



LONDON BUS MUSEUM MAGAZINE



Post Christmas Lunch

Sunday 29th January 2012

Inn on the Lake, Silvermere Golf Club, Redhill Road, Cobham

1st floor function room

12.00 - take your seats and buy a raffle ticket

12.30 - Lunch starts

Four course carvery lunch including cold buffet starter, choice of two main course meats plus veg, selection of cold desserts, coffee and mints.

Cost is £21.50 per adult, £10.75 per child

Please contact Steve Edmonds to book by 31st December 2011 at the latest. NB This date is the deadline for finalising the booking as it must be cancelled by 1st January if we are unable to go ahead.

Please make cheques payable to LBPT Ltd and send them to Steve Edmonds, Cobham Hall, Brooklands Road, Weybridge, KT13 0QN. Cheques will not be banked until after the booking deadline.

Telephone: 0208 661 0745 or mob: 07906 587687. email: stevenstef@tiscali.co.uk

Please bring a donation to the fund raising raffle; any unwanted Xmas gifts welcome.

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Contents

6	From the cab	Peter Duplock
8	from the workshop floor	Roger Stagg
10	Membership Update	Steve Edmonds
11	Volunteer Update	Steve Edmonds
12	Membership Report	Debbis Morris
13	London Bus Museum Objectives	
14	Museum Display News	David Knnear
16	New Arrivals at Cobham Hall	David Kinnear
18	The Very Best of London Buses	
22	UMP Restoration	Brian Green
25	Insurance or Banking	Dave Jones
32	Confessions of a Museum Steward	Colin Read
34	Oxford Bus Museum Trip	Kevin Hibbs
37	More on the Matt Munro Connection	Colin Read
38	Letters	
40	On the Buses 1947-1952	John Fisher

THE LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST LIMITED

Registered Charity No. 1053383

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Registered Company No. 05903873

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If you wish to write to any of the above persons, please do so *c/o the Museum, not at the registered office.*

Welcome to the second London Bus Museum Magazine and my last. Your next edition will be in the very capable hands of Michael H C Baker, journalist, author and producer of some excellently nostalgic books. A hard act to precede!

As this is my valedictory issue, I've been a bit self indulgent and included my story of life on the buses. Writing it made me realise how much I had done in 36 years at work and how little of that I could squeeze in, so if you don't want any more of my ramblings in future editions, please let us have your stories as well! John Fisher has written an excellent item on his life as a driver in the post-war years, can anyone come up with a current driver's story, post-Chiswick?

I was pleased to see that the Trust has acquired T 23 (Titan, not Regal) as I probably drove it several times while it was at North Street. The Titans were an excellent bus to drive, except pulling on to roundabouts perhaps, and the three in the East London Coaches fleet did us very well for the time we had them. I believe T 1128 is still around – I could write a book about that one. I wonder if I can remember the trick to keep the engine running when the over-heating buzzer goes off!

We have the usual reports and an great collection of photos from the October event as well as good news from David Kinnear. One good thing about the new museum is that volunteers no longer need mechanical skills or be concerned about getting dirty, as there is plenty of “front of house” work that can be done. An interest in London buses is all that is needed and some spare time. David already has nearly 80 on his guide team, can you make it 100?

Looking back over the 28 editions I have put together, much has changed and the Trust and Museum have matured and established a secure place in the preservation world. Long may it continue.

Finally, many thanks to all who have contributed over the years, especially Peter Zabek and John Stiles for all their terrific photographs.

Front and back cover photos are all from the London's Best Bus event on 23rd October, by Michael H C Baker. The front shows RLH 48 returning from a local tour, while the back shows RFs 486 and 146 doing what they are best at - carrying people.

From the cab.....

Where did 2011 go? Some periods of this year seem to have taken an age as we nervously awaited the move to Cobham Hall. A change not only in location but in just about everything: the way we operate, our standing in the museum world, the way our members have responded to manning the new building, the demands placed upon us by an eager public audience etc. The list is endless. A change for ever!

The exhibition hall has gradually taken shape with more work to do before we have an “official opening” sometime in 2012. The fact that renowned preservationists such as Mike Sutcliffe and Malcolm Skevington have entrusted their precious vehicles to us on loan for display speaks volumes on the journey we have travelled.

The journey has not at times been an easy one. Some visionaries like Bill Cottrell did not live long enough to see the outcome. For a small group of others the change was too great and, although their views must be respected, the option to do nothing was never a serious alternative. If there was ever any doubt, when the developers gradually demolished the old shed they found that the ironwork supports were rusted through in places and parts of the structure were being supported by the cladding surrounding the building. It was after all a temporary war time building.

At the recent AGM I had to suspend proceedings (watch out for the date of the re-convened meeting) to cool things down a little. Change can sometimes be painful but I know that the Trustees are committed to putting the Trust on a course that will sustain it and enable growth over a long period. In the end the duty is to safeguard the long term future of the marvellous vehicles that we are entrusted with.

I'm sorry to report that RLH 53 (along with sister vehicles RLHs 69 and 71) are still suffering the unfathomable quirkiness of the USA equivalent of the DVLA. I'm indebted to Roger Wright (London Bus and Truck) for his unstinting efforts with help from Steve Newman at Ensigns.

On a more positive note, by the time this magazine arrives we hope to have taken delivery of T23. Although a modern bus to many, the Leyland Titan played an important role in the latter years of 20th Century London. This early example (bodied at Park Royal) will increase our operational fleet capability.

Looking to 2012, our Spring Gathering returns to Wisley and is a little later in the month of April. Hopefully, this will increase the chance of good weather and also grab a few extra minutes of daylight for the journey home.

There are many other things we do in 2012 and one of these is to update the constitution of the Trust (effectively the Memorandum and Articles of Association). This will not be an easy task but we need to ensure that the organisation can grow, that it has a membership structure that fits the kind of organisation that we now are. This work is vital and is some way away from the day to day involvement with old buses!

I'm for ever reminded that none of the changes that have happened in 2012 would not have been possible if it was not for the membership. Members have given freely of their time (and often hard cash in difficult times) to make these things happen. There have been some unstinting efforts by individual members. On behalf of the Trustees and the wider membership, thank you!

It remains for me to offer all members and their families' best wishes for the festive season from all of the Trustees and a healthy and safe 2012.

Peter Duplock Chairman of LBPT

**PLEASE SUPPORT THE COBHAM
FUNDRAISERS
BY DONATING YOUR SURPLUS TRANSPORT
ITEMS**

We want your enamel signs and plates, badges, destination blinds, ticket machines, maps, timetables, books, slides and photos, EFE/Corgi models and other ephemera - preferably London Transport.

We can turn that into cash and all the money raised is put directly into Museum funds.

IF YOU'RE REDUCING YOUR COLLECTION, HELP YOUR MUSEUM BY CONTACTING:

Melvin Phillips on 01342 315177 or melvinphillips@btinternet.com

or

Bob Bailey on 01483 824006 or bailey.bunch16@ntlworld.com

From 23rd October I became the Rolling Stock Trustee, A position created to encompass what happens on the other side of the workshop door. With the need to satisfy current Insurance requirements in a world that now appears to revolve around Health & Safety it is a virtual certainty that our work in maintaining the Class 6 vehicles will need to pass to an outside Contractor rather than be undertaken in house thereby reducing the volume of work within the Mechanical section. With this in mind the issue of Class VI vehicles is currently being evaluated with experts within the membership. Inevitably, we expect a reduction in the Class 6 fleet from now onwards as being a Museum we do not see our position as that of a commercial bus operator or as wedding party transport.

Equally, we will be ensuring that there is always vehicles in our Class 5 fleet that can attend shows, rallies and running days where it will be of benefit to the Trust and to change those vehicles each year to avoid "the same old candidates".

