

# 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The TDs seem to have been withdrawn slightly too early to survive in any great numbers, and those that do are not often seen. It is a great pleasure, then, to publish this photo from Ewen Pring, who writes: "TD 89 is on the road now, the picture was taken on 10th November at the Shell station in Hazlemere, Bucks. Interestingly for us, the Leyland's fuel tank has a wide short neck and can be filled quickly (and expensively) by the HGV fast pumps - as opposed to the AECs we've always been used to (RF, RLH, Routemaster) whose taller narrower necks lead to a slower flow rate and sometimes having to pause for air to come out and the level to settle down. I wonder how many hours would have been saved at LT garages overnight if AEC had been more like that? Is it too late to add this time saving idea to the staff suggestions scheme ("No award"!)." Before you ask, no the TDs did not have a saloon door originally, but the amount of time TD 89 has had one is longer than not."

## Newsletter 173

January 2021

### Opening Lines

Last year was not much fun for most of us, one way and another, and in particular for those of us who enjoy taking our vehicles out in public, and those who enjoy seeing them. What 2021 will bring is anyone's guess, although it does seem that we may be getting to grips with the virus at last, but for everyone who feels a bit depressed at the loss of a year I thought the fine shot of a freshly-restored TD might act as a fillip. Only four TDs apparently survive and now two are serviceable. No doubt if they, and the 15Ts, had remained in service for a few more years they may well have been almost as prolific as the GSs but it was not to be.

One good thing to come out of all the enforced inactivity in 2020 has been the number of contributions received for the Newsletter, doubtless in some cases from people who finally had enough spare time to write a few words - do please keep it up, we are always pleased to hear from you.

Messrs Horder, Osborn, Gray, Andress and Markwell are all spot on about trolleybus 1118's location with the picture illustrated in newsletter 171. However there are a number of items that I have to bring to the Newsletter's attention.

On page 3 it is stated that 1118 was transferred from Wood Green to Isleworth on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1961. The writer would not have been aware, though I was, that 1118 left Wood Green depot on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1961 to go to Isleworth depot where it would act as the training vehicle for their drivers to learn how to deal with the rheostatic electric brake. IH needed a full month for this to be carried out. It was still working these duties on 25<sup>th</sup> April and the attached photograph by Brian Speller of it working in this capacity at Busch Corner confirms this.



Page 4 . Not all of Fulwell's QIs were withdrawn at stage nine of the conversion programme - 1<sup>st</sup> February 1961. Eleven remained in service until 25<sup>th</sup> April when they were replaced by eleven L3s from Finchley at stage ten. None were moved from FY to FW at stage eleven, but as correctly stated more came at stages 12 and 13. John Gray falls into the unfortunate trap made by many others that the white band on the overhead support poles indicated that there was an electrical feeder for drivers to take into account. This is not so. The yellow (not white) bands in fact detailed parking times for private cars. This also corrects the comment on page six about the white strips on the standards. Continuing on page six. The L3s and KIs took over at Fulwell and Isleworth - they did not take over QIs at Hanwell; those QIs at HL were either withdrawn or returned to service.

Page 7. Second paragraph. The 657 finished on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1962 not 9<sup>th</sup> May which is correctly stated by Mr Horder. In the third paragraph there is a question mark as to whether the photograph at Busch Corner was an L3 or a QI - it is a QI as it has five windows each side on both decks whereas an L3 had six.

### III8 Part two

Tony Beard

In chatting with Jim Hawkins regarding the significant detective work that went into Nigel Horder's piece regarding Trolleybus III8, he made the following comment: The vehicle was actually transferred to Isleworth on 23 March 1961 for driver training purposes. The QI vehicles which the K class were due to replace were fitted with rheostatic braking, K class vehicles were fitted with regenerative braking and driver familiarisation was necessary.

Photograph of III8 heading in the opposite direction to QI 1837 at Kew Bridge (Fred Ivey)



### Route 178

Ewen Pring

On Sunday 18th April 2021 up to eight RLHs are hoped to drive over old route 178 for spectators at the LT RLHs 50 Years Later event we are co-ordinating in Lower Clapton/Hackney Wick/Stratford. It was 50 years earlier that LT finished with traditional lowbridge bus designs. All the public info including timetable and route is at:

<https://timebus.co.uk/rlh/news/2021-04-18-lt-rlhs-50-years-later/>

## Wanted - Running Number

David Thrower

I am looking for a garage duty stencil plate "I". Can anyone help? It is for a specific forthcoming event, not just for collecting. I already have a "I", but need "another I" if you see what I mean. I gather they are less common than other numbers, for whatever reason. Condition not crucial. Contact David Thrower, 49 Ackers Road, Stockton Heath, Cheshire WA4 2DZ tel. 01925 264156 or email [david.thrower21c@gmail.com](mailto:david.thrower21c@gmail.com)

## Let's All go to Brighton

Martyn Hunt

During the cold winter, I thought it might brighten everyone's day to go to Brighton, so here are some pictures of Brighton Runs from my archives. One of the first Brighton HCVC rallies I attended was on 7th May 1967; here RT 44 possibly owned at that time by Ted Brakell and RT 1431 owned by the London Omnibus Traction Society are seen in Madeira Drive. (Apologies about the scan of 1431 from the photo - lost negative I'm afraid). Thankfully both these vehicles are still with us.



On following pages: Brighton 4th May 1980.

RF 505 is seen being pursued by an ALM-B Routemaster along Madeira Drive. The RF is reported in Ian Smith's History records as becoming a parts donor for RF 444.

RT 1 is very much still with us and is seen in Marine Drive Brighton after partaking in the HCVC rally.





### **Minutes of Meetings supplied by Tony Beard - version 2.0**

In the absence of extracts from the Minutes of Bill Durrant's and the Main Technical Committee Meetings, I thought members might be interested in those of LT's Bus Advisory Sub-Committee. They begin in 1946 and end with meeting 21 in 1953, thereby covering the introduction of the RT family. Meetings were held on an as and when basis.

The information contained will, no doubt, have appeared in publications that cover this period, most especially Ken Blacker's definitive "RT - The Story of a London Bus" which was first published by Capital Transport 40 years ago. However, I believe it's always interesting to have an insight into the decision-making process.

Please let Mike know if you find the content of significance and I will then continue to produce each meeting in full on a monthly basis. - Tony Beard

**London Transport**  
**Department of the Chief Mechanical Engineer (Road Services)**  
**Bus Allocation Advisory Sub-Committee**  
**Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday 29 November 1946**

Present: Mr Burnell (in the Chair)

Messrs.Counihan

Harbour

Haynes

Jones

Lennard

Mills

Secretary Mr Shaw Scott

#### **1.11.46 General Review**

The Chairman received the new bus position and pointed out that the bottleneck in the supply of new vehicles was seriously affecting the delivery of the new 'RT' buses which had been on order since 1945. He gave the following statistics:

	Original Estimate	Latest Estimate
'RT' buses to be delivered by December 1946	110	Nil
'RT' buses to be delivered by December 1947	910	511
'RT' buses to be delivered by December 1948	1,910	1,208

#### Anticipated deliveries during 1947

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
4	16	25	32	46	56	52	42	56	60	60	62

Whereas the figures quoted above were all estimates given by the body builders (chassis deliveries being far ahead of bodies) Mr Chairman stressed that they could not be taken as final and further scaling down might have to be anticipated. The Board had not accepted the position and every effort had been made and was being made to improve the supply of standard type new buses. Negotiations were in hand with additional chassis and body manufacturers for the supply of some 1,500 buses over those indicated above but deliveries could not commence until March 1948 and the full effect would not be felt until 1949.

