 until Stage 8). It would wait there until it was ready for its return along the Goldhawk Road to Hounslow.

It appears that at the time the photo was taken the conductor was turning the rear destination blind ready for the return journey to Hounslow as no destination is shown. Destination blinds were always shown on the front and rear of trolleybuses whereas the side indicator over the rear entrance only showed the route number and intermediate points.

1118 arrived at Isleworth depot from Wood Green Depot as a result of stage 10 of the London Trolleybus conversion on 26 April 1961. The K1s replaced the Isleworth Q1s which were then released for sale to Spain. The K1s transferred were apparently those in the best condition at Wood Green and were kept in very good condition by Isleworth depot until their final demise on 8 May 1962 (when stage 14 of the London Trolleybus conversion saw the end of trolleybuses in London). So the photo can be dated to between 26 April 1961 and 8 May 1962. I suspect the sticker in the penultimate lower deck window was a yellow one detailing the end of trolleybuses on route 657 so it was more than likely taken in late March, April or early May 1962. The poster on the back of the bus appears to be for BP Super Plus Petrol but that does not help on dating - it is surprising how few photographs in the many trolleybus books show the backs of the buses and I cannot find any with a similar poster!

Photo 2 on page 19

This is of an MCW chassisless L3 trolleybus on route 667 and allocated to Fulwell Depot. The photo was taken at the junction of Twickenham Road and London Road, between Isleworth and Brentford and alongside Syon Park. The bus is coming off Twickenham Road from Hampton Court and after passing Fulwell Depot. The junction was where the 667 joined the route of the 657 from Hounslow. The two routes again split at Youngs Corner, Chiswick, with the 657 going to Shepherds Bush and the 667 to Hammersmith.

There were various L3s transferred from Highgate and Finchley depots as a result of stages 9 to 13 of the trolleybus conversion programme from 1 February 1961 to 3 January 1962, the initial batch at Stage 9 being to replace the Fulwell depot's QIs sold to Spain. As a schoolboy in Kingston, and not being that interested in buses, or up-to-date in what was happening, I remember wondering why the excellent QIs had been replaced by filthy trolleybuses! The original L3s transferred from Highgate on stage 9 were apparently acknowledged as being in, mostly, awful condition and were largely replaced later on by better examples from stages 10 to 13. I would suggest the photo is of one of these later, better, transfers as it seems a well painted and maintained example - not as I recall most of the L3s at that time. The photo was probably taken shortly after its transfer - at that time I think the depot allocation was painted on alongside the running number stencil and there is none showing on the vehicle. However it appears to have the same-doom laden sticker as III8 in the penultimate lower deck window so the photo was probably taken around the same time as that of III8. I cannot see in either of the photos any yellow stickers which were posted on most of the traction poles along routes and which bore the same doom-laden message as the stickers in the buses. Although I did manage to acquire several of these stickers (now sadly lost) - and none from that area - it may indicate that there were other acquisitive enthusiasts around in this area at that time.

An interesting piece of detective work which I hope is of interest.

After that there doesn't seem to be much more to say, but as Nigel surmised, several other people had their ideas and sent them in almost as soon as the Newsletter was published.

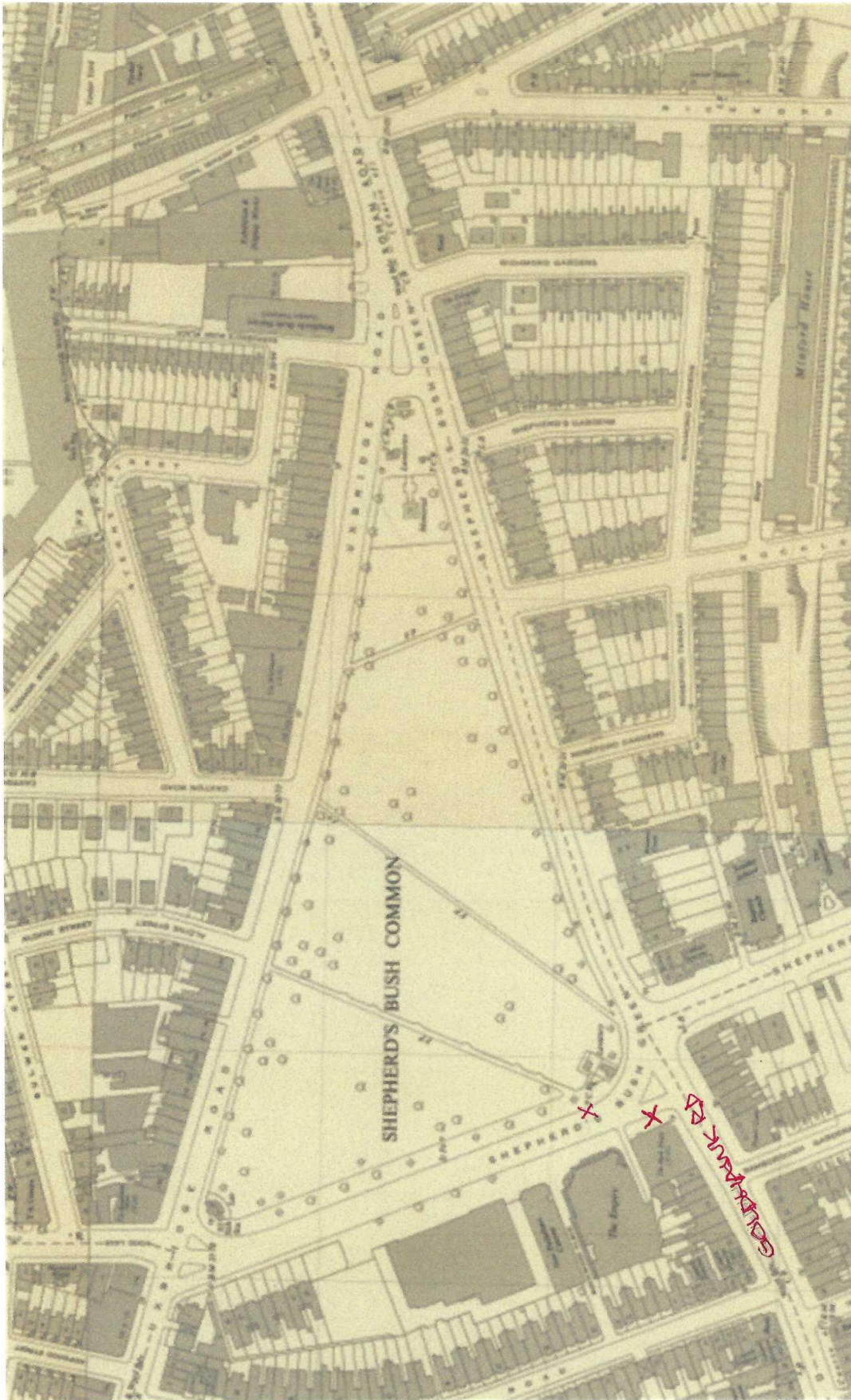
Peter Osborn writes: I'm pleased to hear Mr Bride hasn't fully retired. [He has been dead for some years, Peter - Ed] III8 (if that's which it is) is at the end of the route at Shepherds Bush Green, pulling over to the right to take the acute angle at the eastern end. The 667 is at Busch Corner, Isleworth, where the 657 from Hounslow met the 667 from Hampton Court; behind the wall is Syon Park, one-time home of the LTM collection. At this point, it is faintly possible that I might have alighted a few stops earlier. Clearly I am far too young to remember trolleybuses, except I have a clear memory of sitting on the long seat of a 667 leaning at the roundabout crossing the A316, just before we arrived at my grandparents. I am struck by the different shape of the platform cut-out on this trolleybus from that of the KI; I would guess that it is an L3, but happy to be corrected by our experts.

John A Gray says much the same thing: The upper picture shows the trolleybus encircling Shepherds Bush Green on route 657 from/to Hounslow. The white bands painted on the overhead support poles show drivers to release the power as they pass these electricity feed points. The year I suggest is 1961 - I'll defer to Hugh Taylor, the expert here, viz. his book *London Trolleybuses - a class album*: Capital Transport Publishing, no copyright or published year shown (p.45). No. III8 on route 657 would have gone on to pass the bus below coming towards it at about the Kew Bridge/Chiswick Bus Works area. The unidentified one, below, is turning right out of Twickenham Road, Isleworth, into London Road at Brentford End on companion route 667 from Fulwell depot. The high brick wall was built to enclose the grounds of Syon House - for a short while, the home of the London Transport Museum, moved from the former Clapham bus garage. The overhead wires leading out of the top of the picture would take our III8 on the 657 to its Hounslow, Wellington Road, terminus, past its Isleworth depot home.

Jim Andress concurs: Re the Trolleybuses in the latest Newsletter: as soon as I saw the upper photos my mind said "Shepherds Bush Green". The trolley has only a few yards to go to reach the spot where the trolleys used to stand on the right hand side of the road; the Green being the centre piece of a large triangular roundabout.

The Underground Station is across the road and a bit behind the photographer. At the other end of the green, largely hidden behind the trolleybus is the old music hall, was it the Empire?, which for a long

time was used by BBC Television for stage shows. The type of trolley indicates the photo was taken after the QIs had gone to Spain and been replaced by older versions.



TQ 2379 NW/NE  
Surveyed 1952. Published 1953

OS 1:1250

Above: Nigel's 1952 O.S. Map download.

## The Bush and Busch Corner

Jerry Markwell

The location of trolleybus 1118 in the November newsletter is Shepherds Bush Green, most likely the west side where the road was known locally (and optimistically) as The Lawn. Even back in the day this area was usually busy but 1118 has the road almost to itself so I'd assume Mr Bride had to earn his bread on weekdays, and this was a Sunday or holiday.