Work will now be put in hand to return to MoT standard a number of the vehicles that have been out of MoT for some time now due the relocation and in some instances relatively minor malfunctions. Andy Baxter, as Engineering Manager reporting to me, and who has an in depth knowledge of the older vehicles will be heading up that function as well as overseeing the mechanical works on the restoration projects such as UMP227.

RMCI461 was independently inspected on 9 November by an independent VOSA qualified technician experienced in Routemasters. Following an extensive 2 hour, inside, outside, up in the air and road test the bus was given a comprehensive clean bill of health.

The restoration of UMP is continuing apace under the direction of Peter Smith and the progress is astounding. With the new mudguards now delivered from Dave Allwood there is at last light at the end of the tunnel.

TD95 has been suffering from a severe case of acne on the roof for some time now, a result of the very poor environmental conditions at Redhill Road. Following the removal of loose paint and the application of many hours of elbow grease the etch primer is on and undercoat is following after which it will be back to shiny red and ready for the 2012 running fleet.

RT2775 is now complete other than the application of a new coat of paint and adverts. Some 19 years after it was withdrawn at Redhill Road it is now back into MoT and will join the collection in early 2012 for a Spring Gathering Launch.

Time is nigh for a new project, the canteen trailer and RFW6 seem to be the front runners but with a few more volunteers to the dirty hands brigade we could be working on both. Come along on a Weds for a look see as we intend to introduce a further day for restoration during 2012.

Finally, when we moved we brought with us vast quantities of spare parts that remain stacked in steel stillages. We need volunteers, especially for Weds, to help sort these into 'keep' and go 'piles'. No experience needed, just a pair of gloves. Getting rid of the dross could make space for another bus and we are seriously considering the NS body. Just turn up & see Gerry Job or me.

The move to the new building has opened up many opportunities. its your Museum, come along and help make it even better. Its cheaper than golf and healthier than looking at the TV!

SPRING GATHERING 2012

SUNDAY 29TH APRIL

WISLEY

ITEMS FOR THE MAGAZINE

Contributions in the way of photographs or articles are always welcome. Please send them to: **THE NEW EDITOR**

Michael H C Baker

75 Northmoor Way, Wareham BH20 4EG

or e-mail to MichaelHCBaker@yahoo.com

Text in Word, or any .doc format or typed,
pictures in jpeg, slide or print.

Please send pictures separate from text, as they don't reproduce well if copied from a Word Document.

Slides or prints will be returned.

Please ensure your name and contact details are on each item.

NEXT COPY DATE

WEDNESDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2012

Membership Update

Steve Edmonds

The annual Members' New Year lunch is booked for Sunday 29th January 2012 as announced elsewhere in this issue. It is a little later than usual this year but remains the LBPT social event to which we can invite family without there being a bus in sight. We shall as always be grateful to receive items for the fundraising raffle please.

LBPT Members' Day 2012 will take place at Cobham Hall on Sunday 18th March. Whilst the Museum will be open to the public on that day, all the usual activities will be happening. And we shall be able to welcome new volunteers and brief those who wish to help at the Spring Gathering at Wisley on 29th April.

The membership cards for the October renewals are enclosed with this issue of the magazine in line with our normal practice. Please check the contents of the envelope carefully so as not to discard your card accidentally. If your card is not enclosed please contact the Membership Manager, Debbie Morris. If you would prefer, we can send out your card separately on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.

Renewals from January attract the higher subscription rates outlined in the summer issue of the Magazine. If you are one of our 70 or so "F" members, please remember to inform Debbie whether you want to continue with "Couples" membership or upgrade to "Family" (two adults and three children under 16).

If you haven't already done so, please consider changing your payment method to Direct Debit as it makes the whole collection and updating process so much easier for all concerned. If you change from Standing Order to DD, please ensure that you cancel your SO instruction with you bank; we are unable to do this for you.

The Members' area of web site has not yet gone live but we have nothing to post on it yet that is not covered by the magazine and monthly newsletter. The access arrangements will remain as before when we eventually reintroduce this facility.

Please note that the first Monthly Newsletter, due to be published on 1st December, will only be sent to those on email. Printed copies will be available at the Museum. Please update your email details with us if necessary to ensure that you receive it.

You will have noticed that two additional documents are enclosed with this magazine. They are both important and worthy of your attention. The first is the 2011 Membership Survey; the first was issued in 2005. A number of key players in the organisation came on board as Trustees and Managers as a result of that first survey. Steadily introducing "new blood" has been instrumental in enabling us to build and develop a national Museum enjoyed by thousands of visitors each month.

Everyone who fills a role in the Museum is a volunteer and by definition that places us all on an equal footing. However any organisation needs people to take on different levels of responsibility, equally important but crucially as square pegs in square holes, exploiting each one's individual strengths.

You will find this broad mix of roles in the questionnaire from policy and strategy makers to the many practical skills that are the essential component of vehicle restoration projects and maintenance. If you are not as confident in your skills as you would like we can provide the training you need. In short, there is something for everyone.

Over the last 40 years many people have freely invested their time and money to ensure that we have progressed to where we are today. We now need more people to help maintain the momentum to meet new challenges as they surely will arrive. "Cometh the day, cometh the man"; your Museum needs you!

Please therefore complete the questionnaire and return it to me if you feel able to travel to Surrey on a regular basis. I can promise you a fruitful, enjoyable and rewarding experience. I look forward to hearing from you and I guarantee a personal response to any offer of help. Briefings for new volunteers will be offered at Members' Day on Sunday 18th March 2012.

The second form is our annual invitation to volunteer on one of the days when we prepare for and run our annual Spring Gathering, this year on Saturday and Sunday 28/29th April at Wisley. There is always a great team spirit for this event and whilst the financial rewards are limited to free entry and a meal voucher this is more than made up by the fun and the sense of achievement gained.

Again, if this part of Surrey is accessible to you, please fill in the card and send it to me. The Events committee will be grateful for any help you can give. A timely and full briefing for each role will be provided including final team briefings at Members' Day.

Membership Report

Debbie Morris Membership Manager

Direct Debit forms, member detail forms can all be downloaded from the LBPT website.

For members who joined in October to December your 2012 card should arrive with this magazine unless you picked it up at the member's day. If you do not get your card then please contact the museum and leave a message for either me or Steve Edmonds

Lastly a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined since the last issue of the magazine

1646	Laurence Rosenborg	Woodford
1647	Gary Critcher	Shepperton
1648	Peter Nash	Halesworth
1649	Steven Wood	Hertford
1650	Bruce Bolden	Twickenham
1651	Terence Davy	Petworth
1652	Mark Glynn	Chatham
1653	Michael Dixon	Feltham
1654	A Pipe	Chertsey
1655	Alan Bloomfield	St Albans
1656	Philip Brothwell	Walton on Thames
1658	Daniel Sullivan	Woolwich
1659	Gerald Jackson	Chessington
1660	Daniel Levitsky	London
1661	Laurence Mountjoy	Wokingham
1662	Derek Hattersley	Walton on Thames

Happy New Year to you all

London Bus Museum Objectives

It was felt opportune to re-publish the objectives of the London Bus Museum, which are to:

1. Present a professional museum exhibition of London's bus heritage featuring the largest collection of vintage London buses in the world.
2. Explain and interpret this priceless collection in its historic social and engineering context to a wide audience, ranging from the general public to enthusiasts.
3. Attend enthusiast events by invitation, requiring the vehicles to be in working condition.
4. Preserve and maintain an historic archive of London Bus ephemera and ancillary materials.
5. Participate in partnerships with schools so that students can learn about London's transport heritage and its contribution to the development of our society.
6. Participate in partnerships with Engineering Further Education colleges to facilitate learning and the use of traditional engineering skills.
7. Engage with local organisations by running transport events, which support local initiatives and enable the community to experience London's transport heritage.
8. Provide a source for a wide range of volunteering opportunities for members of LBPT as well as members of the local community.
9. Provide a unique study and learning centre for the media, the arts and educationalists engaged in serious research on the history of London bus.