8ft wide buses were now being discussed with the Regional Transport Commissioner who was willing to allow such buses to operate on approved routes in the outer area whereas he was not convinced that the wider buses could be permitted on routes passing through the inner area. In view of this, 500 of the 1,500 buses mentioned above would be 8ft wide and arrangements were being made for routes and garages to be surveyed using two "mock-up" buses, so that a definite allocation could be made for wider vehicles. Since it was impossible accurately to assess the effects of the increased width on operation in the inner area with only two "mock-up" buses, the intention was to introduce the 8ft buses on a complete route basis; the buses would be transferred from the outer areas and, if not found satisfactory, could be returned from whence they came.

By this means any possibility of a considerable number of 8ft wide buses being found unsuitable would be avoided, although it had to be admitted that considerable delay in the large scale introduction of the wider vehicles would result.

With regard to the Country Area, Mr Harbour indicated that tests were due to commence after Christmas, while Green Line services would automatically follow the decision regarding the inner area although certain routes which avoid this area could be equipped with 8ft wide coaches at an earlier date.

The figure of all 511 new buses in 1947 was most disappointing to Mr Jones who enquired whether there was any alternative means of obtaining new buses and mentioned that the Unions were arranging to meet the appropriate Governmental departments regarding higher priority for the bus industry. He urged that maintenance problems of today accentuated the need for new vehicles, although the former were the concern of the Servicing Advisory Sub-Committee which would have to be fully acquainted with the new bus position in order to make authoritative recommendations.

The Sub-Committee agreed to record that these figures for 1947 were noted and that remarks in regard to the Servicing Advisory Sub-Committee were passed to that body.

#### 2.11.46 Replacement Programme 1947

The Chairman gave the following details of buses which urgently needed replacement as soon as new vehicles became available:

'LT' open back petrol buses at Leyton and Loughton	117
'LT' open back petrol buses at Potters Bar	31
'STL' Tilling type petrol buses at Croydon	15
'STL' Tilling type buses at Bromley	<u>46</u>

Less 25 new Leyland 'STDs' delivered to Loughton	209
	<u>25</u>
Total buses for urgent replacement	184

This figure had to be offset against the intake of new vehicles which would, therefore, be completely absorbed in July 1947 in replacing the vehicles listed above. The engineers, in fact, wanted to use the whole 511 new buses scheduled for 1947 for replacement purposes in order to withdraw the worst of the petrol buses.

The process of elimination of buses which were beyond economical repair was explained and discussed; it was pointed out that the Ministry of Transport examiners were now active and where they condemned an old vehicle there was no option but to withdraw it from service hence the engineer's need for more than 184 direct replacements.

The Committee agreed the figure of 184 old type buses requiring replacement by the first of the new 'RT' buses and with the general procedure of replacement as indicated above.

#### 3.II.46 Vehicles Available for Augmentation

The Chairman pointed out that it was clear that no new vehicles would be available for augmentation until July or August 1947 and possibly not until 1948. On the other hand, he was determined to persist with his augmentation policy but his only source of supply was the 'LT' open back and other old vehicles which would have to continue in service if augmentation was to be continued. While every effort would be made to keep the old types for use in peak hours only, as previously promised, there were specific cases in which this was impracticable.

Augmentation, therefore, depended not on new buses but entirely on the goodwill of the staff in continuing to operate 200 of the best of the 'LT' open back and other old type vehicles in order to tide over the period of approximately a year until new bus deliveries made themselves felt.

The short life ahead of these old buses made any question of overhauling them impracticable since nothing short of a very heavy body overhaul would be satisfactory, while this would, on one hand, divert labour and materials from the overhaul of oil engined vehicles with many years of unexpired life on the other hand it would be a waste in view of the short life still required.

Various points in connection with the maintenance and body repair at garages of these old buses were discussed and it was agreed that such items must be left to the Servicing Advisory Sub-Committee which would be requested to deal specially with keeping the 'LT' open back and old type buses on the road for up to another twelve months.

It was agreed that these proposals that 200 of the best of the old 'LT' open back and 'STL' Tilling buses should remain in service temporarily to give augmentations, were the best in the circumstances.

#### 4.II.46 Allocation of New Vehicles

The Chairman and Mr Harbour outlined the allocation of new vehicles between Central and Country Areas. Acting on the generally accepted basis that the Country bus fleet was in better shape than the Central bus fleet, the Operating Managers had agreed that the whole of the 511 new buses for 1947 would be allocated to the Central Area. Subsequently the Country fleet would be apportioned a fair allocation of new vehicles from the common pool.

Therefore, whereas the Central Area would receive a fair sprinkling of the new buses in the coming twelve months, the Country Area would receive none. Since it was inevitable that

certain older Country buses would be condemned, it had been arranged that sound Central buses should act as replacements on a like for like basis.

The difficulties of obtaining agreement between the various Central garages as to the desired location of new vehicles was emphasised by Mr Jones who stressed that, despite its authority to determine the allocation of vehicles, the Committee would be wasting its time if the men at the garages refused loyally to accept the decisions which it made.

The Committee appreciated these very real difficulties and discussed ways and means of overcoming them. It was obvious that since this, and the other Committees reporting to the Joint Advisory Committee were genuine joint meetings of experts in their particular spheres held for the common good of the interests of the Board and the Union, the decisions reached must be loyally carried out by the men at the garages. Therefore, the Board's representatives declared their willingness to take any steps to assist the Union's representatives in obtaining the backing of their members and offered their assistance in such a direction as meeting the men.

It was agreed that the first 511 'RTs' should be allocated to the Central Area and that the Union's representatives be provided with statements giving various statistics regarding the replacement vehicle programmes, age of existing vehicles, dates due for replacement etc.

#### 5.II.46 Augmentation Programmes -December and January

The Operating Managers gave the following information regarding augmentation programmes:

Central	4 December	19 double deck; no single deck; on various routes
	1 January	17 double deck; 2 single deck; on various routes
Country	4 December	5 double deck; no single deck

Additional double deck buses obtained internally within the Country Bus and Coach Department by changing certain routes over to single deck.

This was noted.

#### 6.II.46 Single Deck Buses

Mr Jones enquired whether any new single deck buses were expected in view of the fact that all 511 buses due in 1947 were double deck; the single deck bus position was acute in many places.

Chairman stated that 31 Leyland 'TD' type single deck vehicles with 33-seater bodies (similar to the new 'T' types) were due for delivery commencing in December and completion during the spring of 1947. These would be allocated to Muswell Hill in the first instance in order to release the new '14T12' 'T' types (working on Route 212) for transfer to Sidcup (Route 241) and Uxbridge (Route 222).

This was noted

#### 7.II.46 Information Regarding Developments etc.

The Chairman emphasised that discretion must be exercised in divulging certain information which was still not for general consumption, particularly where the completion of contracts had not yet been concluded.

#### From the Minutes of the Engineering Committee Meeting No 5 held on 14 August 1933

##### Equipment of Tramcars with Windscreens

Consideration is given to a memorandum, dated 14 August, submitted by Mr Spencer recommending that windscreens be fitted to 107 tramcars in the northern and western areas not already equipped at a cost

of £8,765. He indicated that this programme would complete the equipment of tramcars in the northern and western area with windscreens except cars of the open-top type, which it was not practicable to alter. Mr T E Thomas reported that only 245 out of more than 2,000 tramcars in the Central, Southern and Eastern areas were currently equipped with windscreens and that if provision of windscreens were extended to all these cars the cost would be in the order of £200,000. In the circumstances, it was decided that no steps be taken to equip further tramcars with windscreens at present and that proposals should be resubmitted for consideration in the Spring of 1934.

#### Breakdown in Thames Tunnels

Consideration was given to a memorandum, dated 14 August, submitted by Mr T E Thomas setting out particulars of the arrangement whereby, before transfer to the Board, the Tramways Department of the LCC had been primarily responsible for clearing breakdowns of vehicles in the Blackwall and Rotherhithe Tunnels.