Our esteemed Editor's interpretation of the bus's registration as EXV 118 is probably correct; I hope Hugh Taylor won't mind me referring to the excellent picture on the front cover of his book "London Trolleybus Routes" which shows 1118 on the 657 turning right out of the other end of Goldhawk Road into Chiswick High Road. It could just be coincidence, but the nearside advert in both photos is "Had your daily pinta yet?" The 657 was operated by IH (Isleworth, previously Hounslow, Depot). This was normally the depot's only route. IH had a very small allocation with a Monday to Friday run-out of 25 around this time, and the chances are that they didn't have another KI carrying the same advert.

The 657 was the replacement for the LT, formerly LUT, tram route 57 and ran from Shepherds Bush to Hounslow from October 1935 until May 1962, when RMs on the 117 took over. The photo was taken in the last year-and-a-bit of trolleybus operation: previously the 657 and 667 had been worked by the eight-footer QIs. These were sold to various Spanish transport organisations, and were replaced at IH by KIs transferred from Wood Green. If this is the west side of the Green, 1118 has just come from Goldhawk Road and started on its long terminal loop clockwise round the Green. It is following the Morris Woody well over to the right ready for the turn into Uxbridge Road. At the eastern end of the Green it will do another right turn, stand until departure time, and head back along Goldhawk Road.

It's a pity the overheads don't show up more clearly, they might have helped to give a more precise date. The arrangement had been that as soon as the 657s set foot on the Lawn they got over to the right, and the 607s changed sides ready for the left turn at the Uxbridge Road. There was a crossover to achieve this: unfortunately one can't see in the photo whether it's still there. Sometime after the 607 was replaced, its wiring was removed, but it looks as though the nearest traction standard has something more than just a span wire attached. And the white "dead wires" marker stripes on the two nearest standards have virtually faded away.

Beyond 1118 is someone having a lean and looking at the day. Their leaning post is not an unusually high traction standard, but a vent pipe which let gases out of the sewers. Quite nearby, on the north side of the Green, there used to be something that looked like a large cast-iron wardrobe but was an electrical installation from LUT tram days, possibly a super-size section box. It was still there in the 1990s. Anyone know if either of these are around now?

The trolleybus in the lower photo on the 667 is worked by Fulwell: it has to be an L3 because the front upper deck windows have radiused top corners. L3s and KIs took over the routes operated by Fulwell, Isleworth and Hanwell when the QIs were phased out.

Twickenham Rd - there are several sections of main road by this name in the area, but this one is Busch Corner, the junction with the London Road, which was the point where the 657 to Hounslow and the 667 to Hampton Court parted company.

Again, not many vehicles or pedestrians about so this must be the weekend. The bus is reasonably well loaded, but not really enough for the nearside to be so low. The mudflap between the rear wheels appears to be touching the ground, and it looks like the shaped end of the front mudguard has been crunched against the road a few times. All the wheels are well up into their arches, and as the bus turns the top of the front wheel appears to be scraping the mudguard. Perhaps the poor old thing had weak road springs and had been put in reserve, and was dragged out due to a shortage. It may be just the angle of the camera, but the overhead, particularly the crossover directly above the bus, looks rather tired and saggy as well. So, all things considered, there's probably very little time left before the diesel buses take over on 9 May 1962.

Graham Smith confirms this: I imagine you may have received a flood of replies already concerning the mystery photographs. The 657 shot is at Shepherds Bush Green, with the KI heading eastbound along

Uxbridge Road towards its terminus on the westbound arm of the Green before, presumably, departing either for the route's Hounslow terminus or Isleworth depot.

By now, the 657's magnificent 8-foot wide QIs had been despatched to Spain, to be replaced by KIs, and it was the only trolleybus route serving the Green. For some 25 years Shepherds Bush had been awash with trolleybuses. Not only was it the 657's terminus and, also, the 607's which, at its peak, had an allocation of 80 vehicles providing the highest frequency of all of LT's trolleybus routes with a vehicle every minute over the central section of route between Acton Vale and Southall *Delamere Rd*. In addition, routes 626, 628 and 630 served the Green on their north-south travels. The latter group of routes had lost their trolleybuses in July 1960, whilst those on the 607 went in November 1960, leaving the 657 as the sole user of the overhead wires for a further 18 months until 9th May 1962.

The second photograph, also, has a connection (awful pun intended) with route 657 as the location is Isleworth *Busch Corner* where routes 657 and 667 went their separate ways westbound, having shared the wires from Chiswick *Young's Corner*. The 667, which I think is a QI rather than an L3 (based mainly on its front mudguard and wheel hubs), is turning right from Twickenham Road into London Road, travelling eastbound towards Brentford and, probably, destined for the route's terminus at Hammersmith Broadway. Route 657 continued straight across the junction here on London Road. Behind the wall in the background is Syon Park, home to the London Transport Museum in 1973-80.

[Never let it be said that our readers don't know what they are talking about! I am amazed at the breadth and depth of knowledge of events that took place such a long time ago. - Ed]

### GS 34 - a Mysterious Guy

Graham Smith

It seems that never has so much been written about the GS class than in the past few months. First was the book entitled "GS - The London Guy Special" by Peter Aves and Alan Charman, the latest in a long line of Capital Transport's excellent LT class publications, followed by a four-page article written by Robin Hannay, who worked for Guy Motors from September 1950 to August 1959, in the September 2020 issue of *Buses* magazine.

GS 34 has been in the collection of the London Bus Museum, and its Cobham predecessor, since 1999 when it was generously donated by member Michael Blackburn, its owner for 21 years, who was moving house to Scotland. Mystery surrounds the bus's early life as Hannay disputes data contained in the Aves/Charman book which stated "GS 34 - actually its chassis 44816P - was returned to Guy Motors following accident damage". He asserts that "The chassis did not return to Wolverhampton [the Guy Motors works] and no GS chassis was involved in an accident while being delivered. I can only assume it must have been damaged by ECW" [Eastern Coach Works in Lowestoft, builder of the GS bodies]. Hannay goes on to say "On looking at the Guy track records, I discovered that the track number for this chassis (44816P) was 84 but that for GS 84 was 85. The track number was the total of that type built so far". He concludes that "As all the chassis were sold to London Transport, I can only assume that the original chassis intended for GS 34 was so badly damaged that it was scrapped and a new chassis built to replace it, retaining the same chassis number".

In March 1999, the LBPT published the second edition of the Cobham Bus Collection Guide Book. The entry for GS 34 states that "Its delivery was delayed until December 1953 due to a mishap in fog a month earlier when the vehicle slid into a ditch whilst being delivered to Guildford garage (GF). It was returned to ECW for repair and upon rectification was allocated to Amersham garage (MA)". However, this conflicts with the information in the Aves/Charman book, unless, of course, the bus visited both the Guy Motors and the ECW works for repair, although Hannay does state that no GS chassis was involved in an accident while being delivered and, further, the only complete GS that came back to Fallings Park [the Guy Motors works in Wolverhampton] before entering service was GS 32 which had no damage". No reason is given for GS 32's return to Guy Motors. Could it have been GS 34 wrongly recorded?

In researching the LBPG/T archives for my "London Buses - A Living Heritage" book a few years ago I could find no other information about GS 34's early days. So, what really did happen to that gleaming, brand new, little green bus back in late 1953? Surely it is inconceivable anyone would invent a "fog and ditch mishap en route to GF" story if it wasn't true? Unless information to the contrary comes to light

I'm inclined to think GS 34 was damaged en route to GF, as stated, and sent to ECW for repair, thereby not involving Guy Motors. Presumably its delivery from Guy/ECW to London Transport was to Chiswick Works and was incident-free, with Chiswick as the start point for its apparently ill-fated journey towards Guildford.

Studying the GS histories and, specifically, the body numbers listed in Ian Smith's excellent "Ian's Bus Stop" website shows the LT body numbers are in a consecutive sequence 8166-8249 from GS 1 through to 84. However, their ECW body numbers tell quite a different story. GS 34's ECW number is 6407 whereas those for GS 30-33 and 35-38, the four vehicles on each side of GS 34 are significantly lower at 6376/80/73/77/78/85/83/84. These vehicles were all delivered to LT in November 1953 and four (GS 30/31/33/35) went to Guildford garage, GS 34's intended destination, in December 1953. Further on, the ECW body numbers 6404/05/06/08/10/09 and four of these (GS 60/61/62/64) plus GS 34 with ECW body 6407 went to Amersham garage, again in December 1953. The website records GS 34's delivery month to LT also as December 1953, which contradicts the November date of its accident recorded in the Cobham Guide Book. The vast majority of GS 34's siblings numbered from GS 17 through to GS 53 were new to LT in November 1953 and delivered to garages in November and December. All this appears to indicate that something different did actually happen to GS 34 but what exactly was it and what was the sequence of events?

Perhaps someone knows what happened or has access to official records which might provide the answers. After all these years it would be helpful to establish the truth. If so, please could they either write to the Editor of this Newsletter or email me at: [gdsmit45@aol.com](mailto:gdsmit45@aol.com). Many thanks from my LBM colleague, Guy Marriott, and myself (yes, a Guy and a GS!), co-editors of LBM's "On the Buses" illustrated fleet-list, published last year.

One aspect I have been able to verify is that November 1953 was, indeed, a month when London and much of the country was affected by what was described as "heavy smog" and "thick, dirt-laden fog". It was reported that an NHS scheme to issue smog masks came into operation as smog settled over many parts of Britain. As some may remember, it was in December 1952 that "the Great Smog of London" enveloped the capital with its filthy, yellow-black, polluted air. The Great Smog lasted four days from 5<sup>th</sup> December, my seventh birthday, and I can still remember my birthday party on the following afternoon, a Saturday. Somehow my school chum guests and parents managed to find their way to my house and ring the doorbell. However, on opening the door the smog was so dense we couldn't see who was there until they stepped inside! My maternal grandmother was one of the estimated 12,000 fatalities claimed by the Great Smog. Face masks today are our defence against an unseen killer whereas, back in the 1950s, they were used against a killer that was all too visible...and evil-smelling.

