

COBHAM BUS MUSEUM

MAGAZINE



CONTENTS

From the Editor	3
Chairman's report	5
From the Secretary	6
From the Treasurer	9
Membership report	11
Beyond the Gates	13
Museum developments	17
Books	18
From the Newsletter 25 years ago	22
Know your Committee – David Jones	26
A look at the National – part 2	28
Non-London vehicles	36
Will somebody put me out of my misery?	37
T minus sixteen hours and still counting	38
AEC Williams or RT-GT	44
More on rexine	54
Chatham Dockyard Rally 1997	56
Regal rescue	59
Short turns	61
63 miles – the collection of SNB257	63
Letters	68
Open Day update	82
Vehicle news	83
Vic's Christmas Quiz	84
Diary dates	87

FRONT COVER: Seen at Stoke D'Abernon on the RF Running Day are RFs 534 and 315, the latter of which has now passed from London & Country into the safe hands of our Treasurer, hopefully to be returned to its correct red livery some time in the future. Coincidentally, when the 1956 renumbering programme of RFs took place which involved 21 pairs of vehicles, these two would have exchanged identities had that number been extended to 23! (Photo: Alan Charman).

FROM THE EDITOR

So there you have it. Another year consigned to history, but one which has seen Cobham flourish in so many directions, and all achieved despite the continuing frustrations regarding our legal position and the 'other side' making things so difficult for us.

I am delighted to have been able to present to you another jam-packed issue, and one with much good news to report concerning Museum Registration, our membership level and progress with the museum interior. And despite very cold weather, the final Display Day went very well indeed, the RF crowd performing with their usual finesse and Stoke D'Abernon proving an ideal operating base. For 1998 it looks very much as though there will be at least three Display Days, each with a special theme whereby a whole variety of vehicles can take part during the season. More news next issue.

Sadly, as is the case when any organization, business or individual enjoys success, the edge can sometimes be taken off such glory by a small minority who, often as a result of their own inadequacies, seem to begrudge progress such as Cobham's. The movement seems to have more than its fair share of those who harbour petty jealousies, and who gossip in a non-productive nature. And sadly this isn't unique to non-members, as has been found several times this year. Between your Editor and the Committee we know a lot of people and word usually gets back to us one way or another about those having a undeserved dig at Cobham's expense. We know who you are!

Included in this issue is the first in a series of specially donated portraits from the celebrated lens of Peter Durham, who has now taken the decision to retire from active photography. Peter has built up a close relationship with Cobham over the years. He and Carol have been hugely supportive of our work, and we have certainly always enjoyed their visits. Of course, the reproductive quality of our Magazine can never do justice to Peter's shots but I'm delighted that a legacy of his work will live on for a good few issues yet. There will be a review of his final book 'Bus Scene in Colour: Preserved Buses' in

the next issue and (whisper it), he may even find time to visit our next Open Day as his parting shot. We wish Peter and Carol every success for the future and thank them for their support.

I have received many letters and telephone calls in response to the letter from Roy Adams in the previous issue, and have tried to publish a fair cross section. Some of Roy's comments have provoked a degree of anger. A surprising number of members suggested that the membership fee is, if anything, far too low; others wrote in support of Roy's words. As Editor, I am in a somewhat precarious position at times as regards deciding what does and doesn't go in the Magazine (please don't call it a newsletter!) but generally try to print everything I can. A question which did spring to mind was this – if SDL's original appeal for help with Open Day was so shocking how come only one person (Roy) wrote in at the time? Why did it take the others who subsequently claimed to be so angry three months?! When you actually analyse the situation, both Simon and Roy are really on the same side – they both want the best for Cobham. By stimulating the correspondence which ensued, both are likely to have achieved a positive result by getting more members thinking about the topic, and possibly being prompted to get more involved, no matter how occasionally or indeed if just by post or by recruiting other members. It all counts and I welcome the interest shown.

As a result of Roy's letter, the whole issue of membership fees is to be reviewed and they look certain to increase substantially in due course. The question of stall fees at Open Day is also being looked at as we speak, with a two or even three-tier system being introduced to benefit vehicle groups and non-profit making organizations. You will find that the Membership Report contains my further thoughts as regards members' admission to our special events.

Well, that's about it for now. I'm determined to give my keyboard a good rest over Christmas and feel it's well deserved. I hope you've all enjoyed the Magazine this year and I wish you a Happy Christmas and a Bustastic New Year! Over and out.

Mike Nash

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The controversy aroused by inclusions in the Autumn 1997 Magazine in response to appeals for volunteers disturbed me considerably. Firstly, there is no such thing as a hierarchy within this Trust. The officers and committee are deeply involved in every aspect of management and the process of implementation of decisions, through to physical action for completion of each project. Basically, nobody is wholly at fault for criticisms because the benefit of this Trust is in the hearts of those who spoke out, it is due purely to a lack of understanding in one way or another.

What is this Trust's ultimate aim? It is to ensure a safe and secure future for the Trust and its assets. To obtain this, it is imperative the Trust achieves full museum registration and becomes a nationally recognised body. This requires us to ensure the presentation of the collection meets a criteria set by the Museums and Galleries Commission. The standards expected necessitates the expenditure of a substantial amount of capital on the infrastructure of the museum site. The capital we need can only be generated by the members of the Trust – its workforce.