In accordance with this recommendation, it was decided that three months' notice be given to the LCC of the Board's intention to discontinue this work, but that it be intimated to the Council that the Board is prepared to consider entering into some fresh arrangement to deal with such breakdowns at the Council's cost and that it be referred to the Technical and Safety Committee to consider the most effective way of handling such breakdowns if the Council should seek assistance of the Board.

#### Telephone Facilities, Tramways (CS&E) - Bexley and Erith Areas

In accordance with a recommendation set out in a memorandum, dated 14 August, submitted by Mr T E Thomas, it was decided that the existing private tramway telephones in the Bexley and Erith areas be improved and connected with the present private system in the Southern Area, the work being carried out as part of the normal routine by the overhead line gangs at an estimated cost of £320 for materials, to be charged to the Maintenance Account.

#### Inspection of Omnibuses for Granting of Certificates of Fitness

Mr Durrant submitted a memorandum dated 9 August, reporting on the procedure to be followed in connection with the issue of certificates of fitness for the vehicles operated by the Board had now been satisfactorily agreed with the Authorities concerned, and that, in particular arrangements had been made:

- (a) for the Certifying Officer to be available on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday of each week for inspecting omnibuses requiring certificates of fitness after overhaul at Chiswick Works.
- (b) for such inspections to be made at Turnham Green Garage, which, being a subsidiary shed, was available for this purpose without interference of the normal routine.
- (c) for the certificates of fitness to be dated to correspond with the date of PSV licences, so that the necessity for withdrawing vehicles from service between overhauls would be avoided.
- (d) for certificates of fitness to be for a period of one year for NS omnibuses registered in 1923 and for two years for those registered in 1924. (Note: the issue of certificates for vehicles of a later date will not arise until 1934)

It was further reported that arrangements had been made for overtaking the arrears of issue of certificates of fitness by the end of the current month. This was noted as satisfactory.

#### Notification of Failures and Damage to Omnibuses in Service

Mr Durrant submitted a memorandum, dated 9 August, reporting that he had now agreed with the Certifying Officer that for the purposes of Section 70 of the Road Traffic Act, 1930, types of failure in respect of which notification would be required would be:

- (a) failure of material affecting the main fundamental units or components, such as steering gear, brakes, axles, chassis frames or body structure.
- (b) serious damage to the above parts on collision, etc.
- (c) accidents having reference to stability, such as overturning of omnibuses.
- (d) cases of serious fire.

He further reported that the proposed procedure would not impose any additional inconvenience upon the Board, but that it had been agreed to review the procedure at a later date if experience should indicate that any change may be desirable.

#### Execution of Partial Overhauls at Chiswick Works

Mr Durrant reported that arrangements had now been completed for the execution of all partial overhauls at Chiswick Works from 13 September, next.

#### Q Type Omnibuses Operated by other Undertakings

Mr Durrant reported that the representatives of the Board, who had been sent to Birmingham to investigate and report upon the operation of Q type omnibuses by Birmingham Corporation. The representatives of the delegation were invited to report on their experience regarding the operation of a Q type.

#### Construction of Metal Omnibus Bodies at Chiswick Works

In accordance with a recommendation submitted by Mr Durrant it was decided that authority be given for the preparation of two designs for all-metal omnibus bodies in the drawing office at Chiswick Works, with view to the construction of one such body of each type at Chiswick in the near future.

In this connection, two types of metal pillar section, one manufactured by the Metropolitan Cammell Carriage Wagon and Finance Company and the other by Metal Sections Ltd., were considered and the Vice-Chairman gave Mr Durrant instructions to enquire into the design of metal sections used in aircraft construction in order that bodies to be executed at Chiswick might be modelled on the best designs obtainable. He also suggested that careful consideration should be given in designing the all-metal type of body, to the length of life aimed at.

#### Transfer of Coppersmiths to Garages from Chiswick Works

In accordance with a recommendation contained in a memorandum dated 3 August, submitted by Mr Durrant it was decided that authority be hereby given to the employment of five additional Coppersmiths at garages, Omnibuses (Central), making a total of 14 over the central area fleet and that in this connection five of the former garage Coppersmiths, who have while at Chiswick Works been employed at the Assistant Craftsman's rate of 1/3d. per hour, be returned to the garages and employed as Coppersmiths at the rate of 1/11 per hour.

#### From the Minutes of the Engineering Committee Meeting No 6 held on 21 August 1933

##### Redundant Tramcars N & W Areas

In accordance with a recommendation contained in a memorandum, dated 21 August, submitted by Mr Spencer, it was decided that 30 old tramcars of the open-deck type now occupying valuable space in depots (N & W areas) be scrapped. A form of Authority for the Withdrawal of Capital Assets to be submitted.

### Trolley Bus Scheme: Former SMET Area - Turning Point in Sutton

In accordance with a recommendation contained in a memorandum, dated 21 August, submitted by Mr Spencer, it was decided that the Estate Agent report whether it would be a commercial proposition to purchase a site in Benhill Street, Sutton, indicated on a drawing submitted at the meeting, which might be required for a turning point for trolley buses in the future. (*atb- note that the LPTB clerks had still got to get to grips with "trolleybus" being one word and not two*).

### Technical Section - Omnibuses (Central): Experimental Procedure

With reference to a Board Meeting Minute, Mr Durrant submitted a memorandum dated 19 August, setting out the proposed expenditure of £9,900 upon experimental work to be conducted by the Technical Section during the year ending 20 June 1934.

### Experimental Q Type Omnibuses

Mr Durrant submitted a memorandum, dated 19 August, setting out particulars of the proposed bodies for the two Q type omnibuses to be purchased for operation in the Omnibuses (Central) Area, together with drawings showing the plan and elevation proposed.

The drawings were approved subject to further consideration being given to the addition of a rail round the projection of the front wheel on the nearside and the rearrangement of the lower deck seats on the offside, as indicated by the Vice-Chairman (Frank Pick). Quotations to be obtained for two bodies from Metropolitan-Cammell and Weymann Company.

Arising out of consideration of the above drawings, the Vice-Chairman gave Mr Durrant instructions to investigate the practicability of constructing a balanced four-wheel vehicle of 27ft 6ins length which would comply with all the existing regulations except in respect of length and weight.

### From the Minutes of the Engineering Committee Meeting No 7 held on 28 August 1933

#### Special Expenditure Requisition

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

G.2 for the purchase of one tramcar equipment consisting of motors and controllers from Messrs Compton Parkinson Ltd which was obtained on trial and has fulfilled requirements at a cost of £470.

Approved to be charged to Capital Account.

### Tramway Permanent Way Maintenance - North and West Areas

Mr Spencer submitted a memorandum, dated 28 August, reporting that the cost of maintaining the permanent way on the former MET section of the Tramways (N & W areas) had fallen from £96,437 in 1931 to £84,687 in 1932. Of the latter amount expended, £46,146 was in respect of the renewal of brake stops on account of the wear occasioned by the use of magnetic brakes. On the new type tramcars air brakes as well as magnetic brakes were provided. The use of airbrakes for about 75% of the stops had resulted in a considerable reduction in the wear and tear of rails at stopping places.

### Automatic Electric Points - Tramways

Mr Spencer and Mr T E Thomas submitted a joint memorandum dated 28 August, recommending that automatic electric points be installed at six tramway junctions in the North and West areas at a cost of £100 each in the interests of safety and to relieve the conductor for his more important duties.

This was approved and a Special Expenditure Requisition would be submitted and the expenditure charged to Extraordinary Expenses Reserve Account.