[Editor's notes: Mr Hannay is quite ancient now, and is very dogmatic, the sort of person who is right and knows he is right even when you prove him wrong. I experienced him and his attitude some years ago in another context; challenged to prove the truth of remarks he falsely attributed to me, he mysteriously never responded..... Ah, smogs; I remember them when we lived in Preston. Bus conductors would walk along the kerb at the front of the bus to guide the driver and we would walk up to pay the fares at the stops. I remember the more adventurous, or lazy, ones riding on the nearside wing to do the same thing. It is hard to persuade people these days to believe just how bad these smogs could be. We would wrap handkerchiefs round our faces, bandit-style, and on arrival home would find them black rather than white. It's a wonder we survived to tell the tale and as Graham says, not everyone did. Once you were safely indoors, of course, you could sit back and enjoy a cigarette.....!]

RT 4169 (and yet another GS)

Ian Robertson

I have been picking these up via the Cobham Newsletter and very interesting too. Love the rolling stock committee minutes - costs detailed down to 2/9 3/4 d!

You ask about the current position of RT 4169 which appears to still be alive and well in Belgium along with GS 28 and a few FLF Lodekkas of which at least some are from Eastern National - Good for all those low bridges

<https://bruidsparadijs.be/vervoer/>



These two pictures were lifted from the owner's website; RT 4169 above and GS 28 below. For those who have the printed Newsletter, the RT is in a fair copy of the Ensignbus red and grey livery, and the

GS is cream and blue. Both buses have suffered interior modifications to fit them for use as wedding transport. The RT now has tables and some seats have been reversed and the GS has perimeter seating. I think, although I don't speak Flemish, that the firm's name translates as "Brides' Paradise" and they are based in the town of Merksem. Good to know the buses have not met their ultimate destinations in the breakers' yards anyway. Their current owner appears to have a wide variety of classic vehicles from various countries available for hire. The RT has "originele motor" and is restricted to 50 kph (30 mph) and the GS is allegedly a 1951 product which would make it by a couple of years a pre-production prototype! Someone should tell them - or ask Robin Hannay about it!

## Tyres

Jim Andress

Below is a copy of latest statement on Government Web site re ten year plus tyre ban. The good news is right at the end, "Exemption for Historic Vehicles already exempt from roadworthiness testing and not used commercially"

The government is committed to delivering road safety for all road users and one route to achieve this is by maintaining a robust legislative framework that ensures the continuous assessment of the roadworthiness of vehicles.

We would like to thank all those who responded to the consultation for their valuable input and have noted the views expressed. After considering the responses, we have decided to proceed with a ban for tyres aged 10 years or older in order to improve road safety.

This ban will apply to tyres fitted to the front axle of heavy goods vehicles, buses and coaches and to the tyres on all axles of minibuses when fitted in single configuration. Re-treaded tyres will be subject to the same restrictions as first-life tyres, where the date of re-treading will be used to determine the age of the tyre.

By implementing legislation, we will strengthen the existing operator licensing regime that currently applies to commercially operated vehicles, enabling action to be taken against the small minority of drivers and operators who fail to comply. The legislation will also apply to vehicles that are not covered by the operator licensing regime and its associated maintenance schedules, providing additional safeguards for occupants in these vehicles and for other road users.

This legislative measure is a revision of the proposal included in the consultation, we have listened to the range of views received and believe that our policy delivers valuable road safety benefits, balanced against the shortage of evidence to proceed with a more extensive ban, including further controls for re-treaded tyres.

We will grant an exemption to 2 vehicle groups. Firstly, to those vehicles that are currently exempt from tyre roadworthiness regulations (including agricultural tractors that travel at low speeds) to remain consistent with existing legislation. Secondly, to those historic vehicles that are currently exempt from roadworthiness testing, providing they are not used commercially. We recognise that historic vehicles are usually well-maintained, are used infrequently and do not travel at high speeds but it is important to balance the granting of any exemptions with the safety of all road users.

We have decided not to proceed with a consultation to ban older tyres on taxis and Private Hire Vehicles at this stage, since we do not currently have sufficient evidence to justify legislating against their use for these vehicle types.

We will bring forward amending legislation to put the decisions set out in this document into effect, with an implementation period of 3 months.

This is the culmination of years of work in this area, following 2 fatal collisions where the age of the tyre was deemed to be a contributory factor. Mrs Frances Molloy, whose son Michael was one of those killed has campaigned tirelessly for a change in legislation. Since 2013, the [Department for Transport \(DfT\)](#) and the [Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency \(DVSA\)](#) have published [roadworthiness guidance to](#)

[advise against the use of tyres aged more than 10 years](#) on the front axles of buses and coaches and extended this guidance to include heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) in November 2018.

Editor's note: This provides the definitive answer to the question that has been worrying us all for some time now. I have to reiterate that this is a massive over-reaction to a total of TWO incidents involving very old tyres. It is typical of the way we appear nowadays to have more and more legislation based on tiny minorities making a great deal of noise about things they do not understand, in the present case, this Frances Molloy, who has very kindly increased the costs of ownership of classic heavy vehicles that do not come under Annual Test Exemption by thousands of pounds for no valid reason whatever. That means not only buses and coaches less than 40 years old, but of course ALL lorries, which have now lost their previous test exemption. It is a great pity that the FBHVC did not fight this much more rigorously as there is and was no evidence that not testing preserved lorries led to any risks for road users.

#### **From the Archives - material supplied by Tony Beard**

#### **From the Minutes of the Rolling Stock Technical Committee Meeting held on 20 December 1960**

##### Introduction of Revised Bonnet Nearside Counterbalance Assembly

Reason for Alterations: To improve bonnet lift

Codes affected: RM

A revised nearside counterbalance assembly, incorporating wider springs, was introduced under Mod 96 to take effect on the 601<sup>st</sup> production vehicle at Park Royal. This was found to be necessary to improve bonnet lift.

Owing to the non-availability of bonnet springs 300 of those 600 pre Mod 96 vehicles were supplied with bonnet props fitted in place of the counterbalance assembly under Concession C55. These vehicles with bonnet props fitted will be converted to standard at vehicle overhaul and an Alteration Advice will be issued in due course for this conversion. A total of 300 nearside and offside counterbalance assemblies are being supplied by Park Royal for this purpose at the rate of 50 sets per month commencing in January 1961. These parts will be held in the main stores until such time as they are required.

It is considered desirable, however, that the remaining 300 vehicle at present equipped with bonnet spring assembly be fitted with the wider spring on the nearside of the bonnet in place of the existing counterbalance assembly. The offside spring assembly will remain unchanged but should it become necessary to replace the springs in service then after the Mod 95, spring Part No RM.010.N9 should be fitted vide the Alteration Advice which will be revised in the light of this new arrangement.

The changeover to the wider nearside spring assembly will take effect at garages as and when failures of the existing springs occur or the bonnet is considered to be too sluggish in operation. Those not changed at garages will be modified 100% at overhaul. A float of nearside spring balance assemblies will be required to facilitate changeover at garages and can be obtained from the 300 sets of bonnet prop conversion equipment mentioned above. The removed nearside assemblies will be returned to the works and modified to the latest condition.

##### Engine Casing Studs Replaced

Reason for Alteration: to provide a suitable handling condition.

Codes affected: RM

At LT request AEC have replaced two studs in the engine casing lower joint face by two setscrews and lockwire in order to provide a flat face for machining and handling purposes during overhaul. The studs, which secure the suction pipe bracket to the casing, are to be removed and replaced by setscrews on approximately the first 650 RM engines at full unit overhaul.

Action: Full application at overhaul.

##### Fibreglass Crosswise Squab Back Reinforced

Reason for Alteration: Fractures have occurred on bottom corners.

Codes affected: RM (Prior to Mod)

As and when the fibreglass squabs are found to be fractured at the bottom corner either at the gangway side or the body side, they are to be strengthened by fitting a reinforcing plate to both sides.

This advice is to take effect on cracked fibreglass squabs when fillings are changed under the recent Alteration Advice and at overhaul and garages.

Action: As and when at Works, revised material to be made available for possible garage requirements.

#### Handbrake Lever - Steady Tongue Standardised

Codes affected: 6RT, 7RT, 1/7RT and 2/7RT

In the interest of standardisation and economy the AEC pattern handbrake lever steady tongue is to be used as a standard replacement item in lieu of the Leyland counterpart. Stocks of the Leyland part to be used up but no more to be ordered.

#### Introduction of Dome Nut - Driver's Sun Visor

Reason for Alteration: To prevent injury to hand when cleaning windows.

Codes affected: RF1/3, RF2/1 and RF2/3

The existing plain hexagon nut attaching the offside hinge rod to the sun visor body fixing bracket is to be replaced by a dome nut. Suggestion No 55152

Action: Full application at garages.

#### Rear Indicator Box Conduit Repositioned

Reason for Alteration: To prevent damage to wiring.

Codes affected: RM (Vehicles Bonnet Nos RM5 to RM563 inclusive)

In the event of the offside upper saloon rear moulding being replaced, damage could occur to the wiring in the upper indicator box conduit by over-drilling when removing the pop rivets from the moulding. To obviate this, the conduit is to be repositioned by reversing the two clips thus removing the conduit from the vicinity of the pop rivets. This procedure is to be carried out prior to the moulding being removed at accident repair at works and garages or vehicle overhaul. RM542 has already been modified.