THE ACQUISITION FUND NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT

The purchase of RLH53 has drained the Fund to zero - although that's exactly what it's for! Now please help to rebuild the Fund and enable your museum to continue to fill those important gaps in the London Bus Collection.

Contribute to the Fund and then, when that elusive RTW or roofbox RT becomes available (or something equally interesting), the Trust will be able to move quickly to secure it.

New Exhibits lead to major 'Timeline' upgrade

The welcome arrival of Mike Sutcliffe's "Chocolate Express" and Malcolm Skevington's CR16, on 23rd October, both buses now on loan to us, created an opportunity to upgrade the design of Sector 3, "The Emergence of the Motor Bus".

Exhibition fit-out operations were postponed to avoid 'The Very Best of London Buses' event, while the new design work was completed. The buses in Sectors 3 and 4 ('The Decade of Development') were then shunted into their new positions in the Timeline on 2nd November. If all goes to schedule, the next stage of the scenery fit-out will be installed in time for the school Christmas holidays. Research and creative production is now well under way for this.

This new "panorama" expanded scenery design for Sector 3 will lead on from the Horse Bus diorama to give an improved visitor experience. It will enable us to more effectively tell the fascinating story of the "Roaring Twenties" battle between 'The General' and 'The Pirates' for supremacy of the streets, possibly the most colourful period ever, in London's bus transport history.

Changes are planned to Cobham Hall's aluminium Octanorm exhibition support framing (the sort of giant Meccano set we use) to allow easier ingress and egress of buses between the "old" and "new" display halls by the addition of a huge, full height sliding door behind STL2377 . This will replace the original fire exit in front of this bus.

On trial now are new freestanding displays for the guest buses, the Foyer, and the Horse bus diorama with some smart new barrier posts.

Horse Bus News

Our four new "vanner" horse replicas were finally delivered on 21st October and were harnessed to the display horse buses, now accurately turned out in real antique tack, thanks to the professional expertise of our carriage master associate, Tony Drewitt. At sixteen and a half hands high, the new horses are the correct size. London Transport Museum's pair of kindly loaned horses, for

which we thank Bob Bird, are shortly to retire to Acton after their faithful service.

Meanwhile, we are using the winter months to do some much needed remedial work to keep the Three-Light Horse Bus in road-running order. This is an expensive business requiring the removal and 'cutting and shutting' of the steel tyres and remaking of the rear springs, some £2,000 worth of work - any donations towards this essential work would be gratefully received. This horse bus is expected to run in service again at our event on Sunday, 29th April 2012 at Wisley. Last year its appearance at Dunsfold was a 'sell-out' with not a spare seat all day long.

Visitors Numbers looking good

During the first three months of opening, starting 1st August through to end October, I estimated that about 24,000 visitors entered the Museum. Based on the sort of numbers coming through the doors on different sorts of days: school holiday days/weekend days/ week days, on that basis, over our first year we might expect something in the order of 79,495, or 220 visits per day averaged out. On Sunday 23rd October over 2,700 visitors poured through the doors of the London Bus Museum at 'The Very Best of London Buses' event. We have along way to go yet, but it is a good start.

If you are a Guide or Steward...step forward and take a bow! And a big THANK YOU.

A large part of the hugely positive reaction we get from the public, fulsomely recorded in the visitor's book, is down to the sheer enthusiasm of all of you, our front of house guides and stewards. It's the friendly welcome you give our visitors, and your encyclopaedic knowledge of London's bus history that works the magic. Congratulations and a huge personal 'thank you' to each one of you.

To all our other readers.....if you're not yet on the team you are missing out on a great experience. Why not contact Steve Edmonds and sign up now? It is a rewarding day and really good fun - ask any of us!"

Who could have imagined these sorts of visitor numbers at the old Redhill Road site? We are clearly doing something the public likes!

NEW ARRIVALS AT COBHAM HALL



Our four new "vanner" horses on display. The scene is Mansion House, 1900 - not a "protester" in sight!
CR16 and The Chocolate Express enter the 'Timeline' display. PhotoS: David Kinnear





CRI 6 in position in "The Decade of Development".

Photo: David Kinnear

David with Mr & Mrs Mike Sutcliffe MBE

Photo: Michael HC Baker

The Chocolate Express with its smart new display and barrier posts.

Photo: David Kinnear



THE VERY BEST OF LONDON'S BUSES

23RD OCTOBER 2011



Photo credits:
PZ - Peter Zabek
MHCB - Michael H
C Baker

A selection of photos from the day by Peter Zabek and Michael H C Baker



PZ



MHCB



MHCB



MHCB



MHCB



MHCB



PZ



PZ

'and the battery compartment doors were renovated'

There have been a number of updates on the progress of the restoration of UMP 227, the forerunner of the RF fleet. Generally space restricts the reports to a few key statements such as that above. For anyone interested in delving a little deeper here is a fairly comprehensive summary of the work involved. There is nothing special about the work on the battery compartment doors; it is just one of very many steps to return the vehicle to a presentable state.

There are two battery compartments, one at the rear of each side. Each of them housed two 6 volt batteries. The doors are about 3 feet long and 2 feet high. They are approximately rectangular, however the bottom is curved to fit the rise of the bodywork behind the rear wheel and they are slightly convex from top to bottom, again to follow the general shape of the bodywork.

The basic construction of the doors consists of a 1" square hollow steel frame covered with an aluminium sheet. There is a full length hinge along the top edge of the door and at each side there is a small extension beyond the main frame to allow for an overlap with the bus body. There are also two locks and a diagonal trim strip which continues a similar strip along the length of the bus. The hollow steel sections originally had a hardwood insert which allowed the panel and hinges etc. to be fixed with woodscrews.

Over the years the steel frame had suffered severe rusting and the aluminium skin had corroded. Previous restorers had removed the aluminium skin and had rebuilt and painted the steel frame.



Restoration at Cobham began with the repaired steel frames. Two second-hand but sound aluminium panels were used as the new skin. The exact size and shape required for each skin was marked out on the new panels allowing

the correct amount for the edges that were to be folded at 90 degrees top and bottom and wrapped around the frame extensions at either side. Remaining parts of the original panel helped with this process. Fairly detailed shaping was required at each corner to ensure a tidy finish. After cutting the aluminium sheet to shape with a jig-saw, it was clamped in place onto the frame so that the edges could be bent over with a hammer and wooden block. Care had to be taken to clamp the panel very firmly to ensure that the outside of the panel would not be distorted when bending it around the frame. At this stage the panel was bent to only 90 degrees so that it could still be separated from the frame for further work.

The steel frame already had holes along the top and bottom through which the fixing screws for the panel would pass. In the case of the top edge these screws would also hold the hinge in place. Holes had to be drilled through the new panel to line up with the holes already in the frame. This took some careful measurements to ensure they were in the correct place. In many cases the screw holes in the frames had to be plugged with wood to ensure the screws would be able to grip. With all the holes drilled and countersunk, mastic was applied to the surfaces where the frame and panel would come into contact and the panels replaced over the frames. The top edge, together with the hinge, and the bottom edge of the panel were screwed to the frame. These needed to be slotted head screws as cross head screws are not compatible with the age of the vehicle. Fixing of the panel was completed by fully folding the sides over the extensions of the frame.

At this stage the panels, which still had old paint on them, were prepared for repainting. The paint on one panel was generally loose and flaking off. This was removed with paint stripper and the panel painted with etch primer. The other panel, to which the paint was firmly attached, but in places worn down to bare metal, was rubbed down and painted with Bonda primer. Bitumen paint was used on the interior surface because of the proximity of battery acid.

Attention turned to refitting the locks. Only two of the original budget locks were available. Extensive searches of the spare



parts held at the museum did not uncover any of the correct dimensions. Fortunately a stockist of spare parts for classic cars was able to provide two new locks which were almost indistinguishable from the originals.