## Refuges between Tramway Tracks – Balham High Road and Streatham Hill

Mt T E Thomas submitted a memorandum dated 22 August, reporting receipt of letters, dated 2 and 14 August, from Wandsworth Borough Engineer enquiring whether the Board would consider altering the tracks in Balham High Road and Streatham Hill to permit the installation of central refuges, following the widening of these roads.

In accordance with Mr Thomas's recommendation, it was decided that Mr Thomas reply to the Wandsworth Borough Engineer that the Board is not able to contemplate the alterations on the tracks proposed as no obligation rests on the Board to make its tramways accord with street widenings and that the cost of altering the tracks should be treated as part of the street improvement.

## Notification of Failure of and Damage to Tramcars, Trolley Buses and 168 Public Service Vehicles

Consideration was given to a letter, dated 23 August received from the Ministry of Transport setting out proposals for the procedure to be followed in the matter of reporting certain cases of failure or damage to the Board's road vehicles, and asked for an assurance that the procedure proposed would be acceptable to the Board.

It was agreed that the procedure outlined in the letter was not acceptable as it involved the duplication of reports to the Traffic Commissioner and to the Ministry, and had the effect of establishing responsibility for determining whether a vehicle was safe for service in the hands of the Traffic Commissioner as well as the Board.

The Vice-Chairman further stated that the types of failure in respect of which reports would be made in the case of tramcars and trolley vehicles should correspond to the types of failure in respect of which reports would be made in the case of omnibuses.

The Vice-Chairman accordingly gave Mr T E Thomas and Mr Spencer instructions to advise him how the types of failure of tramcars and trolley buses, in respect of which reports should be made, can best be defined to correspond with the formula agreed in respect of the omnibuses. The Vice-Chairman undertook on receipt of this report to write personally in reply to the letter received from the Ministry.

[Tony adds: "I imagine that I will not be able to gain access to Tfl Archives until next year and therefore the submitted items are designed to fill the void. Once I do gain access, we will then have to decide on whether to revert the material currently unobtainable or continue with the series I have just started, the magazine cannot accommodate both." Please let me have your views. I must apologise for an unusual number of typos in last month's Minutes; must have been half asleep when cutting, pasting and reading the results. There have been a number of very favourable comments about the inclusion of material from the 1930s and not one complaint, so we shall continue to do so. – Ed.]

## Another Youtube Recommendation

Tony Beard

For you tube viewers, Special Services Fireman (1960) is a bit of a gem. After the "team" have freed a child's head from some railings; watch what happens next!

## Back to Brighton

Martyn Hunt

The annual HCVS road run and rally at Brighton on 2nd May 1999 saw a large presence of ex LT vehicles as noted:

GS 1 & 2; RF 421, 444 and 530 (Red); RF 626 (Green); RM 642 and 1571; RT 227 (Green); RTL 1163 and 1427; ST 821; STL 2692; T 31 (single deck) and 971J service vehicle.

On the following pages, RFs 421 and 444 and RTs 227 and 2043 are seen along Marine Drive Brighton on 2 May 1999 heading home after the HCVS rally. The vehicles photographed are still with us in 2020.





On the following page, the last of Martyn's "Brighton" photos, we see T 31 in Brighton's Old Steine and heading for the town's Madeira Drive and ST 821 in Marine Drive Brighton; both vehicles had been participating in the HCVS road run / rally on 2nd May 1999. We featured the T being pushed at the LBM, Brooklands, in a previous Newsletter, but here it's running under its own power.



## Seat Frames - A Cautionary Tale

Tony Beard

Following David Thrower's mystery seat frame comment in the December newsletter, the following might be of interest.

The upper deck seat frames were removed from RT 113 while the nearside framing was replaced during the vehicle's spell in the open (1963-1966) in a yard next to Haringey Stadium, the "stack" accompanying the bus when it transferred from North London to the Eastern National garage on Canvey Island. Once

there, the remainder of the seat frames were removed while the lower deck re-framing was undertaken. During 1966, the Group acquired RT 17 for spares and it was decided to dismantle the vehicle upon it joining RT 113 at Canvey; all the vehicle's seat frames were retained.

The enlarged "stack" then accompanied 113 from Canvey Island to a former removal firm's premises in Chadwell Heath in 1974 where restoration continued.

Prince Marshall acquired I037J for approximately £900 in 1978 and knowing that we had dismantled RT 17 enquired if the 2RT2 Group had any seat frames to spare; we were happy to oblige. During a working party held the Sunday before pick-up was arranged, I asked Norman Rayfield and Denis Battams to sort through the frames we had and make up a complete set for RT 113. By that time RT 54 (then owned by David Gomm) was sharing our "garage" and I advised them to check the frame layout on the vehicle when making their selection in order that they didn't miss any of the lower deck "specials" which had cranked legs to miss the various floor traps. The upper deck was pretty straightforward with only the "four-legger" to identify. There was of course those fitted with poles which Den and Norm found and every frame was labelled regarding its position on the bus, their all having been set out in order on the forecourt of the building we were occupying; I thought they did a good job. Prince collected the seat frames in ST 922 a few days later.

At the end of 1978, I received a letter from the LBPG, suggesting RT 113 could make an appearance at the prestigious 150 Years of London Transport Event (the Shillibeer Rally) to be held in Hyde Park the following July. All the stops were then pulled out to get the vehicle finished and as RT 113 was within walking distance of my home I even undertook a bit of flooring work on 25 December.

The condition of the seat frames, however, was causing a problem; the hiduminium brightwork on every one was in need of expert polishing. By chance, I saw an advertisement in the newsletter which Prince Marshall mailed out with copies of Old Motor that mentioned a company in Exmouth willing to undertake polishing work. Within a short space of time I had travelled by train to Exmouth with an example seat frame, in the hope the company could swiftly undertake the work. A deal was struck and Peter Liversage borrowed a van from his place of work and transported the rest of the frames to Devon; he also arranged to collect them a couple of weeks later. The nicely finished frames then had their tubular steel sections painted green in preparation for installation as the restoration of the interior saloons drew to a close.

Before his death in 1978, Alan Allmey had secured the body plans for the 2RT2 and they were regularly consulted as the interiors neared completion. From one drawing I found to my horror that the upper and lower deck seat frames differed, their position on the bus determined by the knuckle through which the bolt passes to attach each frame (apart from the four-legger) to the side of the bus. A swift trip to the garage confirmed my suspicions, some of the upper deck frames had been allocated to the lower deck and with all of our "spares" with Prince Marshall, there was little time to arrange a swap. In a blind panic, I phoned Tony Peters and found that the LBPG did have some spare frames and they might have examples of those we were missing. Fortunately there is little difference between a 2RT2 and post war RT seat frame, and Sid Hagarty I high-tailed to Cobham a couple of days later and found the frames we required that were in good condition and could be easily polished using our own resources.

RT 113 went to the Shillibeer rally with full complement of lower deck seats but only a handful on the upper deck fitted with "poles" to support the roof. The remainder were fitted the following week.

When I later had a chance to look at RT 1 following its first restoration by Prince, I noticed that at least two of the lower deck frames had a wooden block spacer placed under their feet; one, I seem to remember had its pole going through the ceiling. In a later article by Prince regarding I037J/RT1 he stated that a supply of "pre-war" seat frames had been secured but not all of them fitted as well as they could.

[Latest thinking on the question of the mystery seat frame is that it is from an RF..... one of which David owns! - Ed]

## Helping the Kids Out

Martyn Hunt

RT 2420 was new in November 1949 with a Weymann body, allocated to garages mostly South of the river until stored in September 1977 with a subsequent sale to Brakell. After 2 years with Brown & Root the vehicle was returned to Brakell. In October 1979 2420 was purchased by someone called Jevington in the Sussex-based The Rainbow Children as a Holiday Bus which they kept for approximately 10 years until sale to Whitechapel Car Auctions in 1991. The vehicle then entered the preservation scene - is this vehicle still around? - over to you, readers. RT 2420 is seen at Eastbourne on 1 May 1982. Acknowledgements to Ian Smith for the history.