#### Hand Lever - Gear Selector

Reconditioning at Ball End

Reason for alteration: To facilitate maintenance,

Codes affected: 3RT, 15T, RLH and RF

The ball is crewed in on the end of the lever which is drilled on assembly for a securing pin. Due to variations in of the ball during subsequent replacement, the screw end of the lever is weakened by cross-drilling of pin holes.

The damaged end of the lower lever is to be cut off behind the 18mm flange and a machined replacement end welded on as shown on LT drawings.

#### OMO Country Buses - Saloon Lamps and Driver's Blind Modified

Reason for Alteration: To improve driver's visibility

Codes affected: RF5, RF5/1, RF5/2

In order to improve the driver's visibility the nearside cab blind is to be modified as shown by revised LT drawing. Cowls are also to be fitted to the two forward nearside saloon lights to obviate reflection in the driver's screen.

A float of revised blinds will be required at garages to facilitate the removal and return to works of the existing blinds for modification.

Action: Full application at garages.

#### Reversing Indicator Lens Assembly OMO Vehicles

Codes affected: RF5, RF5/1, RF5/2, RF5/3,

Mr Stone reported that the Laboratory had agreed to purchase sheets of Perspex in red and opal from ICI Ltd for test purposes rather than obtain 6 pairs of lens as suggested at a previous meeting of this Committee. Mr Styles advised that the Perspex would be obtained shortly and testing would begin at the earliest opportunity.

#### RT Rear Grab Handle Aluminium Bracket

Mr Styles submitted samples of defective brackets and pointed out that it would appear they were defective in their original state and that fatigue cracks started from blow holes in the metal surface.

Discussions ensued in the source of supply and Mr Stone was asked to investigate. Mr Tame advised that there was no evidence of bracket failure in service and fractured brackets were either the result of accident damage or testing in the laboratory. Mr Styles then suggested that an examination of brackets be carried out at garages and suspect brackets be changed with a similar bracket of same design and material.

In conclusion the Chairman agreed to the following:

- (a) At this stage there was no justification for a campaign change of brackets or material change.
- (b) Rolling Stock to arrange for the examination of brackets on at least 100 RT vehicles at one garage and check for surface cracks. In the event of apparently defective brackets being found, these to be returned to the laboratory in pairs for testing under normal installation conditions.
- (c) Any brackets removed to be replaced by standard bracket.

Subsequent to the meeting Mr Butler confirmed that only a very small number of brackets were in fact manufactured in Chiswick at the bulk were supplied by Messrs Gabriel's Ltd.

#### Retaining Plate, RM Platform Nosing Slat

Mr Stone stated that he had investigated the possibility of employing wider type Trolleybus steel nosing but concluded that it was too thick and as such was unsuitable for the above application. A wider tread nosing to standard pyramid design is available from Messrs Billingham Ltd. Continuing he recommended that the original welded assembly should be adopted in view of the above. This was agreed and an Alteration Advice to cover this requirement would be issued as soon as possible.

#### Strip in Driver's Cab Door Guide

Mr Butler referred to a recent Alteration Advice reissued in December 1958 authorising fitment of Ferobestos strip in lieu of beech. He pointed out that RTW vehicles ex-overhaul were still being fitted with beech material and queried whether there had been an oversight in this connection. Mr Tame was to investigate.

#### Fitment of Lampshades and New Type "Cut-Away" Blind to Ten OMO RF Country Buses

Mr Butler referred to a recent meeting of the Country Bus Committee and requested as a matter of urgency that arrangement be made for the fitment of lampshades over the first two nearside saloon lamps and also the fitting of a cut-away blind on the nearside of the cab. The Chairman stated that the matter should be referred to the Works Manager with regard to works' capacity to carry out the necessary work; in the meantime an Alteration Advice would be prepared.

#### Fuel Tanks

The Chairman drew attention to the increase in foreign matter deposited in fuel tanks via the filler neck particularly RT vehicles. Out of 130 tanks recently examined 20% were found to contain deposits of various materials ranging from metal objects to sand and paper. He stated that steps had been taken to fit a detachable gauze filter in the next of tanks of Private Hire vehicles only but at that time it was considered uneconomic to extend this fitment throughout the fleet.

Following discussion on the foregoing, it was agreed that a check should be kept on the incidence of failure and if there is a significant increase then steps would be taken to overcome this difficulty.

#### Fuse Capacity - RM

The Chairman referred to correspondence concerning fuse capacity in respect of RM vehicles. It was noted that the present fuse wire of 24 gauge would permit a current of 48 amps at 24 volts under short

circuit conditions to be carried indefinitely and that this fuse would take 20 seconds to rupture at a current of 70 amps.

This condition was thought to be undesirable and Mr Bonner suggested a reduction in the size of the fuse wire to 28 gauge. This fuse would then rupture in 5 seconds at 40 amps and should safely carry a current of 11 amps which represents the maximum loading for any fused circuit. Discussion ensued and it was pointed out that trouble from loose lamp caps had been eliminated and failures should not arise from this source.

The question of whether a common fuse wire could be used throughout the fleet was raised and Mr Bonner confirmed that this could be applied and added that the maximum individual fuse loading on other vehicles was in fact less than on the RM

### Suggestions

Number	Description	Remarks
48252	(appeal) Garages - engine oil draining on rotas	Adopted award
55028	RM vehicle - modify wiring of auto gear control panel	Interest award
55284	Perkins engine - addition of two blocks for second stage mount	Adopted award
55334	Coach 715 - garage code plate revised	No award
55439	Loco truck modified for use as platform truck	Adopted award
55555	Blasting enclosure - emergency shut off and warning	Adopted award
55697	RF Reposition front bell push	No award
55741	Bonnet side panel to be reinforced	No award
55755	Driver's mirror offside - rain throw off	No award
55765	Driver's mirror nearside - rectangular type	No award
55700	Destination lights to be connected with side lights	No award
55778	Trafficator rubber bodies - improved repair scheme	Adopted award
55789	Driver's mirror nearside - arm bent outwards	No award
55152	RF Visors - dome nut to bolt	Adopted award
55230	Phosphoric acid tank - frame to hold wings	No award
55295	Destination gear - jockey rollers to be unpainted	Omission award
55386	Barrow for emergency doors - protection	Omission award
55445	Driver's cab floor - catch fitted to trap	No award
55449	Hemel Hempstead - light to refuse point	No award
55468	RT screen wiper motor - mod to connection	No award
55525	Garage breakdowns - red triangle on tripod	No award
55540	Rear universal coupling shield to be fitted	No award
55545	RT handbrake quadrant - countersunk bolt in place of welded in	No award
55622	Safety glass window in shot blast area backed with 26oz glass	No award
55684	Aldenham - rackholder for dipping small parts	Adopted award
55685	Tray holder on wheels for spraying	No award
55689	Small baskets for star washers and small items	Adopted award
55856	RT two belts on dynamo and compressor instead of three	No award
52168	Shot blast machines - economy in shot	Additional award
54724	Garages modification to prevent broken fuel couplings	No award
55040	Bulkhead trestles - small block bolted on	No award
55099	Device for clearing drain holes in battery crates	No award
55331	RM axle boat changing - suggested equipment	No award
55477	Garages fitted with a direct alarm to police stations	No award
55687	Electric truck charging - hook to hang lead	No award
55704	AEC shackle plates - hardened steel washed dowelled to plate	No award
55923	RM screen wiper bade to be moved up arm 1 1/2 in	No award
55949	RM front axle boat - long high tensions bolts in place of short.	No award

*And there I must put a temporary stop on these reports. Under normal circumstances by the time this piece was written (end of September 2020) I would have already visited TfL Archives and photographed*

*pages from of the Main Technical Committee and Chief Mechanical Engineer's Meetings for 1961 but thanks to Covid, that ain't gonna happen for a while! I do have the Engineering Committee files that begin at the commencement of the LPTB, He is an example: The Vice Chairman mentioned throughout is Frank Pick; note that Bill Durrant is in attendance from this point.*

### **From the Minutes of the Engineering Committee Meeting No 1 held on 7 July 1933**

#### Special Expenditure Requisition

The following Special Expenditure Requisition was submitted for approval and the signature of the Vice Chairman:

LPTB/24/1169 for the construction of 100 "STL" type 4-wheel double deck omnibuses and two spare bodies and for the purchase of 89 AEC 115mm bore oil engines for fitting to existing "LT" type omnibuses at a cost of £192,229, the work to be executed by AEC and the Engineer (Omnibuses). This was approved and would be charged to Capital Account.

#### Failures and Delays - Omnibuses (Central)

With reference to the unsatisfactory trend of the Failures and Delays relating to Omnibuses (Central), Mr Durrant submitted a memorandum dated 4 July, indicating provisionally certain steps which he proposed to take with a view to improving the general level of efficiency, in particular:

- (a) reorganisation of the relationship of the senior and junior garage engineers and their hours of duty.
- (b) execution of biennial partial overhauls at Chiswick Works as far as possible to give relief to the garages.
- (c) provision of the requisite staff to enable an additional intermediate dock to be established in the case of the NS type vehicles.
- (d) an increase in the number of spare licensed omnibuses.

This was noted as an interim report. No definite action was authorised pending submission of detailed recommendations as soon as possible.

#### Overground Company - Organisation

In accordance with a recommendation submitted by Mr Henderson and Mr Durrant, it was decided that the existing organisation in respect of the maintenance of omnibuses lately owned by the Overground Company should be continued unchanged until further notice, as already agreed in respect of operation.

#### Dunlop Tyres - Lettering

Mr Durrant reported that the Dunlop Rubber Company propose to insert in the tyres supplied by them for use on the Board's omnibuses, white lettering indicating the make of tyre.

It was decided that the Board would agree to this proposal without prejudice to its right to withdraw its consent at a later date.