Fitting the locks required a large hole to be cut in the panel, in line with the hole already in the frame, through which the key would pass. Two further holes were needed in line with holes in the frame for the fixing screws of the two diamond shaped plates which fitted over the key holes. The locks and diamond plates were then fixed on one door with wood screws as originally intended. On the second door it was found that, in the area of the locks, the steel frame had no wooden insert and it appeared to have been strengthened on the inside with an additional steel plate. There was therefore no way of using woodscrews to fix the lock and diamond plate in place. This was overcome by drilling appropriate sized holes through the steel frame and tapping them to accept machine screws instead.

The final task was to drill holes in the panel for the rivets that were to fix the diagonal trim strip in place. Mastic was applied to the trim strip before it was riveted in place. The doors were then able to be refitted to the bus and undercoated to await top coating with the rest of the vehicle.

As with most parts of the restoration a number of people were involved in carrying out this project. Most of the work does not involve any special technical skill, perhaps the most significant requirement is an ability to come up with solutions to a stream of small problems. Anyone interested in seeing if they might



enjoy getting involved should arrange to come along and see what is currently going on. Generally work on UMP takes place on Wednesdays although, where appropriate, some work may be carried out at members' homes.

That was the choice my careers master at school offered as he took a long drag on his pipe, filled with an amazingly aromatic concoction by the name of Clan. “Transport, Mr Hopwood”, was my reply, which rather flummoxed him and I was sent away until he had time to come up with something suitable. And so began a train of events (pun intended) that shunted me into the transport industry.



RT 882 in Acre Lane August 1973

My interest had really begun many years earlier with trips on local routes 35, 37 and 137, when I began noticing buses with roofboxes, odd radiator grilles (RTLs) and later new Routemasters. Other influences had been trips to relatives in Whetstone on 1938 tube stock and to “Auntie’s” office on standard stock on the Northern City Line to Old Street, where trolleybuses were on their last legs. The move to grammar school at the Oval (also attended by the late Ken Glazier) led to

a more detailed interest and, when cycling became the regular means of transport, lunchtime trips to Camberwell garage, where the large yard was full of interest. Other pointers towards buses came in August 1973 when two RTs appeared for a few days locally, 882 as a mobile home and 2888 belonging to a religious group. These set me wondering about the afterlife of London Buses. Many weekends were spent cycling with a friend to various parts of London (as far as Dorking on one occasion) to go train spotting, so buses were not yet the dominant interest. In September 1973 I had my first encounter with the London Bus Preservation Group at their Buses of Yesteryear event on Clapham Common, where I bought the bonnet number plates from RTs 3431 and 3792 for £4 each.

Back in the careers master’s office, I was offered applications for training schemes with British Rail, National Express and London Transport, the

RT 2888 in Lyham Road August 1973





latter being the only organisation to offer an interview. With a couple of mediocre A levels under my belt I was still accepted and following the usual formalities reported to White City Railway Training Centre on Monday 1st September 1975. I spent two very interesting weeks

there, on part of the guards' course and had a chance to push buttons and "play" with the famous White City model railway. Annoyingly my part of the course finished before being let loose on the real train stabled in White City depot.

From White City I moved to the District and Piccadilly Line Divisional Office at Earl's Court, processing failure and delay reports, complaint letters and other backroom tasks. The attachment provided opportunities for interesting visits to control rooms and depots, while the training scheme also offered chances to visit Acton Works, Aldenham and night maintenance work on the Underground. After about six months I was moved to the railway personnel office at 55 Broadway, which only served to put me off HR work for life. The next move was very much more interesting.

My third attachment was to the Railway Development Office, which was concerned with works at stations and provided opportunities to visit more depots, including Highgate Woods and New Cross, and the disused tunnels from Borough to London Bridge. The filing cabinets also contained blueprints of all the network's stations, which gave a fascinating insight into what had been and what might have been.

Subsequent attachments were to the Buses traffic office, running time section and planning section, all of which gave great insight into what was involved in running buses and also provided plenty of opportunities to explore west London. I also came into contact with well known transport personalities such as Ken Glazier, Mike Steward, Alan Nightingale and Barry Arnold to name-drop a few.

LS 6 Fairfield Road, Bow, Dec 74 with bike



My third year was spent with the Public Relations Department, processing complaints (again) and where I met Barry Lejeune, Bruce Jenkins, John Parkin, John Wagstaff, John Reed and Derek Fisk. While the work could at times be disheartening, I was surrounded by interesting and entertaining people who made my time there pass

quickly and enjoyably.

Part of the training process involved a day-release course to study for membership of the Chartered Institute of Transport and it was here that I met Matthew Keyte, then a trainee with London Country, who asked if I was interested in preserving an RF. And so started another chapter in my life. I met the rest of the group – then numbering eight – at a pub, coughed up my £100 and not long after travelled over to Stonebridge Garage to look at the chosen vehicle, RF 503, which Matthew had ridden on when in service at Edgware and was felt to be a good bus. An engineer from Streatham garage had been asked to come and give the bus a once over, but he didn't make it and we carried on regardless and bought the bus. The absent engineer re-appeared later in my career, but I won't embarrass him. The bus was duly collected a couple of weeks later and I had become a preservationist.

Part ownership of RF 503 brought me into fellowship with Steve Fennell, then with London Country, and many, many photographic outings to pastures new to capture on film the late 70's transport scene. The bus was stored at Continental Pioneer's premises in the former



Collecting RF 503 from Stonebridge

Richmond goods yard, which was also home to Ted Brakell's empire. Here I encountered at close hand most of the RT variants and quite a few other assorted old buses and coaches. One that I always wonder about was an Austin K8 with a Kennex body which was on site for some time and which I "had" to drive up the yard on the occasion of one of many reorganisations that took place. These were probably just an excuse to see what could be started, drive it about and park it somewhere else. The numerous shunting activities provided an opportunity for underage driving, and a chance to learn how to reverse into spaces reasonably well.

It turned out that RF 503 was not a well bus (it is now, though) and it was decided to sell it and buy another, hand chosen example, from Kingston, RF 392. By this time I had met Dave Simmons and Paul Morris, then engineers at Norbiton, who, along with Richard ??? were restoring RF 672 to original condition. The sale of RF 503 allowed me to join the 672 group as their aims were rather more in line with my own aspirations. We all remained good friends, with the three buses, RFs 672, 392 and RT 3198 (still around) and the later acquisition of prototype modernised RF 136. Late in 1978 672's restoration had reached a stage where undercover accommodation would be ideal and as there was no room at Cobham, we found space with the Chiltern Omnibus Group at Radnage.

At work, my trainee-ship had come to an end and I found a permanent job at the West Divisional Office - Buses at Dollis Hill, which was actually in the grounds of Cricklewood garage. Initially I worked on the traffic section, working with bus stops, site meetings and the like. In 1979 the first step towards privatisation of London's buses occurred with the setting up of the bus operating districts. Dollis Hill became the HQ for Watling District (Roman Watling Street ran through the area) and the area south of the Thames became Cardinal District with offices at Northfields. Buses began to be adorned with stickers to identify the district they belonged to, Watling's logo being a Roman soldier. This led to the decentralisation of a number of functions from 55 Broadway and I gained promotion to deal with complaints again. As this was the era of primary and supplementary schedules and NBAs(No Bus Available) in three figures, I was kept rather busy!

Also, earlier in 1979, RF 672 had been repainted and we began to rally it in earnest, winning a few trophies along the way. In June of that year we ventured to Cardiff, parking the bus overnight at my aunt's house near Maesteg and then heading on to Cardiff. RT 190 was also at the rally, with Geoff (Ding) Singer and his wife and another young lady, to whom I got chatting on the way home. Nearly 30 years

RF 672 on home ground at Dormansland



later I am still happily married to her (not Geoff's wife – her friend). The rallying continued through the courtship, which culminated with our wedding in 1982, with 672 playing a major part.