Editor's note: RT 2420 passed to John Hammell, a former Newsletter subscriber, and was restored externally to resemble the buses used in the film "Summer Holiday." At some stage it passed to another preservationist, Mick Macy in Dunstable but is currently in Lincolnshire with a firm called 2 Way Travel. By one of those unbelievable coincidences that happen all the time, I have recently received an e-mail from member Brian Maguire who in the past was involved in rebuilding this bus for an intended return to PSV use. Work, however, has stalled. Read on:

"We are asked about the LT news from 1933, and from my point of view, yes please, more, more, more ! Wonderful to read about it all being set up. Cannot believe there is still so much to learn about LT after all these years. When I first joined the mag, John Crossley and I were wondering why there was a round disc screwed on the canopy over the bonnet, with nothing under it. The next mag had the answer, without us asking. Your ability to mind-read is unsurpassed. It is a regret that 2Way Travel have not

touched RT 2420 since John and I left there; it's still on a ramp up in the air. How insulting, we worked on it for 2-3 years for nothing. FOC. That following RT 3323 at the place up the road, being dumped outside ever since. Very sad. I may join John in this mag, as he now lives in Somerset, and is 85 at Christmas. At 74, I cannot see me doing much more, all my friends have passed away, just some young guys at our barn these days, hence I am rebuilding the AEC Dalesman coach."

[Editor's note: "the place up the road" is Sandtoft, where Brian and friends rebuilt RT 3323 some years ago and the Roe Dalesman is a 1959 AEC Reliance, XWX 795, new to Felix, Hatfield (the one in Yorkshire, not HF) and more recently used as a caravan.]

### GS 34 - A Mysterious Guy

Graham Smith

Further to the item in Newsletter 172 I am pleased to report that two people have responded with some extremely useful information which solves the mystery of GS 34's delayed entry into service, at least to my satisfaction. I acknowledge with grateful thanks the assistance of Alan Bond for sending a copy of the GS file containing all the information gleaned from the LT Chiswick record cards, and Alan Charman, co-author of the GS book and owner of GS 62, for answering many of the questions I posed.

In summary:

1. Crucially new information has come from the Daily Movement Files ('DMF') - not something I'm familiar with - which were sent to LT's Financial Asset Department at 55 Broadway.
2. The actual chassis of the 84 GSs were delivered from Guy Motors direct to ECW, where they were accepted as 'partial asset' upon delivery, this becoming the first DMF entry for each vehicle. The initial DMF entry for 44816P, GS 34's 'original' chassis, dated 24/7/53, shows 'accident damage...acceptance refused, returned for repair'. This would certainly explain why GS 34's actual delivery arrival date with LT at Aldenham (not Chiswick as I had wrongly assumed) was around a month later than the rest of the GS 30-39 batch.
3. The above information contradicts the 'November 1953 accident in fog whilst on delivery to Guildford garage (GF), and returned to ECW for repair' report contained in Cobham's 1999 guide book and, also, Robin Hannay's statement that 'no GS chassis was involved in an accident while being delivered, nor were any returned to Guy Motors in Wolverhampton'. It remains a mystery why what seems a very definite statement about the foggy November accident appears to be unsubstantiated by official records. Fog in July on a Wolverhampton to Lowestoft journey seems unlikely but, perhaps, was another GS involved in a foggy November accident en route from Aldenham to GF? Studying the Chiswick record cards shows five GSs - 30/31/33/35/39 - entered service at GF on 1/12/53 but their pre-service entry histories show no unusual movements or delays. Mike Lloyd's experience in dealing with RH serves to cast doubt on the accuracy of some of his recollections. Alan C suggests that, possibly, only the engine and gearbox, rather than the damaged chassis, were returned to Guy Motors.
4. The same chassis number as the one believed to have been accident damaged and scrapped - 44816P - appeared again in October when it was accepted as partial asset by ECW again, on the same day as 44994/5P (GSs 64 and 65). The Chiswick records show variations in the dates, with 9/10/53 for GS 64 and 13/10/53 for GS 65 but only the original date of 24/7/53 for GS 34. GS 34's body was constructed by ECW out of sequence along with the GS 60-65 batch...and was subsequently accepted by LT at Aldenham on 11/12/53. By coincidence this was on the same day as GS 64. Both buses were transferred to Amersham garage (MA) on 17/12/53, so London Bus Museum's GS 34 and London Transport Museum's GS 64 are twins, having started their LT lives on the same day and only going their separate ways after spending almost eight years together at MA.
5. GS 62 was, also, allocated to MA in December 1953 but moved away to Garston (GR) some nine months later. Alan C has spotted that these three GSs 34/62/64 are the only surviving trio with consecutive ECW body numbers - 6407/8/9 - and hopes they might get together at some stage. Why not celebrate their 70th year in 2023, with Amersham/Chesham as the obvious location? This should give both museums time to ensure both buses are fit. Whether some of us will still be fit by then is another matter!

6. I checked with Alan C that GS chassis were, indeed, driven from Guy Motors to ECW rather than on low-loaders. At 200 miles this must have taken some 10 hours and often provided a rather draughty and cold journey for the driver.

7. Robin Hannay states that the Guy track number for GS 34's new chassis was 84, with GS 84's being numbered 85. So, that mythical GS 85 almost existed!

\*\*\*\*\*

Unless someone produces further and different information which can be authenticated I declare closed the search for the reason why GS 34's entry into service was delayed...whilst remaining forever mystified how the 'foggy November accident on delivery to GF' story ever saw daylight.

[Apologies for the untidy layout of the above caused by the electric moron deciding it knew best and refusing point-blank to be corrected. - Ed]



Above: GSs have become rare sights on running days in recent years but a recreation of LT/LCBS's last GS route, the short 336A between Loudwater Village and Rickmansworth Station some 40 years after the route's withdrawal on 30th March 1972, saw two of the class in action, GS 13 and 64. London Transport's Museum GS 64 is in Loudwater Village, with a Guy (Marriott) at the wheel, in a photograph taken by a GS. Graham Smith

## GS 28 - Are There Two of You?

Graham Smith

Newsletter 172 contains a photograph of 'GS 28' provided by my good friend Ian Robertson. Registered TGB 381 it is based in Merksem, Belgium and working for its living for a company called *The Bridal Paradise*. The company owns more than twenty old buses (including five classic Parisian open-backed Renaults) and a similar number of 'beautiful and stylish' cars, as well as providing a comprehensive wedding service. Photographs of the bus, which looks to be in remarkably good condition, can be seen at: <https://bruidsparadijs.be/guy-bus/>. It's known as *Guy Special*. With perimeter seating (shades of wartime London and T-class conversions) for up to 25 people and the floor carpeted, it looks rather more luxurious than in its LT days.