### **From the Minutes of the Engineering Committee Meeting No 2 held on 17 July 1933**

#### Special Expenditure Requisitions

The following Special Expenditure Requisitions were submitted for approval and the signature of the Vice-Chairman

- (a) E2 for the purchase of 12 AEC Regent oil-engined double deck omnibuses of the low loading type for operation on Route 410, Country Area to replace obsolete omnibuses now being worked on that route, at a cost of £20,700, the chassis to be built by the Associated Equipment Company and the all-metal bodies by Metropolitan-Cammell Weymann Motor Bodies Ltd.

- (b) EI for the purchase of 2 "Q" type double-deck omnibuses for experimental operation on Country services, at a cost of £3,806 the chassis to be built by the Associated Equipment Company and the all-metal bodies by Metropolitan Cammell-Weymann Motor Bodies Ltd.
  - (c) FI for the doubling of the tramway track and road widening work in Lewisham by Morden Hill, less the estimated cost of road widening chargeable against the LCC at a cost to the Board of £3,100. The work to be executed by the General Manager, Tramways (CS&E).
- (a) to (c) were approved and would be charged to Capital Account
- (d) LGO/24/1168 for the equipment of 300 LT type omnibuses with Mechanics joints on the front and rear cardan shafts in accordance with a minute of the Traffic Committee (Underground Companies) at a cost of £2,535.

This was approved and would be charged to Revenue Account.

#### Erith Tramways - Track Connection at Abbey Road Depot

Consideration was given to a memorandum, dated 14 July, submitted by Mr T E Thomas, reporting that the depot from which the Erith cars are operating could be closed if a track connection were made at Abbey Wood to enable the service to operate from Abbey Wood Depot and recommended that, subject to the consent of Woolwich Borough Council and the Erith Urban District Council, the proposed connection should be provided forthwith at an approximate cost of £500, estimated to yield a saving of £475 per annum after allowing for the additional car crew which would result from the change, but without allowing for the saving in rates on the depot, which would amount to approximately £70 per annum. The proposed track connection was shown on a drawing and the proposal was approved in principle. Mr T E Thomas would secure the consent of the Councils concerned and submit a Special Expenditure Requisition to cover the cost of this work.

#### Reconstruction of Tramway Track - North and West Areas

Mr Spencer submitted a memorandum, dated 13 July, suggesting that the obligation of the Metropolitan Electric Tramways to the Middlesex County Council to reconstruct 12 miles of double track before 30 April 1934 (of which 5 miles had already been undertaken) had now presumably lapsed, but reporting that certain of the tracks, in any event, required reconstruction and that it would be more economical to reconstruct than to continue patchwork repairs. It was accordingly decided that Mr Spencer should submit a detailed programme for the reconstruction of the tramway track in the former MET area together with estimates for consideration.

#### Spare Omnibuses (Central Area)

Mr Durrant submitted a memorandum, dated 14 July, reporting that the present margin of licensed omnibuses over scheduled omnibuses was 7.56% and that after allowing for the spares required to cover daily docks and Chiswick and garage overhauls, the available margin to cover accidents, mechanical defects, intermediate docks etc. amounted to 3.53% of the scheduled omnibuses.

In accordance with his recommendation, it was decided that the authorised percentage of spares should be increased to 8% of the scheduled omnibuses, which would render approximately 4% available for accidents, breakdowns etc. on the understanding that while in theory this would entail an addition of 17 omnibuses to the present licensed fleet no change would be made in the percentage until the forthcoming schedule reductions are brought into force, so no additional omnibuses at present require to be licensed for spares. The nominal margin of 8% to be again reviewed in the light of further experience as circumstances demand.

#### Low-Height Double Deck Omnibuses for Route 410, Country Area

Consideration was given to Drawing No V.760 of Metropolitan-Cammell Weymann Motor Bodies Ltd showing the proposed design of the body for the 12 low height double-deck omnibuses for operation on Route 410 Country Area, authorised by Special Expenditure Requisition E2. The drawing was approved subject to an alteration of the front destination indicators to conform with the Board's standard and to the reconsideration of the arrangement and spacing of the upper deck seats.

### Large Capacity Oil Engine Omnibuses

With reference to a minute of the Chairman's Meeting: Underground Companies, Mr Spencer submitted a memorandum dated 13 July, reporting that the Joint Committee appointed by the Chairman (Lord Ashfield) had now agreed that an oil-engined omnibus should be built for experimental purposes, being a vehicle based on the standard 6-wheel omnibus chassis but with the engine and transmission line moved to the offside.

The drawings were examined and subject to certain modifications for which the Vice-Chairman gave instructions, it was decided that the drawings should be submitted together with the recommendation of the Joint Committee for consideration at the next Chairman's meeting.

### ST Type Omnibus Damaged in Accident

Further to a minute of the Traffic Committee (Underground Companies), Mr Durrant reported that the Comptroller and Accountant had now advised that ST type omnibus body No 11397, damaged in an overturning accident on 14 May, was new in 1930 and cost £600 and that in the circumstances it would be more economical to repair the body in question at a cost of £250 - £300.

It was accordingly decided that the damaged body in question be repaired at a cost not to exceed £300, and not scrapped as previously proposed.

### Lorries and Miscellaneous Vehicles - Colour Scheme

Further to a minute of the Traffic Committee (Underground Companies), Mr Durrant submitted a plaque showing the side elevation of a lorry painted with the proposed grey and black colours to be adopted as standard for miscellaneous vehicles of the Board, conforming to the grey and black used on a specimen vehicle already inspected by the Vice-Chairman.

It was decided that the grey and black scheme should be submitted be adopted as standard for all miscellaneous vehicles of the Board and that Mr Durrant should arrange to advise all departments concerned so that when next the lorries and other miscellaneous vehicles under their control are painted, the standard colour scheme may be employed.

### Applications for PSV Licences and Certificates of Fitness

Mr Durrant produced a memorandum, dated 13 July, with reference to the proposed procedure for application for PSV licences and Certificates of Fitness for vehicles operated by the Board. It was noted that the arrangements had not yet been finally agreed with the Authorities concerned.

The Vice-Chairman gave Mr Durrant instructions to press for the appointment of a Resident Examining Officer to be established at Chiswick Works for the purpose of inspecting overhauled omnibuses as they pass out of the Works. The matter would be further considered at the next meeting.

## **From the Minutes of the Engineering Committee Meeting No 3 held on 24 July 1933**

### Trolleybuses - Tyre Mileage

With reference to a Minute of the Staff, Stores and Accounts Committee, Mr Spencer submitted a memorandum dated 1 July, reporting upon the low average mileage of tyres on trolleybuses compared with the mileage of omnibus types and indicating that tyre mileage of trolleybuses was improving. This was noted and accepted

### Organisation of Experimental and Technical Work - Omnibuses

Consideration was given to a draft memorandum, dated 24 July, upon the organisation of experimental and technical work in the Department of the Engineer Omnibuses (Central) and setting out proposals for the creation of a Technical Section under the Engineer, Omnibuses (Central), in which all such work would be consolidated, with the exception of the Chemical Laboratory. Subject to certain amendments indicated by the Vice-Chairman, the draft was approved for submission to the Chairman's Meeting and the Board.

### Programme of Delivery of New Omnibuses

Consideration was given to a memorandum, dated 21 July, submitted by Mr Durrant, reporting that, in accordance with the present schedule, the delivery on 100 STL type omnibuses covered by the current

order would be completed by the end of October. By the engagement of 110 coach factory staff, the output of bodies could be advanced from 3 1/2 to 5 1/2 per week and that AEC could correspondingly accelerate the delivery of their chassis. However, if the delivery programme were so accelerated, a gap would occur between the completion of the existing programme and the commencement of delivery of a further 100 omnibuses, construction of which had been authorised by Special Expenditure Requisition No 24/1169.

In accordance with his recommendation, it was decided that no increase in staff should be made at this time for the purpose of accelerating the output of omnibuses covered by the current order, but as soon as it is known what staff would be transferred to the Board from the coach factories of Messrs Tilling, the rate of vehicle delivery would be reconsidered.

#### Partial Overhauls of Omnibuses at Chiswick Works

The Vice-Chairman stated that while a further report from Mr Durrant was awaited upon the several proposals for improving the general level of efficiency of omnibuses, it was the intention that the biennial partial overhauls should be executed at Chiswick Works as far as possible, in order to give relief to the garages and he accordingly authorised Mr Durrant to proceed with arrangements for this purpose.

#### Applications for PSV Licences and Certificates of Fitness

Mr Durrant reported that arrangements with regard to the procedure to be followed in connection with the issue of certificates of fitness for vehicles operated by the Board had not yet been agreed with the authorities concerned, but that the Certifying Officer was understood to be contemplating setting aside certain days each week for inspections of vehicles requiring new certificates after they had been operating in service for a short period. The Vice-Chairman stated that the Certifying Officer was not entitled, under Section 69 of the Road Traffic Act 1930, to require that omnibuses should be so withdrawn from garages for inspection and that this was a proposal to which the Board could not accede.

Mr Durrant further reported that it was understood that the Certifying Officer, in pursuance of his powers under Section 70 of the Road Traffic Act 1930, proposed to ask that all cases of damage to omnibuses, however caused, should be reported. The Vice-Chairman stated that the Board would not be prepared to agree to this proposal and that it should be maintained that it was not the intention of Section 70 of the Road Traffic Act to provide that damages caused by collisions etc. should be reported, but only such instances of failure or accident as reflected upon the design and construction of the vehicle.

#### O Type Omnibuses - Messrs Tilling

With reference to a minute of the Traffic Committee, Mr Durrant reported that approximately 28 "O" type omnibuses on loan to Messrs Tilling of which the licenses would expire between 1 August and 1 October 1933, would require to be replaced as and when the licenses expired.