Marriage afforded an opportunity to transfer work to the Forest District Offices in Ilford, having bought a house in Romford. I returned to traffic work and by dint of many surveys and site meetings soon became familiar with my new territory. My LT connections and work with bus stops led to me being able to acquire the Trust's first Q type shelter and some of the Birmingham Guild sign posts from outside Loughton Garage. Late in 1983 I became involved in a project to design a network of routes which would be operated by buses fitted with wheelchair lifts, in our case LS 454. After visits to Leicester and Doncaster to see how their "mobility buses" operated and some local research, I produced schedules for a number of routes designed to take people to and from major shopping areas like Walthamstow, Stratford, Ilford and Romford. The network was launched in March 1984 and was the basis of the 900 series of routes that eventually spread throughout London.

In the same year, the year of bus deregulation (outside London), London Buses rolled out the "non-traditional" agreement which was a framework within which spare buses could be used for private hires with drivers paid a "non-traditional" rate. A ready reckoner of prices was provided and we soon built up a reasonable number of customers, many of them schools. Work continued to grow as did my involvement, to the extent that, following a move of offices within Ilford in 1989 and decentralisation of schedules and finance functions, I was appointed Private Hire Manager and provided with an assistant. The company had by then become the East London Bus and Coach Company in another move towards privatisation and route tendering was well underway, bringing back many of the DMSs that had previously been with London Buses and which had been bought in bulk by Peter Newman in the early days of Ensignbus.

My biggest hire, the International Ports & Harbour conference 1994



By this time RF 672 had found a space at Cobham, Dave Simmons had departed for pastures new and Paul Morris had met and married Debbie. Rallying continued on a regular basis and 672 actually went to Holland on one occasion. We were pleased to be involved in the LT 50 celebrations at Chiswick and Aldenham, both of which have many memories. For a couple of years, while on the committee, through the persuasion of John Bedford, I was secretary to the National Association of Road Transport Museums. Besides providing chances to visit other museums, this was helpful in me being able to start work on the process that would lead to Cobham becoming an accredited museum. My connection with Cobham also helped at work with provision of buses at various garage open days that I had been involved with, Hendon, West Ham (old), Upton Park and Romford (twice). However, the arrival of our daughter in 1989 rather curtailed rallying for a while, prolonged by the arrival of our son in 1995.

Back at work, the private hire business was doing sufficiently well that it was decided to establish a dedicated team of drivers who would work mostly under EU hours regs. The team was to be based at Romford Garage (NS), along with our small fleet of buses, T 1128, T 63 and T 80, with RMA 8 and a leased coach joining later. We also had RMC 1515 and T 512 as open toppers. The fleet changed over the years, with more coaches being taken on in 1991 following the closure of London Forest Buses. My first day at NS was rather memorable as one of the drivers went sick and I had to cover a school run on the 345 (as was) and a swimming contract in Paddington taken on from London Forest. It was a memorable day, one of hundreds that were to follow!

Further fleet changes followed when bought by Stagecoach for the first time in 1994 and the takeover of Selkent Travel. The branding was East London Coaches

and we lasted until 2007 when the prospect of the LEZ, digital tachographs and profit levels below what the new East London Bus Group required brought down the curtains. At the time the fleet consisted of three VN double decks, two TA double decks, all with seatbelts, and five coaches.

By the time we closed East London Coaches, the business has moved to Waterden Road garage near Stratford and the two years there were probably our best. Running what was virtually my own coach company provided many opportunities to meet and work with some great people and some really good memories, P & O ferries drivers' breakfasts being one of the better ones! As luck would have it, when the axe fell I was able to fall into a recently vacated post – complaints!

This took me back to another office in Ilford, above the company's travel shop, which had been opened with the success of the East London Coaches day trips. Sadly that was on borrowed time as the award to London of the Olympics had resulted in the closure of Waterden Road and Stratford garages which were to be relocated to a new garage at Canning Town called West Ham! As a head office building was included the premises, the shop at Ilford was closed in 2008 and we moved to the new premises in 2010.

Things were changing at Cobham too, following the untimely passing of Bill Cottrell in 2008 I took on editorship of the magazine, with Keith Rose for a short while. This was the second time, having done the job with Geoff Singer way back when everything was typed and cut out and stuck down to form "camera-ready artwork" and membership was about 120. I have enjoyed this second spell rather more (it's been less controversial for those with really long memories), but rather regret not being able to get the "scoop" interview with Peter Henty that was intended for the 50th edition of the last series as he was appointed Commissioner just as I was about to fix up a date! Recent changes and the move to Brooklands seemed to be an opportune time to hand over the mag to someone with different ideas, hence this is my last one.

Part of the East London Coaches fleet and me at Waterden Road in January 2007



During my frequent stewarding duties I have been faced with a number of interesting questions, as I'm sure others have as well. It's often a two-way process as I find I'm learning new things from time to time.

Following the time-line theme, I was asked whether passengers paid lower fares to travel on top of a horse bus. I was about to dismiss this as facile, when something stirred in the old brainbox regarding differential fares on mailcoaches, whereby passengers paid more to travel inside. Subsequent investigation revealed that certain London horse-bus operators did indeed charge more for travel inside.

It is part of my 'spiel' to point out that the Dennis starred in a 1975 episode of *Upstairs Downstairs*, the episode covering the 1926 General Strike, when it was driven by Simon Williams acting as a volunteer. As we know, STL441 is briefly glimpsed in *The King's Speech* and, together with STL23) 77, even more briefly in *Nanny McPhee* and *the Big Bang*, despite several days of filming, along with the ST as well.

The green roadside time clock I had assumed to be a provincial version until someone pointed out it is merely the red one without its overcoat! I gather it was used internally, probably in a garage. An accompanying notice would be welcome.

The Green Line coaches seem to be confused with the old Country Area, which many visitors seem to have forgotten about, after forty years. Many visitors believe themselves to have travelled on STLs, despite being far too young to have done so. After all, the interiors are not that different to RT family buses or even Routemasters.

The lack of trolleybuses is often remarked upon and I normally 'direct' them to Carlton Colville or Sandtoft but maybe we'll have a photo display featuring this mode of transport in the future.

I've been asked by a small child "how do you make a bus?" (where do you start?) and, of course, the RT driving simulator - for want of a better name - is always popular with the children. An accelerator pedal would greatly assist demonstrations for as it stands, it bears more resemblance to the adjacent Routemasters! The purpose of the knurled knob on its left remains a mystery as do the two small lights beneath the (easily removable) wooden box!

Are we part of the London Transport Museum?' is a regular question (no, just good Friends) and one of the visitors admiring RML3 assumed the 'LT' part of the registration stood for London Transport. Perhaps the use of this particular London mark was just a happy coincidence! Surprisingly, the turnstile on M6 draws forth a lot of interest as people have clearly forgotten that such things existed on OPO buses of the period.

Look forward to seeing additional and restored vehicles in the museum, the small items added to the display and completion of the excellent dioramas.

John Broadhurst explains the workings of real horsepower to young visitors. More such volunteers are always welcome.

Photo Peter Zabek



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Oxford Bus Museum Trip Report

by Kevin Hibbs (well, some idiot had to do it!)

16th October saw the first proper members' outing since our new Museum opened, and the venue chosen was the Oxford Bus Museum. Shortly after the crack of dawn on that Sunday (ok, I'm lying, it was about 7:30am!) we were raising the shutters of the maintenance bay and coaxing RP90 into life - not a difficult job, bless her heart, as her engine fired straight up and she behaved impeccably all day.

The vehicle was checked over meticulously (good grief! I'm lying again, she was given a cursory glance, as the main checking had been done on the Wednesday before!), while the members, the drivers and that idiot who shouts "hold very tight please!", even on a driver-only vehicle, all relieved themselves, after swilling too much tea and coffee, and then we were ready to go. Alan Heasman pulled the RP out at 08:50 and up to Weybridge Station, where we had arranged to collect various members who had travelled in by train. At 09:00, on the dot, (crikey! I'm lying again, it was 09:02 as the LT rule was always "never run early", so we don't!) the doors were shut and anyone who was not on board was deemed to be "not coming". Alan thus set off for the M25, which usually runs well at that time on a Sunday.