Except...is it GS 28? It seems most unlikely. That's because in an email sent to me by Bob Bailey, a fellow-trustee at LBM, a 'GS 28', registered as BSV 910, was for sale by online auction on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at H and H Auctioneers of Warrington. With a guide price of £22,750, it sold for £18,750 to an unnamed bidder. The auction description was in considerable detail together with numerous photographs, both interior and exterior. Here's just one image: <https://www.handh.co.uk/auction/lot/345-1952-guy-gs28/?lot=51365&so=0&st=345&sto=0&au=492&ef=&et=&ic=False&sd=2&pp=96&pn=1&g=#>

So, which is the real GS 28 and which is the imposter? *Ian's Bus Stop* website is helpful to a limited extent but, also, may have been confused. After its revenue earning service with Country Buses ended in 1969, GS 28 acted as a staff bus, initially at Plumstead (AM) garage and then at Abbey Wood (AW) before transferring to Reigate (RG) in August 1970 for use as a staff bus to Aldenham and Chiswick works, then into store at RG in February 1973. In March 1974 it was sold to Ronnie Lane Enterprises of Chiswick - Ronnie Lane was a bass guitarist and founding member of the Small Faces rock band - and converted into a motorhome for band transport. It was painted maroon and white, and reregistered to BSV 910 (its current mark), reportedly in 1985. It's here that the *Ian's Bus Stop* website data and information from the auctioneer diverge quite significantly. *Bus Stop* says it was bought by a Mr R Nicholls of Talerddig, Welshpool, Powys in March 2003 and sold in July 2009 to *Antique Auto* of Merksem, near Antwerp in Belgium. A year later it was re-registered NXN 664 and there the entries cease.



*Above: There can be no doubt that this is GS 28, seen in February 1970 during its year on staff bus duty at Abbey Wood garage. The author studied this photograph of the genuine GS 28 alongside those of the*

rival candidates to see if there were any matching dents or other distinguishing common features. Sadly, after a gap of 50 years, there was nothing which could obviously identify the real GS 28.

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The auctioneer's details concur with the above information until 1980 when it records that Ronnie Lane, by then suffering with multiple sclerosis, gifted the bus to someone who had been the bus driver on the band's UK tours in the 1970s. By this time Lane had bought a farm in Minsterley, Shropshire where the GS was kept. The auction house says this unnamed person is the current vendor, having owned the bus for 40 years. Although the time periods are quite dissimilar, could this be the Mr R Nicholls named as the owner from 2003 to 2009 in the *Bus Stop* data? His address as Talerddig, Welshpool is only 10 miles from Lane's farm. Significantly, there is no mention in the auctioneer's information of this GS 28 ever being sold to anyone in Belgium. Googling 'Mr R Nicholls' produced a death notice in *The Shropshire Star* and other newspapers for a Ron Nicholls of Groes Pluan, Welshpool who died on 9/10/17 aged 67. Could this have been the owner and, perhaps, his family was selling the bus? Welshpool is a small town, with a population of only 6,000, so the chances of two "R Nicholls" of similar age is quite unlikely.

The evidence suggests that the real GS 28 has been registered BSV 910 for at least 35 years, is fitted out as a motorhome, has never been to Belgium and was acquired by a new but unknown owner at last month's online auction. If so, which GS is registered TGB 381 and owned by *The Bridal Paradise* in Belgium? I suspect that some incorrect information for GS 28 was passed to *lan's Bus Stop* back in 2009. However, the same website lists two GSs - 10 and 76 - which were exported to Belgium. Both are shown as used for wedding parties, with owners near to Antwerp. Also, *The Bridal Paradise* mentioned earlier is located just 7 km NE of Antwerp. GS 10's records shows it was sold in 'red LT-style livery with black wings' by (Tony?) Peters of Croydon in March 1999 to M Clewers of Antwerp, reregistered to LIJ 186, and used for wedding parties. Almost four years later it was sold to Luc Pauwels Projects of Sint Niklaas, some 25 km SW of Antwerp, and there the trail goes cold. The name Luc Pauwels is shared by various people living in Antwerp so I have been unable to establish whether GS 10 still exists and with whom.

More promising is the other GS émigré to Belgium, GS 76, which *lan's Bus Stop* shows as 'bought for continued preservation, Essex, supposedly (but) actually bought for export: repainted white for wedding bus, Belgium: Retro Ceremoniewagens, Aartselaar May 2009, bought by Rik Liekens, Tienen, Belgium'. GS 76's reported move to Belgium was just two months before *lan's Bus Stop* recorded, almost certainly mistakenly, that GS 28 had been sold to *Antique Auto* of Merksem. Research shows that *Antique Auto* was founded in 1977 by a Dirk Geerardyn who, some years later, founded *The Bridal Paradise*, the home of the 'other GS 28'. I reckon the Belgian 'GS 28' is likely to be GS 76 but perhaps someone may like a trip to Antwerp to discover its true identity? In 2003 four LBPT members went to northern France to view what was thought to be an ex-LT T-type Regal. We used emery paper to remove layers of paint to reveal 'T357' on the cabside and 'GN 8242' on the rear registration plate. Whether the owner of a well-maintained GS would be as cooperative is, of course, debatable. Perhaps a body number exists in the cab?

[Editor's notes: Firstly, I refer my learned friend and everyone else to Newsletter 144 in which the story of GS 76 and its export to Belgium - by deceit - is explained in full by David Ralph who, together with his brother Tim, once owned it. My own records of GS 10 record it as sold to B. Hutchinson, SW 19 for preservation in October 1973, and that it was later painted red, but I have no further information since then. He still owned it in October 1990.

The "real" GS 28 has been something of a mystery for many decades. I have a friend whose father was a bus operator in mid-Wales and who himself also was one for a time in Herefordshire. Years ago I met him at a rally at Welshpool (the Welshpool Transport Festival, to which I took RT 1018 and family for three days) and he spoke of a mystery GS located "somewhere in the hills" and when I mentioned Ronnie Lane, he said he was aware of that one, but this was "another one" which seemed unlikely. He had no details of which ones either of them were, just that they were GSs and he believed there were two of them. My records for GS 28 show it as sold to Ronnie Lane Enterprises, London W4 in March 1974. It was painted maroon and there is a recorded sighting in Chester in June that year. However, my own next entry shows the bus passing to R. Nicholls, Charlbury, still as a caravan, in August 1985. Charlbury is a small town about six miles north of Witney in Oxfordshire. Again, I have no further entries in my own records for this bus but some years ago Maurice Bateman produced a list of surviving GSs and the bus was again listed with "R. Nicholls, Charbury (sic)" but located at Talerddig in 1990. It now seems likely

that Mr Nicholls did indeed own the bus for 40 years, well, 35 years anyway. How long? 35 years! (with acknowledgements to "Beyond Our Ken", a humorous wireless programme of bygone days). I believe the re-registration to BSV 910 took place when the bus was transferred to Mr Nicholls.

Finally, I note from a perusal of various photos that the Belgian "GS 28" we illustrated last time has been fitted with a replacement fuel tank. The photo we published in the last Newsletter shows the filler neck lowered and a corresponding alteration to the panels. If this was done in the UK before export it would prove the point, but of course it may not have been.]

### Transport Auctions of London

Michael Wickham

We would like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas, however different and difficult the circumstances make it this year, and a much better 2021. We are most grateful to all our customers, friends and supporters for helping us to carry on during 2020 and hold two very successful sales, albeit one fewer than in 2019. We look forward to continuing to provide a reliable, friendly and professional service in 2021.

Our proposed 2021 sale dates are (subject to change if COVID-19 restrictions so require):

- Saturday 30 January
- Saturday 8 May
- Saturday 31 July
- Saturday 30 October

The sales will continue as online events until further notice. Should we need to change any dates as a result of COVID-19 restrictions making viewing and collections impossible, we will let you know as soon as the decision has been made.

The January sale is fully subscribed and entries are now most welcome for the following sale.

Contact us on: [enquiries@transportauctionslondon.com](mailto:enquiries@transportauctionslondon.com)



Above: Tony Beard found this photograph of RT 1965 on the internet. It was captioned: "first bus under railway bridge at Sidcup 28 November 1958." Note the height limit sign... Tony firstly suggests that we do

not attempt to do this with our own RTs and secondly, asks if anyone has any comments to make, such as how it all come about. I do remember a “low bridge” in the south end of Watford, long ago, that was clearly marked “14’ - 00” but was in fact some 16 feet high. When we were in the driving school we had to shout out “low bridge ahead” to alert the instructor to the fact that we had noticed the sign, and he would then tell us it was safe to proceed. It got a bit monotonous after a few dozen times.