It was decided that Mr Durrant advise the Engineer of Messrs Tilling that an effort should be made to secure an extension of the licenses after partial overhaul of the vehicles, if this could be shown to be economical. Otherwise, the Board would replace the "O" type vehicles in question by ST type omnibuses on loan at a price per mile to be agreed with the Comptroller and Accountant to cover interest and depreciation (understood to be 1.125d).

### **From the Minutes of the Engineering Committee Meeting No 4 held on 31 July 1933**

#### Special Expenditure Requisitions

The following Special Expenditure Requisition was submitted for approval and the signature of the Vice-Chairman:

F.2 for the construction of a tramway track connection between the tracks recently operated by Erith tramways and those operated by the LCC in order that the Erith cars can be worked into Abbey Wood Depot, at a cost of £500, the work to be executed by the General Manager Tramways (CS&E) in accordance with previous discussion. This was approved and would be charged to the Revenue Account.

## Bexley, Erith and Dartford Tramways

For convenience it is here recorded that arising out of an inspection of the Bexley, Erith and Dartford Tramways by the Vice-Chairman with the General Manager, Tramways (C.S. and E), it was decided:

(a) Proposed Conversion to Trolleybuses

- (i) that the General Manager Tramways prepare a scheme for the part conversion of these tramways to trolleybus operation and the abandonment of the remainder;
- (ii) that the General Manager Omnibuses (Central), prepare a scheme for the future operation of omnibuses in this area and that both schemes should be referred as soon as possible to the Commercial Manager for consideration and report by the CoOrdination and Development Officer and the submission of his recommendations should be referred for discussion to an early meeting of the Traffic Committee

(b) Parliamentary Powers Required

that the Parliamentary Officer should report as soon as possible regarding the most expeditious means by which the Board can obtain the necessary powers for part-replacement of these tramways by trolleybuses and the abandonment of the remainder.

(c) Bexley Depot

that subject to an alternative depot site being secured, arrangements should be made in due course for the re-sale of Bexley Tramway Depot to Bexley Council on commercial terms, as the depot is not convenient for the purposes of the Board.

(d) Erith Depot

that, if possible, arrangements should be made in due course for the resale of Erith Tramway Depot to Erith Council on commercial terms as the depot is not convenient for the purposes of the Board.

(e) Alternative Depot Site

- (i) that Mr Buller should report as soon as possible upon any sites of not less than two acres in the Bexley area available for purchase and suitable for new tram or trolleybus depot, including the Crayford Garage site of the Omnibuses (Country and Coaches)
- (ii) that in this connection, the General Manager, Omnibuses (Country and Coaches) should report as soon as possible what arrangements could be made for the accommodation of omnibuses and coaches displaced from Crayford Garage, if this garage were appropriated for the purpose of the tramways.

Tony adds: "Now I have run out of copy and it looks unlikely whether I will gain access to the Archives until the Spring. I have therefore enlarged the latest submission by the inclusion of the LPTB's Engineering Committee Minutes for July 1933. I have these roughly typed up to August 1937 but it all depends whether our readers want go that far back. To a transport historian like me, they are fascinating. In my latest offerings (1960s) we are seeing the demise of the trolleybus system; here were see some of it brought into existence.

It might be as well to gauge reaction from the readers. [Comments to the Editor, please]

There is a however, however. A couple of years ago when I first copied the Engineering Committee minutes, I hived off all references to vehicles about which Ken Blacker is currently writing: Q, C, CR, TF,

STD etc. and apart from the recording in this set of an order being placed for Q type vehicles, any other references to this class and others listed will not be included. But I think they'll still be enough on other vehicles."

### London Bus Museum News

Leon Daniels

The Museum closed its doors for a winter refresh on 1st November. The old layout has been in place for a decade and the nature of the visitors has changed - more families and a much higher proportion of photographers. Everyone now has a smartphone.

So the old 'one-way around' will go and a much more open layout adopted. Although there will be a short timeline from Horse Bus to Low Floor bus, most of the exhibits will either be in groups or stationed on a virtual roadway which will run diagonally across the floorspace linking the two main vehicle doors. With white lines and street furniture the buses will look more at home. The mezzanine floor will be open to the public for the first time as it gives an excellent photographic view. There will be a bigger children's area too. There will continue to be a restoration bay in the public area - it's very popular and NS 174 should be completed there over the next year.

A major move of vehicles has been completed. Some are temporarily outside and the others closely parked together to give volunteers and contractors space to work. The story can be seen on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/57GCNdP6vOw>

The refresh will be completed in time for a grand reopening in Spring 2021 which we hope, will be alongside a significant relaxation in the current Covid-19 restrictions so London Bus Museum, situated at Brooklands, can once again be host to the sound of happy visitors.



Above: Trolleybus 1812 leaving the London Bus Museum following the end of its period on loan from the British Trolleybus Society.

### RTC I

Tim Stubbs has found and forwarded an article from "Motor Transport" in 1949. We thought readers might like to see it. This was published in columns over two pages so you will have to try to follow it; unfortunately our Newsletter is a bit restrictive with these things.

# A DOUBLE-DECK GREEN LINE COACH

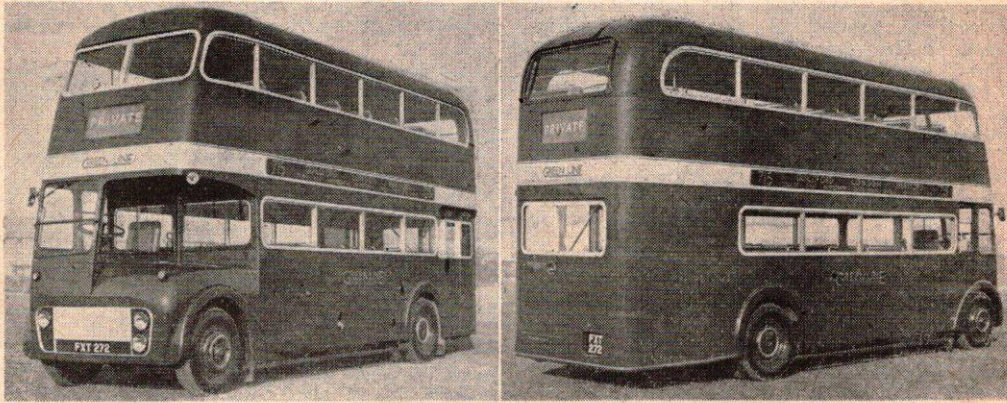
*Air Conditioning and Engine Cooling Combined*

## FEATURES OF A LONDON TRANSPORT EXPERIMENT

**L**AST week, by courtesy of the London Transport Executive, we were able to examine an experimental double-deck coach designed for use on Green Line routes and designated RTC1. This vehicle has been developed so that the practicability of operation of specially designed double-deck vehicles as coaches may be tested. The objective of the design has been to produce a vehicle which shall provide an enhanced standard of comfort and amenity. Opportunity has been taken at the same time to incorporate a number of features of advanced experimental

has been necessitated by the incorporation of fluorescent lighting and a large air circulating fan for the heating and ventilating apparatus.

The main construction of the bodywork follows the form adopted for the production batches of RT-type bus, but the general appearance has been improved in various ways. Externally a special character is imparted to the vehicle by a new form of window treatment designed to give the effect of long windows with maximum visibility. This has been achieved by special design of the intermediate pillars, together with the elimination



Exterior views of the new Green Line double-deck coach of the RTC type

character in order that they may be tested under service conditions. The body and chassis chosen are those of RT97, severely damaged by enemy action during the war.

The new arrangement has been designed and constructed in the development section of the Chiswick Works of London Transport, is of standard 7 ft. 6 in. width, and has a seating capacity of 20 in the lower and 26 in the upper saloon, giving a total of 46. The chassis is

of the half-drop window horizontal centre bars. The windows are of the full-drop type, mechanically wound, but with a limited opening to ensure safety of juvenile passengers.

### Rear Platform

The removal of the engine cooling radiator to a position beneath the staircase has permitted the design of an improved front with better accessibility to the engine. There is a larger driver's



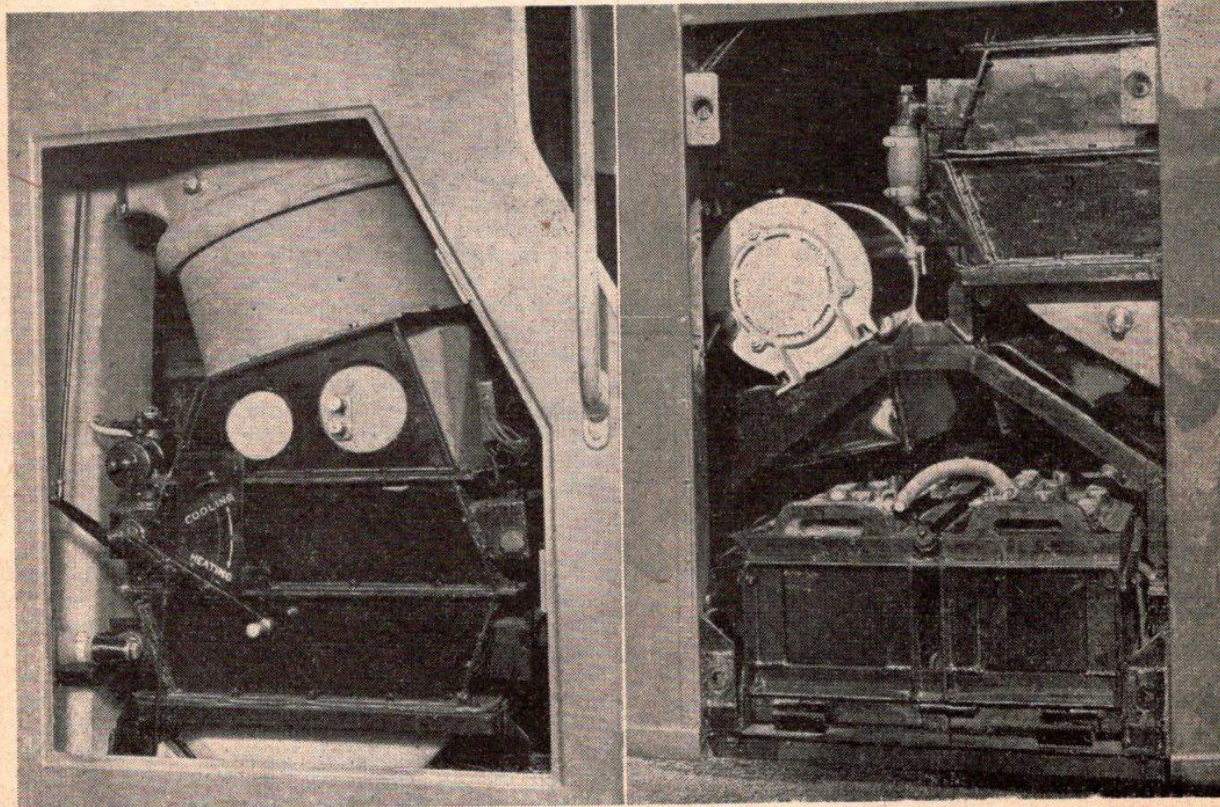
Seat for London Transport double-deck coach with Dunlopillo cushion and loose covers mounted, and (right) the frame