The road was boring, as always on a motorway, so we all made small talk (hell! I'm lying again, we all teased each other mercilessly), so the journey flashed by in what seemed to be moments, until bladders got the better of some of us. We pulled into the Oxford services for a short comfort break, where we took great delight in showing off our vintage conveyance (is that stretching a point?) to a few other coach parties who were there for much the same purpose as us.

Once relieved, we loaded up again and set off, carefully checking that everyone was on board AFTER we had left! Someone really should write down instructions for us. On the road again for only a very short while and we were there, the directions that had been given to us were



excellent, even the idiot doing the navigating could follow them! We were marshalled into position (there I go again, we were told to “put the thing down there on the end” with a wave of a hand and a jaunty laugh), ending next to a rather nice coach, the provenance of which escapes me. However, once creaking joints (ours) were cajoled into operation, we ambled off the RP and had a squint around. Not too many vehicles in the display area, although it was still early in the day, so we knew that it would fill up later. We thus decided to take one of the free trips to the Bus Museum itself, so Alan, Paul Morris and I selected a new hybrid Dennis with an Enviro body, which I have to say was most pleasant to ride on, arriving at the Museum to be stunned by how good it is.



Alan and I wandered around the exhibition halls, after sorting out bladders again and eating something which we hoped would stop our stomachs annoying us all day. The layouts in the halls were good and the vehicles and other artefacts on display were brilliant. We were particularly interested in the “cutaway” restoration of one vehicle (pictured courtesy of Roy Spurgeon), which we thought was fascinating. Also the Commer toast rack style charabanc was wonderful. The only annoying feature was the electronic frog in the “scrapyard find” scene, that croaked the whole time we were in there. I kept looking around for a large hammer, to put the thing out of our misery, but such weapons had all been hidden from view.



After viewing the halls, we decided that it was time for a ride again, so we picked a beautifully restored Morris with a 1½ deck body, that had been used by a band. No doubt there were better bands on cigars, but the vehicle was a delight,

comfortable and smooth in the driver's expert hands, although not what anyone would call "fast"! We weren't interested in speed, of course, we leave that to the Brooklands mob, as they have had more practice, but we were very interested in the interior décor, which was presented very well indeed.

Once off and a few photos later, we saw a smashing looking AEC Reliance, with a 7.7 litre engine and crash gearbox (note that I noticed the mechanical side before I even thought about looking at the body, which was, er. . . . um. . . . ! Damn, I can't remember! It will come to me, just give me time). Anyway, we jumped on and took a ride back to the Museum, which was fine, and we had no complaints. After mooching around again, viewing things that we had missed the first time, we decided that time was getting on, so we went to the bus loading area and found a lovely looking Regent with a lowbridge Weymann body, which looked remarkably like an RLH, although I can't imagine why, as it wasn't (see photo). It was full, so we had to go away, but the AEC Reliance was there again, so we got on it and enjoyed another ride. The standard ride included circumnavigating the airfield and stopping outside a building of modern construction, so it was worth ignoring (it was actually a police station, although it looked remarkably unattended at the time). Anyway, passengers could take pics in the dappled light of that location, including the one here that I took. On again to the showground, which had indeed filled up slightly, since our earlier departure, so we had a look around, meeting an old friend or two, and picking up another paying passenger for the ride home, thus helping to fill our Museum coffers.



Eventually, it was indeed time to go, so Paul Morris took the driving seat and showed us how well he knew the vehicle by giving us a superb ride back to Brooklands. He remembered that we had to stop at Weybridge Station, I had forgotten, so the guys were dropped in the right place to get their trains home. We put the RP away, after patting her lovingly (some of us really are sad), and promptly fell into the canteen for more tea/coffee. No wonder we have trouble with our bladders! The day was declared to be a success, so we all went home happy, wondering when the next outing might be. Any ideas? Bluebell, maybe?

Further to my notes in Issue 66 (Spring 2010), I recently took the opportunity of emailing Matt's daughter, Michele, advising her of our move and assuring her of a warm welcome should she choose to visit our fine new museum. The RTL (or an RT) would have been one of the types of vehicle that Matt would have driven in service, his driving career being at Holloway (J) for a short while in the mid-1950s. Indeed one of the several MM websites shows him in the cab of an RTL and he actually made some of his very early recordings with Decca, incongruously wearing his driver's jacket and PSV badge!

It seems that Matt would frequently perform at a pub in Hornsey Rise between driving turns on the 14s! His bus-driving career came to a close in November 1956 when he sang at a dance in Muswell Hill organised for bus crews attached to Holloway.

Michele graciously replied immediately and explained that she is very busy and is about to embark on a tour to Australia and New Zealand but would like to visit us at some point. Having quite a musical family, I subsequently purchased her excellent biography of her dad, *The Singer's Singer: The Life, and Music of Matt Monro*, upon which she now requires feedback when I've read it!

What a gracious lady.

FOR DISPOSAL AT A SENSIBLE PRICE.

Rod Lucas, well known repairer of bus related electronic items is having a clear out and is offering the following open to sensible offers. All are in good working condition, either new or refurbished. A donation of the profits going to museum bus purchase fund: automatic and semi gear control panels (LVA, LVS, G2 ,4 ,6, CAV 511), Titan/Olympian/National/VR/Tiger, Gear selectors National/Titan styles, Atlantian Long stalk variety, DMS, VR, Engine shut down units, Engine Protection Units, Flashers (Relay RM), 3mph units, Temperature senders, Door Relay Panels (M), Indicator Switches (Big Red Knob with time delay return), Original speedometers as fitted to Metro and National, Lighting inverters, and many more. Contact Rod on 01737 812703 or 'heather.view@virginmedia.com'.

I particularly enjoyed reading the article by Barry Lejeune "My Life with Buses". As a child and a teenager I lived near to Ruislip Lido and his mentioning the then local bus route numbers and types of bus led me down memory lane. I would therefore like to offer some of my remembrances of the Ruislip area.

As a young child standing at our front garden gate I watched the big red bus pass by and on occasions the bus conductor would give me a wave and this drew my attention to watch for the next bus and hence my interest in London buses started from this point. This I later realised was an ST class bus on route 98 running from Hounslow to Ruislip Lido. Then came October 1941 the 98 route no longer came to the Lido and terminated at Ruislip Station. However, we were not left without any buses and route 211 was extended from Greenford to Ruislip Lido. This for a bus spotter introduced a further interest as rebuilt T type class operated from Hanwell (HL) garage. Eventually in later years the T type with MCW bodywork appeared. Originally I have gathered the 211 was extended to serve factories on West End Road, Ruislip, which previously had not been served by a bus route. There were yet further changes and at the end of the war the 211 route then terminated in Ruislip High Street in a road opposite the then Astoria cinema. Now the 158 route appeared operating from Harrow Weald (HD) garage, some of the 158's journeying from Watford to Ruislip Lido. At this time the route was served by STL's, some of the original 1934 Regent type, yet more frequently the later edition STLs incorporating modifications to the design brought about in 1939. Latterly RT's took over this route then a short interval with RTW's reverting again to RT's. Following the demise of the RT class I understand RM's took over in 1978 under the mantle of route 114 from Edgware until privatization of LT buses. However these final changes were after I had moved away from Ruislip. I never understood why so many alterations occurred on this short distance from Ruislip proper to Ruislip Lido, a distance of some 1 mile.

In February 1942 the 220 bus route from Uxbridge to Pinner changed from the single decker T class (I think ex LGOC class rebuilt with front entrance) to the double decker ST class and subsequently RT operated. I must not forget the 223 route from Ruislip Station to West Drayton station at first operated by T class vehicles and then to RT buses.