Above: Tony has also supplied this photograph and has suggested we use it as a “where is it?” competition. He does, of course, know the answer. It is not somewhere I recognise so that rules me out for a start, but I am sure it will be familiar to someone - probably dozens of you.

While we are wallowing in nostalgia for a time long before the fifties, have a look at the following.



Colin Read writes: “These were both captured from ‘Lost Films of WW2’ on BBC4 recently. NSs somewhere in London (possibly New Oxford Street - may be some clues there) and the best I could get of a 9T9 (I’m assured) following a Mosley’s Blackshirts march in the 1930s.”



Above: For those few readers who kindly ask about progress with my own much-loved (sometimes!) RT 1018 I am happy to include this photograph taken on 18<sup>th</sup> December, shortly after I had finally put the last parts back on, so the body is now complete after about seven years. Just needs paint, tyres, repairs

to the trafficator ears and some more work underneath and maybe she'll even be out on the roads again later this year. This photograph was taken in the workshops of the North West Museum of Road Transport in St Helens where the RT has more or less taken root. Remember those car stickers the yuppies used to have - "My other car is also a Porsche"? Well, "my other bus is also an AEC" and just for interest, it is seen here with the RT in November 2019. I suspect the men of Southall might be hard-pressed to identify any AEC parts, but that's Maltese buses for you.



### E-mails

My "Bream Coaches" e-mail address is not my main one, and was set up for the exclusive use of Newsletter contributors, etc., so that the material does not get lost in the huge amount of electronic correspondence I receive on my main address. I do not visit "Bream Coaches" every day, and sometimes not for days on end, so if you don't receive a prompt reply to any correspondence don't worry, it just means I am busy elsewhere.

### RF 116

I am aware that some people attempt to maintain records of all surviving examples of "family" vehicles. Very recently the PSV Circle discovered RF 116 in the yard of Hawkspare Ltd, Dartford where it would appear to have been for very many years. There are two other buses there, not related to ours. The buses were all still in existence in September 2020 and their identities were provided by the managing director of the company. It is not known what condition any of them are now in, nor whether they are available for sale, and the Circle has asked people to "respect the privacy of the business property." I publish this for the benefit of the completists and not to encourage anyone to go along and pester the firm. Of course, it is perfectly possible that a genuine enquiry might be welcomed; it is equally possible that it would be a nightmare trying to extricate the vehicle. Interestingly, although the yard is described as being in Dartford, the firm itself is referred to as "Hawkspare Ltd., Green Street Green."

Again for the benefit of people whose interests extend past the buses of the 1950s, I recently learned that the former SMS 337 has apparently recently returned to the UK from Malta where it was one of those largely unmodified examples used by the Ministry of Education. It has arrived in the UK with the roof, front, nearside and rear restored to LT livery but the offside still in the blue and cream used by the Ministry. I am unsure who owns it and what is planned for it but if I hear any more I will publish it. At least one of our readers is a fan of the AEC Swift.

## NEWS FROM THE FEDERATION OF BRITISH HISTORIC VEHICLE CLUBS

### *Legislation Lindsay Irvine*

#### **HGV and PSV Tyres (Again!)**

Readers may have seen a short 'newsflash' on this topic on the FBHVC website. In the last Newsletter, I set out the recently published Government response to their earlier (2019) consultation on Banning Tyres aged 10 Years or Older. I rehearsed the history of the issue, from the high profile campaign arising from a tragic coach accident in September 2012, through heightened guidance on the age and condition of tyres on large vehicles and onto the Government consultation process. The stated aim in the Consultation was to legislate for a ban on the use of tyres 10 years or older on "heavy goods vehicles, heavy trailers, buses, coaches and minibuses". (The consultation also proposed to ban the use of retreaded tyres on such vehicles irrespective of the retreaded tyre age). The consultation document did recognise the position of historic vehicles and proposed an exemption for those which met the criteria of Vehicles of Historic Interest (VHIs) provided they were not in commercial use.

However, the proposed exemption was also linked to the criteria for exempting vehicles over 40 years old from requiring roadworthiness testing ('MOT'ing'). When exemptions from MOTs for VHI had been promulgated in 2018 (following a Government consultation in 2017) most VHIs over 40 years old no longer required an MOT including HGVs first used before 1 January 1959 and used unladen. However, HGVs built after 1960 still required to be tested irrespective of commercial use. The effect of linking new tyre requirements to exemptions from MOT testing in the Consultation indicated to the Federation that these post 1960s HGVs would have to comply with new tyre rules. When the Government's full response came out, the wording of the potential exemption for historic HGVs seemed to confirm this: Since we are proposing to amend roadworthiness legislation for tyres, by introducing an additional requirement for tyre age, it makes sense to use the same basis for any exemptions as those already in place for historic vehicles from roadworthiness testing. These existing exemptions for vehicles of historic interest were determined on the basis of the effect of the exemptions on road safety, which was a key factor identified during the 2017 public consultation."

I also promised that the Federation would seek the best outcome for the inevitable secondary legislation. I therefore entered into correspondence with the DfT and in very constructive discussions, responses from the Department suggest a much more favourable position for the newer HGVs. In their first response, the Department referred to their legislative intent ("The new road safety requirements affecting tyres will be introduced into the Road Vehicle (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (C&U)") but that "these requirements will not apply to a vehicle of historical interest except where that vehicle is used for a commercial purpose." They also sought to reassure the Federation that the 1960 to 1980 (i.e. rolling) VHI HGVs would not have to satisfy the new legislative requirements.

The vehicles most affected by this will be goods vehicles having a gross mass exceeding 3.5 tonnes or buses and first used between early 1981 and 1 April 1991, as these fall outside the definition of a vehicle of historical interest.

Since this seemed to run contrary to the linking of tyre legislation to MOT requirements, a request for additional clarification was made and the position was restated in a second response that "providing that it is not used for commercial purposes, the new requirements will not apply to a vehicle if it [comes within the definition of a VHI]".

Well notwithstanding that the position appeared much more favourable than that set out in my last note, in the first draft of this article I still expressed caution until I had seen the legislation ...

... and I now have; the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 have been laid before Parliament (they are subject to Parliamentary process until 7 December) and I am happy to report they are in line with DfT undertakings set out above and with the now established definition of a VHI. A couple of areas bear some additional comment: the new regulations use different “type approval” regulations as a reference point for “a type of vehicle no longer in production” compared to the regulations which exempt VHIs from MOTs. I have not had time to evaluate the significance. Secondly by defining the “front axle” as “any axle, forward of the mid-point of the chassis on which the wheels are controlled by the steering system” this seems to indicate that for the very few HGVs and coaches that have 2 steering axles, if not otherwise exempt, compliance will require new tyres for the wheels on both front steered axles but this will not apply to a rear steer axle, a now-common concept which (relying on my expert colleague!) was first introduced to the UK market on the Neoplan Skyliner double deck coach from 1981.

We are also able to advise that if a vehicle eligible for exemption is presented for annual test (whether voluntary or mandatory) that the exemption still applies and we understand testers will be fully briefed ahead of the expected commencement date of 1 February 2021. [How can a vehicle eligible for exemption be subject to a “mandatory” test? - “Friends” editor.]

In respect of a vehicle which is required to comply with the age limit, the date code on the steered axle tyres must be legible and present, and this will be checked both at annual test and at any roadside stop.