basically the A.E.C. Regent Mark III, incorporating fluid transmission, air-pressure brakes and gearbox operation, and preselective gearbox, with the final drive effected by a 5.2 to 1 worm gear. Certain modifications have been introduced to the suspension arrangement, as a result of which overall height is 14 ft. 6 in. High deflection semi-elliptic laminated road springs are em-

ployed and torsion bar stabiliser mechanisms are fitted to both front and rear axles to improve stability. The latest-type fluid shock absorbers are fitted to the front axle.

cab, longer and broader, while the bonneting has been modernised to comply with the general theme. The windscreen has been suitably modified to conform to the more aesthetic outline of the front of the vehicle, and a cab heater (incorporated in the engine cooling system) has been included to add to the comfort of the driver.

The customary open loading platform has given



The air conditioning and radiator plant under the stairs seen from the platform and (right) with external cover removed from offside of coach

place to one of enclosed type with pneumatically operated double-leaf sliding doors of patent design and operation, as fitted to RT97 when it was rebuilt for a pay-as-you-enter experiment after it was blitzed. These doors are worked by push buttons in the conductor's position, with emergency buttons in the driver's cab and an emergency release valve on the outside of the vehicle. An emergency door opens in the rear panel at the back of the platform.

#### Higher Capacity Dynamo

The 9.6-litre compression-ignition engine is of the direct injection type, the combustion chambers being of toroidal formation in the piston crowns. Engine cooling is effected in conjunction with the coach-heating system, described subsequently, and there is thus no radiator fitted in the orthodox position at the front of the vehicle. This enables the driver to enjoy an extraordinary range of vision to his nearside front. The introduction of a 7-in. high-speed dynamo with high output

The external finish is based on a darker green than the standard Green Line colour, broken only by a continuous horizontal band of light green at intermediate floor level, outlined with bronze-finished moulding. On the sides of the

(Continued on page 6)

# Double-Deck Green Line Coach

(Continued from page 5)

coach this lighter band incorporates the familiar route boards in green with bronze lettering, and these have been fitted in such a way that the pleasing general appearance of the vehicle is in no way disturbed. Also incorporated in the band on the front and rear of the vehicle are permanent Green Line signs consisting of flush-fitting translucent plastic panels with built-in amber lettering which can be illuminated at night. Front and rear route and destination blinds, in the customary positions, employ amber lettering on green background, to correspond with the Green Line signs. Illumination of all signs and indicators is by fluorescent lighting.

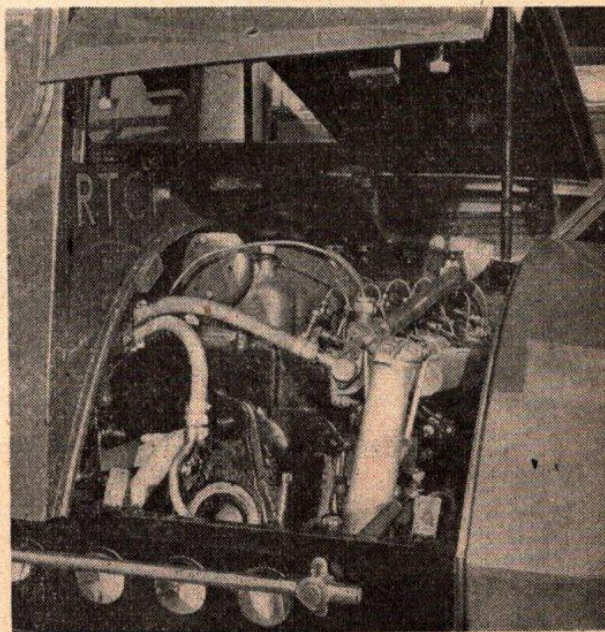
A new approach has also been made to the finish of the interior of the vehicle, and the final scheme was arrived at in conjunction with consulting industrial designers, Norbert Dutton and Douglas Scott. The lower panels are covered in dark green synthetic cloth with a slight grain and semi-matt finish, whilst the window surrounds are stove-enamelled cream matt with a crackle finish. The roof is finished in cream. Intermediate window pillars are covered with aluminium, anodised, with a silk semi-matt finish; handrails and other fittings are of aluminium. Floors have been covered with mottled green rubber sheeting throughout and at the front end of the lower deck the familiar flywheel cowl has been eliminated and replaced by a ramp extending the whole width of the body, giving a clean unbroken line and also acting as a footrest for passengers in the front seats.

## Luxurious Seating

The extremely comfortable seats represent another new departure, the final design having been reached after statistical analysis of the preferences of a representative cross-section of travellers. New angles have been adopted for the seats and backs, whilst individual Dunlopillo cushions with readily detachable loose covers (for ease of cleaning) have been incorporated instead of the usual double cushions. Both seats and squabs are supported

on elastic cord. The moquette cushion covering, whilst being of new design, preserves the general theme which has become a characteristic feature of L.T. rolling stock. The spacing is 2 ft. 9 in. back to back, in lieu of 2 ft. 6 in. in 34-seat single-deck Green Line vehicles.

Seat frames are of high-tensile steel tubing, supported on four legs, and incorporate a footrest for the use of passengers in the seat immediately behind. This also acts as a stop to prevent small luggage drifting about on the floor of the coach. As it is a double-decker the provision of parcel or luggage racks is not possible. Integral handrails on each seat back have permitted the removal of vertical rails throughout, and consequent added freedom of movement inside the vehicle. The effect of the new seats, as experienced over some 20 miles of travel in London suburbs, is entirely comfortable; they are probably the most luxurious p.s.v. design possible while retaining any degree of simplicity. The new seating thus provides an appreciably higher standard of comfort whilst sacrificing none of the desirable



Access to engine of the RTC type

maintenance features in respect of standardisation and ease of detachability. The conductor is provided with a tip-up seat on the near side ahead of the entrance doors, from which he can easily reach the door-operating buttons above his head.

### Heating and Ventilation

The problem of adequately heating and ventilating a double-deck vehicle has received careful consideration, and a new approach has resulted in an arrangement which is being provisionally patented. A sufficient degree of heating in winter weather with a suitable number of air changes, entailing the use of the whole of the heat available from the engine coolant, has been achieved by the repositioning of the engine radiator under the stairs, at which point connection is made to longitudinal ducts at floor level on either side of the upper and lower saloons. The engine coolant—probably distilled water will be used—is passed through a heat exchanger over which air from the interior of the vehicle is blown by a fan operating at 1,800 r.p.m., driven by a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -h.p. 24-volt motor.

During the winter, air is drawn from the front of the vehicle through ducts in the intermediate roof to the heating unit by means of the fan, whence the heated air is passed through the ducts at floor level into both saloons. A total of 650 cu. ft. per minute is circulated, giving 17.5 air changes per hour. During summer conditions the flow is reversed and air is extracted from these ducts through the radiator, which is then operating as a cooling unit for the engine, and discharged at the rear of the vehicle. The changeover from heating to cooling is made by the movement of a single lever mounted inside a small flap in the main access panel under the stairs. Later the changeover may be mechanised. Maximum temperature of the air in the saloons is controlled automatically by a thermostat. On a journey from Chiswick to Ruislip in wintry external conditions, the coach rapidly assumed a genial temperature, a satisfactory result in view of the cool-running nature of the diesel power unit.

The engine coolant tank, fitted with a pressure relief valve, is situated inside a fairing in the upper deck between the stairs and the rear seats on the off side of the vehicle where access to a filler is obtained through a trap. The coolant is conveyed to the engine from this tank via the heat exchanger under the stairs and a pipe located in the lower saloon air duct. It returns to the tank via the heater in the driving cab and a pipe in the air duct of the upper saloon. When the engine is switched on, although the ventilation fan motor circuit is completed, the fan does not actually come into operation until the temperature of the coolant reaches 55 deg. C.

### Fluorescent Lighting

Fluorescent lighting has been incorporated with a view to obtaining general service experience and assessing the maintenance problems associated with it, and the layout consists of two parallel lines of lighting in each saloon, along the upper edge of the normal lighting panels on each side of the roof. Choke and starting equipment are concealed behind these panels. Each tube is housed in an open plastic container, and the intervals between the tubes have been filled with a suitably shaped fairing to give a clean appearance. On each deck there are nine warm white tubes, 18 in. long and rated at 15 watts, supplied with current from the batteries via a converter which converts the current from 24 volts d.c. to 110 volts a.c. This equipment is mounted under the stairs.