After the war Ruislip Lido became a popular attraction referred to by some as 'London by the Seaside'. This attracted many visitors on summer weekends and often there were day trips by visitors from bombed out London who arrived in hired LT buses. This was an additional interest as occasionally the LT 60 seater 'Bluebird' class came along. Checking garage codes on these visiting vehicles and destination blinds

was all part of the interest. Also on summer Sunday's the 97 route using RM's was extended to Ruislip Lido.

Being a bus spotter meant I cycled to various garages including to Windsor(WR) garage and noting Craven bodied RT's on the 457 route Windsor to Uxbridge Station. I do wish in those days I owned a camera for I may now have been able to look back on what may now be regarded as historical photos.

I too possessed Ian Allen ABC books my first which was issued in 1948 shown as No 1— Buses and Coaches plus later issues. Thumbing the pages of the ABC's highlights the numerous changes in the development of the London Bus since the post war period. What a pity bus design, livery standards and bus crew uniform standards laid down by LT have now disappeared.

John Sketcher

I have just read and enjoyed our magazine,with its new format, this has greatly improved.

With so much included with the RLH class,this has brought back memories. In the late fifties I was working in a drawing office opposite Rayners Station, and often viewed these new buses, turning to Northwick Park.

I did vist my Uncle, a veteran of the First World War, in Walton on Thames. On one of these locations we went to Guilford by the 461 route. This was the time that the Godstone STL were working out there last weeks here. We always travelled upstairs as Uncle was a smoker, and he was fine sitting centrally with gangways each side, viewing the countryside. On the return to home, a new RLH drew up,and when alighting at Walton, the comment came "that thing have gone backwards from the old buses, which liked better I could see out of them". The view from the up stairs seats had much to be desired, and with four seats abreast this must have had difficulties for the conductor fare collection.

This leads me to comment on the way LT used the town of Walton on Thames on their buses. The central area 218, displayed the full name,in the route box, and also on map. The Country area used just Walton. Why was this distinction made between the two areas.

At this time, the Walton on Thames Motor Co was operating there long established service from their garage at Walton Bridge and the Railway Station. This was in completion with part of the 218 route,so only a Penny (old money) fare was charged between the Bridge and The Halfway, but in fact 218 did not go to the station. That's what competition does in this fringe location, outside of the Metropolitan Police Area.

In 1947, London's passenger transport was still very efficiently run by The London Passenger Transport Board, despite post-war difficulties.

On a very hot Monday morning in mid August 1947, I reported to Chiswick Depot to be trained to drive buses the London Transport way. I reported to the main desk and was directed to a lecture room where other members of the intake had assembled. There were about twenty-four would-be bus drivers. We were then given a talk about what would be expected of us as bus drivers. After that, we were issued with our all-important passes, each bearing our name. This also served as an ID when we were on LT properties, such as garages, offices, and Chiswick Depot.

After lunch in the canteen, we made our way to the clothing store where we were issued with our uniforms. This consisted of a grey dust coat for summer wear, black overcoat for winter, and a cap with the LT blue and white enamelled badge. At the final session of the day we were allocated in groups of four to the instructor for the first part of our training. I was assigned to a LGOC/LPTB veteran, Jack Norton, a great personality with a wealth of tales and information. Thus ended my first day at London Transport.

The next day, we began training on an ex-Tilling petrol ST sibling to ST 922; the cab was devoid of instruments. The commanding view from the cab made placing the bus easy, the big petrol engine was responsive and pulled well. The brakes could have been better than they were, but this likeable beast was nearly twenty years old, and technology had improved since the time it was built. During the week, we spent time in the lecture room, where we were instructed on what to do in the event of breakdown, how to assist the conductor, if necessary, how to report mechanical faults on the garage fault sheet, etc. We were also instructed on the correct procedure to follow in the event of accidents and how to complete the accident report form. There was a lot more to Chiswick than just driving.

On the Saturday of the first week, it was time to be tested on the manual gearbox. Our crew all passed, although we heard that some other chaps had been put back for further instruction. That was the conclusion of my first week at Chiswick.

On the Monday morning of the second week, we had new instructors for driving the STL. The preselector gear took a little longer to get the hang of, but, once mastered, it became a pleasure to drive. When we began training on the STL, the difference between manual and epicyclic boxes was impressed upon us. After a



Photos of training buses were rare, such as STL 39. Photo Michael HC Baker

session at the wheel the Instructor always said “Mind how you get down.” This was to remind us that neutral was a GEAR that had to be engaged. But, in later years when driving many different makes of cars with automatic gearboxes, I came to the conclusion that the preselector had much to offer over the auto. STL training continued, then on Friday we had our final test, which everyone in our crew passed. Good Instructors? Perhaps.

On the second Saturday, the skid pan was good fun. You got the feel of what a skid with a bus was like; this practice for me was useful for me later on. Then came the final part of the day: issue of the PSV license and the numbered badge. This was followed by

being informed of the garage to which we had to report. I was posted to Victoria GM Garage. I said cheerio to Chiswick, but not goodbye.

On 1st September 1947, I entered Victoria Garage and reported to the output, where I was given my instructions about Route Learning. At that time GM operated Routes 10, 22, 52, 77/ 77A 137. None of these routes now cover the distances that I learned, they have all been seriously curtailed; Route 10 has been completely re-routed. Learning the 52s changed my life. Boarding a bus bound for Mill Hill I sat myself on the top deck, when the conductor came up to collect fares I found myself in the company of a clippy. Of course we chatted, some time later we dated, and, in September 1952, Rose and I were married. SHE STILL RINGS the BELL.

In 1947, all garages that had a full service rota put new drivers and conductors on the “spare” list. This was to cover holidays, sickness, and all other absences of service staff. The spare list also meant that those on spare could be loaned out to other garages. In GM’s case this was Battersea, Camberwell, Chalk Farm, Hammersmith and Middle Row. I was sent to Battersea, where I drove on Routes 19 and 39, Chalk Farm Routes where I drove on Routes 24, 31, 39, a short on

Route 68 to Norwood Garage (this was on a Leyland CR Cub), and Middle Row on Routes 7 and 28.

My time on spare was quite an experience as I got to know many different areas of London. A benefit of being on spare was that if duties were covered, you were given a Standby time. You then sat in the canteen and waited to be called. After about four hours of waiting, a Depot Inspector would call you and tell you to go home. A shift on spare could not be guaranteed, and you could find yourself doing a late turn during your early week, but this was compensated for on the following day.

An interesting feature of Middle Row was that it was an old horse bus garage, and as you walked through to the output, you saw the old halter rings still attached to the walls where the stalls were situated. It had out earned the nickname of the Dust Hole. I am sure that many of the “old timers” viewed the garage with affection.

In March 1948, I was given a service on Route 137. In those days it ran from Crystal Palace to Highgate Archway Station. Running time was 128 minutes. I liked the early and middle shifts best as these covered the full route. After 7.00 pm and on Saturday afternoon, Sundays and Bank Holidays, the route terminated at Oxford Circus. That end always seemed to be slow. My conductor was a really great man. He was a few years older than me. His name was Arthur Figgins, or George, as he was known to everyone. He was a good colleague with a dry sense of humour, and he could be very diplomatic with difficult passengers. We worked together for over three years and I really enjoyed that period. It was a change of shift that split us up.

My next conductor was another George, completely different in character and temperament. We parted when I went to back to Chiswick for training as an Inspector.

At that time, GM had in its fleet STLs and about twenty four STDs. I think these were Leyland TD4s Bonnet Numbers STD 101 to STD 111. I was told, but cannot be sure, that these buses were delivered in the early days of the war. STD 112 to STD121 were post-war deliveries. I personally liked to drive the STD after a couple of weeks on the STL.

In 1948, London hosted the Olympic Games, and coming into the garage about 11.30 pm, George and I were asked if we would do a special job. It was to drive a fleet of buses to meet some of the athletes at Victoria Station and take them to the Olympic Village in Richmond Park. It so happened that I was the only driver

who knew the way without hesitation. It was a good trip, and we ended up getting back to GM about 4.30 AM. The OT was very useful.