### **Commercial Use Implications**

Even though the legislative situation is now favourable for our historic community, VHIs will have to comply if they are used for commercial purposes. As a result we want to stress that this tyre requirement encompasses both pre and post 1960 buses or trucks. Just because the pre 1959 VHIs are not required to be tested does not exempt them from the tyre requirement if they are used for commercial purposes. We also remind readers (both those with heavy vehicles or cars/motorbikes) that regardless of whether this 10 year limit applies to your vehicle, that tyres (and the rest of the vehicle) must remain roadworthy at all times.

### **Government Consultations**

Last time round, I referred to three DfT reviews or consultations:

- a. A review of the provision of large vehicle roadworthiness testing;
- b. A consultation on proposed changes in guidance in the Highway Code principally concerned with pedestrian, cycling and equestrian safety and
- c. A ‘call for evidence’ in relation to a Government proposal to permit the use of Automated Lane Keeping System technology (ALKS) on motorways.

In relation to a., the Federation was also seeking to obtain a longer exemption period from testing due to capacity shortages caused by the COVID shutdown of the testing centres. The Federation has sought access to the Review through the All Party Parliamentary Group but this and an extension to the exemption have been further COVID ‘victim’ with the usual channels in the House stymied by restrictions. Therefore, I have no update on this currently but will look to provide one next time round. In relation to the Highway Code amendments, I note I had previously described them as “on the whole innocuous and coherent with a reprioritisation of safety emphasis.” After some debate, that was the conclusion of the Legislation Committee who also resisted a proposal that consideration should be given to seeking ‘vulnerable’ status for our historic vehicles. This would be on the grounds that the perceived technical and other limitations of certainly some of the very old vehicles should prompt other road users to give them special consideration. It certainly had a tempting ring but was not accepted as an issue to pursue not least because it was not something surveys, correspondence or members had been campaigning for. There were other solid reasons which I am sure you will understand might not be in keeping with our aim to continue using our vehicles on ‘Tomorrow’s Roads’.

However, we did respond in detail to c., the ALKS (Automated Lane Keeping System) proposals and the full Federation response can be read on the website. Full details of what is proposed are on the Government paper, but essentially:

“ALKS is designed to enable the driver – for the first time ever in commercially available vehicles – to delegate the dynamic driving task to the vehicle under certain circumstances.”

This is distinguished from the more familiar driver assistance systems where the driver must remain in control of the vehicle and responsible for the driving task all times. Initially this would only be allowed on the motorway inside lane at speeds up to 37 mph but there are grander aspirations ...

In summary we raised questions about sensor limitations in existing ALKS hardware and software (actually partly conceded in the proposals). Given that some 1920s and 1930s vehicles often had fabric and wooden bodies and sometimes were shaped quite differently from modern vehicles, we asked for assurance that the sensors could identify them before operations on the motorway are authorised. The limited options available to the ALKS equipment in the event of a problem it could not cope with (stopping in lane or handing back to the driver (issuing a 'transition demand')) also raised concerns. A question as to whether the driver should be allowed to occupy him or herself with other tasks (Facebook anyone - other social media sites are available?) also required some comment by the Federation on the technical and legal side. Experience in the aviation world has shown that urgent manual reversion from an automated process can have unhappy consequences.

The reader may not realise that much of the UK and international legislative process to allow autonomous vehicles is already in place. It is times like that that we miss Raymond Baxter or Maggie Philbin on *Tomorrow's World* [a bygone television programme - "Friends" Editor] flagging up the pros and cons of futuristic 'transport solutions' in a mature way, as much of the media coverage of driverless cars is rather patchy, not well analysed and occasionally hysterical. However, the media did cover the concerns about ALKS expressed by the respected Thatcham Research organisation which were referenced in the Federation response.

#### ***DVLA Ian Edmunds***

I wrote about changes to the NOVA procedure and expressed the hope that I would be able to offer a fuller explanation in this issue. Unfortunately, my hopes have not been realised! The necessary clarification that I requested from HMRC has not been forthcoming up to the time of writing and unfortunately I understand from contacts in the Accountancy world that this is currently par for the course. Thus in the absence of a definitive reply from the Government Department responsible, the following is my deduction from the one clear piece of information we have at our disposal.

Some correspondents have expressed disbelief that the system has actually changed, believing that it is merely a case of mistaken requirements from DVLA. However the NOVA criteria have definitely changed, there is a new issue of the NOVA I form, dated 2/20, in which the introductory wording is amended to require a NOVA application "... if you have purchased a vehicle in the UK which is unregistered or if your vehicle has had a break in registration" in addition to the previous requirement "... if you are bringing a land vehicle into the UK for permanent use". It is notable that the remainder of the form has not been changed and is not always appropriate to the new requirement.

This change is almost certainly to close some form of loophole that was being exploited to avoid the payment of VAT on new or near new vehicles. It is not directly relevant to historic vehicles and it may be that historic vehicles were not considered when the change was implemented. Nevertheless, anyone seeking a first registration from DVLA will have to comply with the requirements as DVLA will continue to carry out their policing function by declining to register a vehicle until the NOVA procedure is satisfactorily completed. We can only assume that the established current procedure will continue to work with some necessary minor adjustments. So we suggest the use of the paper version of the new 2/20 NOVA I form, which should be completed as far as possible, many responses may be 'not known', and sent to the new HMRC address given on the form. As before it will probably be necessary to use the paper version of the form as the online version will not allow you to proceed until each question is correctly answered and that may not be possible for a historic vehicle. A paper form can be obtained from HMRC, details at - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/personal-transport-unit-enquiries>

I must stress that this guidance is given in good faith but is untested, please let me know about any problems - or indeed any successes.

The Federation is currently in discussion with DVLA regarding the possibility of holding a virtual meeting before the end of the year. It is hoped that progress can then be made on some of the long-running contentious issues. At the same time the APPHVG remain committed to providing any assistance they can. Any further news will of course appear here at the earliest opportunity.

#### ***2020 National Historic Vehicle Survey***

The results are starting to come in. The 2020 National Historic Vehicle Survey closed in October. Over 15,000 enthusiasts took part along with over half of the Federation Club members and some 200 commercial businesses and museums.

At the time of writing, the full results are still to be evaluated but we hope to publish a summary before the end of the year which we will be available on the Federation's website.

In the meantime, here are some key facts you should know:

#### **Historic Vehicles in the UK**

2016 1,040,000

2020 1,539,000

This data is derived from an extract of the DVLA's database. The increase in vehicles is a direct result of including four more years of vehicles over 30 years old.

#### **Number of enthusiast owners**

2016 493,000  
2020 684,000

The number of enthusiast owners is based on evidence from the Survey showing that on average an enthusiast owns 2.25 vehicles.

#### **Value to the UK Economy**

2016 £5.5 billion  
2020 £7.2 billion

In 2016 the full range of expenditure connected with the historic vehicle movement was examined, it includes not only vehicle sales, insurance, maintenance and restoration but also spending on such items as events, road trips, museum visits, magazines and also significant spending by international enthusiasts in the UK. We repeated this task for the same spending categories in 2020.

#### **Average mileage covered by a historic vehicle**

2016 1,124  
2020 1,200

The very modest increase in mileage demonstrates that historic vehicles are not used for everyday transport. Typically, they are used during the warmer months of the year and in many cases for short trips to events although of course a smaller number of vehicles are used for longer tours, including trips abroad.

[“Friends” Editor’s note – there will be more from the Federation in next month’s Newsletter.]

#### **Membership Renewals:**

January: Peter Cousens, Ioan Davies and Ron Kitching.

February: Alan Charman, Andy Cornell, Mike Godfrey, Peter Goodfellow, Colin Grafham, Richard Jones, Bob Martin, Bob Stanger, Peter Wall, David Wilkinson and David Yates.



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](mailto:bream.coaches@talktalk.net) Please **do not use any other address** for Newsletter contributions.

Membership enquiries and subscriptions (*but not Newsletter material*) to:

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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