Double-deck buses were used on Green Line coach routes on their wartime restoration; on their reintroduction after the war they were retained only on certain routes from Aldgate, where Daimler vehicles are used. In prewar days LT1137 was an experimental double-decker, built on an A.E.C. Renown chassis, used mainly on the Redhill and Bushey Green Line route. If found suitable in service from operating and engineering aspects after licensing, the new experimental double-decker of the RTC type will serve as a prototype for future production when sufficient supplies of chassis are available.



STL 1490 has suffered an altercation judging by the dented upper front nearside area. Caught in the one-time extensive yard of Watford High Street garage, it displays running No. WA98, presumably from its last journey on the 344, a local route in peak hours connecting the printworks factory area on the town's bypass to the Metropolitan line Watford station at Cassiobury. The doorless forward-entrance buses were reputed to be draughty for lower deck passengers. An emergency door was provided in the lower deck rear wall. The sturdy-looking Weymann-bodied bus was withdrawn from stock in June 1951.

Photo: D.W.K. Jones



The first and last STL types together: 1932 to 1946. In its as-delivered livery of dark green and white with brown roof and black wings, STL 2696 rests in the same WA yard next to red STL 201, numerically the penultimate member of the LGOC "Bluebird"-style second batch, now reduced to training prospective drivers. Both buses are fitted with their radiator blinds - 2696's effectively keeping out much of the wintry blast - while 201's remains rolled *in situ*. Routes 351 and 321 performed something of a "Cox and Box" act down the years. Presumably no more though: I see route 321 is now worked by Redline as an

unrelated weekdays service Aylesbury-High Wycombe via Princes Risborough (LOTS: *The London Bus*, July 2020). STL 201 finally bit the dust in July 1949 while STL 2696 remained in stock to June 1955 when it went into Dundee's municipal ownership for a further nine and a half years. Photo: D. W. K. Jones



And ANother 321 . . . In April 1952 at least, the Maple Cross working had been numbered 351, but by March 1979, London Country's Leyland Atlantean AN 59 shows it as 321. Passing the re-assuring solidity of Croyley's Met line station's façade, the bus winks right to turn into New Road on its way southward to take a break. We trust the dangling cable below the offside headlamp was nothing serious, though nearside damage to panelling seems endemic to Watford's buses. Photo: John A Gray



Previous page: Seven years earlier, in March 1972, Clarence Carter photographed LCBS's RT 1710 plus two RFs and the likely 336A Guy GS on the slopes at Rickmansworth station "lay-by". Was the gradient not steep enough to employ wheel chocks to avoid a possible runaway?



This one would not have been one of Watford's buses, but not so far away in the grounds of Aldenham Bus Works, Frank (DWK) Jones came across the first of the conversions from the immediate pre-war 15STL16s, SRT I, awaiting not inconsiderable repair attention, including to the route blind box above the platform, early in 1949.



Above: The chassis of RT 2213 moving under its own power during the re-vamp of the London Bus Museum. On the next page, one bus that needed manpower rather than internal combustion to move was T 31, seen here having a bit of assistance from some of its carers. - photos courtesy Leon Daniels.



Previous page: A splendid shot of RLH 71 enjoying the late sunshine and demonstrating the reason for low-height buses at St Mary's Lane bridge, Upminster on 25<sup>th</sup> October. The bus is being pursued by a 1972 MGB GT - less rare than the RLH but very appropriately making a "period" photograph. Below, the bus is seen at Upminster Station - photos by Paul Van der Hulks.



### Window Problems

October's Newsletter contained a reference by David Thrower to a problem he encountered with an RT seat-frame and the socket holding the stanchion to the ceiling. Old buses pose many problems, and recently my dear old RT 1018 did just that to me. I have (at last - very long story...) finished replacing all her lower-deck nearside window pans, using some repaired pans which I have had in stock for years, origin now unknown or forgotten. I think we all know these items are in very short supply indeed, so one has to do the best with what is available. I found that whoever had repaired one of the fixed-light pans had managed to make one end of it very marginally smaller than the other, the difference being only about an eighth of an inch, and when we came to glaze it, the usual trick of 'thumping' the glass carefully into place resulted in a pile of shattered glass. This led me to check the dimensions closely and discover the minor discrepancy in the size; I now have to get a window specially cut to suit once the glaziers decide to re-open. Apparently the British "Government" (for want of a better description) appear to think that replacing broken glass is not "essential."

Another problem arose with one of the drop-light pans. This, it transpired, was very slightly bowed at the bottom, and while I was able to persuade it into position in the body frame the window rubber does not seat as snugly in the channel as I would like. A further annoyance with this one is that the flange which should fit closely to the inner shrouds doesn't, and the rubber inside only just seals the gap. Again, it isn't much, and probably only an expert would spot it, but it emphasises the point that if you repair a window pan - or get someone else to do so for you - it is absolutely essential to get the dimensions spot-on, and to ensure that the finished job is square, true and undistorted. You cannot tell "by eye" or I would not have found myself in this position.

Good news is that Baines still supply the rubber, IRS 1575EP, from stock and very quickly, too.

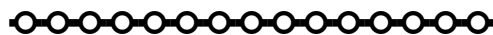
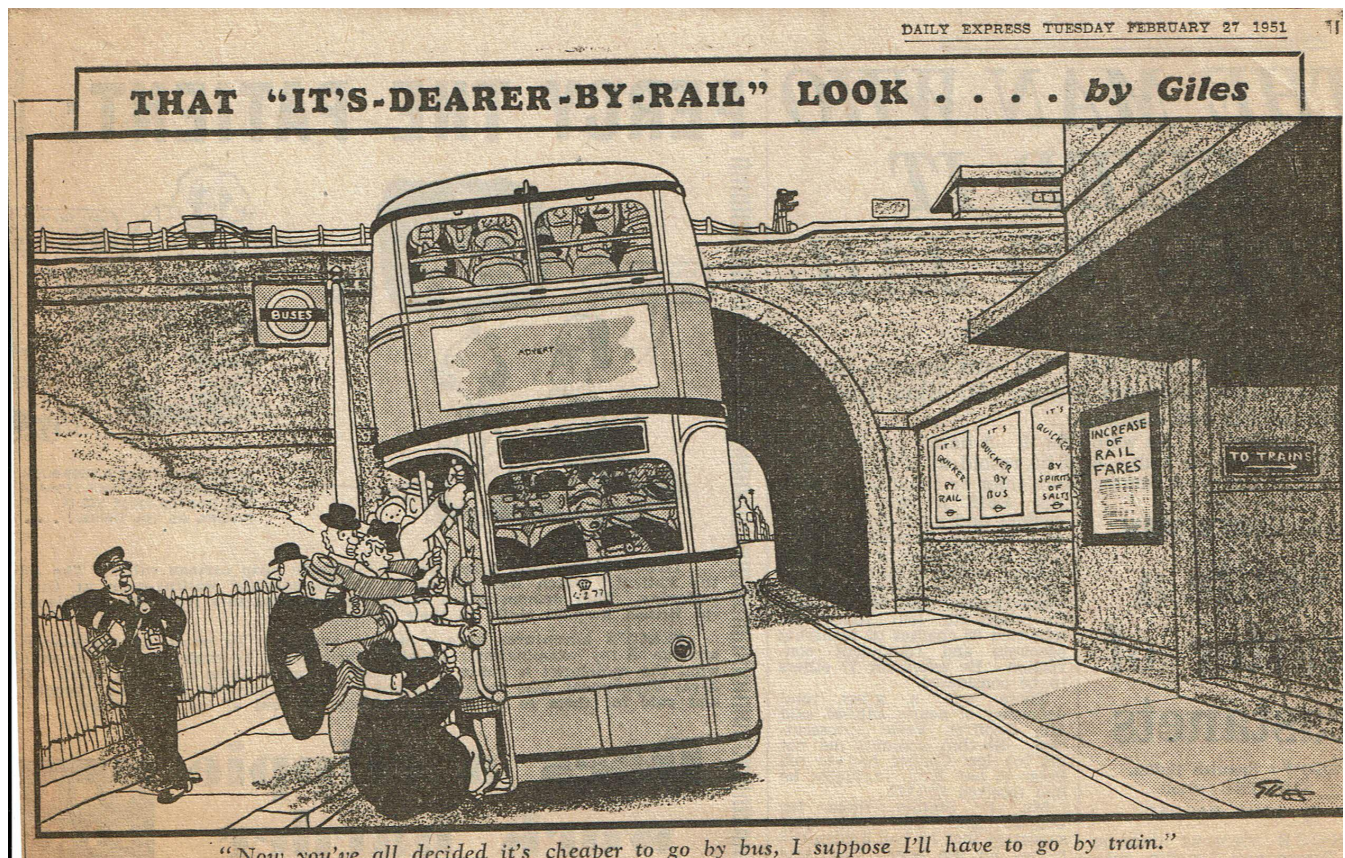
## Membership Renewals

December: Stephen Behr, Glen Bubb, Mick Gamble, Mike Godfrey, Nigel Henty, Roy Hillyard, Martyn Hunt, David Mooney, Chris Powis, David Pring and John Willis.

January 2021: Peter Cousens, Ioan Davies and Ron Kitching.

Colin Read writes: "I've already had one order for my film booklet following my small ad. Many thanks. Lovely to see the vehicles in the Lee cartoon (p20): a very rare portrayal of a trolleybus. Carl Giles was another good cartoonist and not infrequently portrayed buses."

We can take a hint!



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