One thing I noticed at GM was that new tyres were almost non-existent. The front tyres that showed were mainly bald with little cross stripes cut into the tyre to give a semblance of tread. Skid patch training became very useful. New tyres were not really available until we got new buses. This situation must have applied to every operator across the country.

In issue 71 of the Cobham Magazine, Diana Lambing relates, how, in late 1949, her Father bought an old ST to convert into living accommodation. It is interesting to note that after the bus was placed on site the wheels were removed and returned to a garage. I think that illustrates how serious the shortage of tyres was at that time.

GM also housed coaches on the British European Airways fleet. These were Commer Commando with Harrington body and were later replaced with the RF coach (as of the example at Byfleet).

Seeing the mobile canteen at Byfleet reminds me of GM's mobile canteen, which was an old TILLING ST slightly converted with a kitchen at the front with limited seating. Most of it was up the open staircase to the top deck, very inconvenient on cold dark night with supposedly hot food. How times changed after I left GM.

In issue 56 of The Cobham Magazine is a reference to Red Rovers of Aylesbury who own RT 1668. This bus was at one time based at GM. I drove this bus many times on Route 137 and I thought it one of the best RTs that I had driven.

I think that I was very fortunate during my days as a bus driver with the many different types of buses I drove. ST, petrol STL (at Middle Row on Route 7) diesel STL, STD. The STD was not very popular with many drivers at GM, they called them Conker Boxes, I thought differently. Bristol, and lastly, A Guy Arab with Gardner 6LW engine.

In about 1949/1950, in order to help ease the shortage of buses, London Transport was loaned buses that were destined for eastern National, Eastern Counties, Hants and Dorset etc. Some garages were given Lowbridge Type, and although needed, they were really unsuitable for Central London routes as the fast change of passengers made it difficult for conductors to collect fares, but, as they say, any port in a storm. At GM we had possibly six Bristols with Gardner 5LW engines, great on the hill approach to Crystal Palace.



*One of many Bristols used in London after WWII
Photo John Stiles*

When the Bristols were returned to their owners we got the SRT. It appeared that there were RT bodies which were awaiting chassis, so a number of later STL chassis were modified to accept the RT body. As RT chassis became available, so the bodies were transferred. The SRT did seem to be a bit sluggish compared to the STL.

I continued to work Route 137 until May 1952, when, hoping for better things, I left GM to return to Chiswick to train as an

Inspector. But that, as they say, is another story. All I will say is BUTLER and BLAKEY it was not.

1947 to 1952 was educational, to say the least, but very enjoyable at the same time. What was the best PSV? Very hard to say, they were all so different. I liked the three 'rounder's' on an LT on route 11. Gardners in the Bristols and the Guy Arab reminded me of my days with the Scammell Pioneer. The most memorable, though, was TF9. This was a Leyland Tiger coach, the survivor of a fleet of thirteen acquired in 1938/39. These coaches were fitted out for Private Hire work as distinct from fleet purchased for GREENLINE on Routes 704 Windsor to Sevenoaks and 705 Windsor to Tunbridge Wells.

John Reed writes in his book *London Buses* that all the Private Hire fleet was destroyed in an air raid at Peckham; he was misinformed. In the early days of television, London Transport had a contract to ferry BBC staff from Broadcasting House to the Television Centre at Alexandra Palace, with drop off and pick up points on the way. GM was given the job. The two senior drivers were allocated the two shifts. In February 1948, one driver was on holiday so the two top spare drivers were given the privilege of covering the duty. I was fortunate enough to be one of them. The TF9 was so responsive and great to handle that power steering would not have been needed. That was a lovely experience. I wonder what happened to TF9?

In May 1952, I passed as an Inspector. I stayed in until 1959 when, with garages closing, the chance of further promotion was diminishing. I therefore decided it

was time for pastures new, and said goodbye to a fine organisation that was being run down.

GM garage was closed many years ago – it is now a Sainsbury's Supermarket.

Memories that stay? I suppose when I was sent to Chalk Farm on late turn. I had to learn Route 31, and that process covered the first half of the duty. By then it had started to get foggy, so by the time meal relief finished a peasouper was coming up all the way to Chelsea World's End; a good old London smog had developed. I had a minor incident in Edith Grove when I hit a car parked halfway on the pavement without lights. The District Superintendent was satisfied with my report.

At Chelsea, many drivers who were already there refused to make a move to Chalk Farm. As it grew late, I became restless because I had to get home to Camberwell from CF. So I decided to roll. With the side window open, it was just possible to see the curb over the bonnet, so I began the slow crawl. I have no idea what time we arrived back at CF, but we arrived without mishap, albeit late. The conductor I was working with told everyone that I had only learned the route that afternoon; the driver of the bus following us came to me, shook my hand, and told me that he had been on the 31s' for twenty years, and said there was no way that he could have found his way back to CF that night. On that same night, my future wife, Rose, was stuck at Kingsbury on Route 52. London suffered many more smogs before the Clean Air Act came into being.

So, what do I feel about those years long ago? They were good. I do not regret the five years I spent driving routes out of GM. It was a wonderful experience, bus work that has gone forever.

Many drivers and conductors worked together for many years, and some found life-long friendships. The driver seemed to be alone up in his cab but in so many cases his mate was on the back. Today's driver does seem alone. I do not envy them. It's a pity that they will never know the camaraderie and oftentimes absolute fun LT staff had in my day. Going to work was something to look forward to.

We had congestion by "natural causes," malfunctioning traffic lights, accidents, other incidents; not the planned congestion that is endemic today.

I would still like to have a bash at an STL or RT.

Roland Graves has been asked to mention this.

RML 2598 Ex Arriva (Rte 73) Still in as withdrawn livery etc. Bus is taxed, tested and in use. Sounds as though it is class 6.
Asking price about £18 - 20,000 but negotiable.

Contact Sarah Bruce. 01556 680273 or M 07584 656387.



Attached are a couple of photos taken last Sunday (2nd October) during Amersham and District's running day. The tree bound flag marked the terminal point of Route 349 at St Leonards in deepest Buckinghamshire. How long before the tree growth renders it too high to see?
Brian Jones

Two Tax-efficient ways of Giving to the London Bus Museum

1. *From your tax rebate via your Self-Assessment Form*

Did you know that, if you do your tax return by self-assessment and are lucky enough to be due a rebate, you can donate some or all of the rebate to the London Bus Museum? This is because the Trust is a Registered Charity.

And the great thing is: the Revenue do all the work – they send us the money, you don't have to do anything – AND they will give us an extra 25p for each £1 you donate. You can choose whether the London Bus Museum receives the money anonymously or whether your name is disclosed.

If you complete your Tax Return by Self Assessment, whether on paper or on-line, all you have to do is nominate the London Bus Preservation Trust to receive all or part of your rebate by quoting our code HAT33TG on your tax return (in part 19A or part 12 of the short return).

2. *By remembering the London Bus Museum in your Will*

If you are making, or reviewing, your Will, why not consider leaving a legacy to the London Bus Museum? The money you leave to us in this way will help us to preserve London's Bus Heritage for future generations and will ensure that the support you give us now continues after your death.

As a Registered Charity, the London Bus Preservation Trust pays no tax on legacies it receives and we will therefore receive every penny of the money you decide to pledge to us now for the future (subject to no change in current tax rules). The most beneficial way for the London Bus Museum to receive legacies is for our general funds. If, however, you would prefer to leave money for a specific project, we would much appreciate discussing this with you first to ensure that your wishes can be respected.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of these, or other, tax-efficient ways of giving money to the London Bus Museum, please write to the Treasurer, the London Bus Museum, Cobham Hall, Brooklands Road, Weybridge, KT13 0QN quoting your phone number and when it would be convenient for us to call you.

Thank you for your support.