Our main source of income is our annual April Open Day. Statistics not previously released show that when I organised the Open Day in 1994, my records list 63 volunteers. The Brooklands site has been universally accepted as a bigger and better venue for a rapidly expanding event and yet in 1996, Simon Douglas Lane had only 6 extra volunteers. In 1997, a similar number required us to spend money in order to cope, what is known as a diminishing return resulting in a reduced profit. Remember, the building will only require the current massive overhaul once and the requests for maximum effort will only apply for another two years in my estimation.

It is now my proud duty to inform you that our application for full museum registration was approved early in November and I congratulate all volunteers for what is a truly remarkable achievement in such a short space of time. Our progress has been such that when

projected forward would equate favourably to the work outstanding to meet the MGC's standards.

A purpose built and fully enclosed visitor reception and shop is in the process of being built and should be operational by Open Day in 1998. Both remaining bomb shelters have been roofed over, dried out, painted and put into use as stores thus eliminating many spares from the main display hall. New toilet facilities will follow shortly.

I am not ashamed to admit that to further the rate of our objectives, some of us have put in up to 35 hours per week in various ways on Trust work and I hope it puts into perspective some of the views put forward recently.

We have now entered a new league, one which gives this Trust security and an exciting future of progress which can turn from buildings to buses, the very purpose which bonds all members together.

Finally, thank you for your support and I wish you all a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year with a very special "thank you" to our Secretary, John Bedford for his outstanding contribution as the longest continuous serving committee member of the Trust who has made much of this achievement possible.

Peter Plummer

FROM THE SECRETARY

Volunteer help at Cobham

In recent weeks, I have received a number of letters and telephone calls from members who were concerned about correspondence in the Trust Magazine, referring to the low level of volunteer support at Cobham, in particular for the 1998 Open Day. Some have suggested that it might be better if they resigned from the Trust due to their inability to make a more positive commitment.

To avoid any misunderstanding, I would like to explain some of the underlying problems facing any organisation like the Trust, which is heavily dependent on volunteer support to survive and

secure a stable future for itself. The conflicting opinions expressed in the Magazine will need to be viewed in a wider context if they are to be fully understood.

Due to the rapid expansion in museum activity which has taken place since the new committee was elected in 1993, the pressures on it and on the small nucleus of regular volunteers have intensified. The principal reasons for this are, firstly, the urgent need to make good the considerable backlog of building repairs, and secondly, to prepare and implement a museum development programme, to provide better facilities and a more welcoming environment for the increasing number of visitors, and to create a better standard of display.

The need for this was recognised in 1992, when the Trust made its application for membership of the Areas Museums Service for South Eastern England, in the knowledge that if we ultimately achieved Registration under the Museums and Galleries Commission national registration scheme, the museum would enjoy significant long term benefits – principally, eligibility to apply for major external funding.

In October this year, we learned that our application for full registration had been approved. I cannot overstate the importance of this – it is a milestone achievement. However, we must remember that it imposes on us new disciplines and a stricter code of conduct on the way we manage the organisation. This is in addition to the rules governing the management of Registered Charities, which already apply. It is inevitable that as we increase the pace of change at Cobham and introduce new initiatives, the demands on those most closely involved will increase correspondingly.

Reverting to the Open Day: this is the single event which is most demanding on our resources, particularly the need to enlist an adequate number of volunteers to supervise the two display sites. It has gradually established itself as a major event at the start of the rally season each year, and produces a substantial percentage of the Trust's income, on which we depend to meet the museum's running expenses. The input from volunteers on the day will be crucial, but

there is a growing recognition that there is a limit to what can be achieved using volunteers alone – and it is no use pitching our expectations at a level that is not sustainable.

Despite a steep upturn in membership numbers, mainly thanks to better communication with the outside world and an excellent magazine, I am mindful that many members who would like to spend more time at Cobham are prevented from doing so, either because they live too far away or that family or business commitments must take priority. No two people share the same circumstances and it is my view that there should be no compulsion on volunteers.

Thus, for the future, we shall need to assess how much can be achieved with volunteer resources alone and set a realistic balance between projects undertaken in-house and those for which we shall need to engage an outside contractor. The latter will include some of the more specialised schemes now being discussed by the committee.

1997 will be recorded as a milestone – the year in which the Trust achieved Museum Registration. We will need to pursue the opportunities that this presents to achieve key objectives within an acceptable timescale. Changes in the way we manage the museum will be required and these will need to be understood and accepted by everyone. For the future, volunteers will continue to fulfil a crucial role. These sentiments are reflected in a letter I have received.

“The LBPT is at a critical stage in its development. The direction from here needs to include the expectations and aspirations of all involved if it is to continue to attract a satisfied and growing membership, where support for the preservation of London buses can be demonstrated in either an active or quiet and reserved way. Resorting to regular criticism of a large percentage of the membership as ‘apathetic’ via the columns of our otherwise excellent magazine is not, to my mind, the best way to move forward”.

This has been an exceptional year at Cobham – one of the best I can remember. Whether you have been a regular volunteer or occasional helper, thanks for your support. Good wishes for 1998.

John Bedford

FROM THE TREASURER

As this is my first report to appear in the Magazine, I must thank my predecessor Bill Cottrell, for a smooth and efficient handover. It is quite normal for the incoming Treasurer to privately groan and complain at the actions of the past. I can quite honestly say that this is certainly not the case at the LBPT. Everything is clear and concise and it has been very easy to pick up the reins, thank you Bill.

But what of the financial position? Those of you that are regular visitors to Cobham will have noticed the work being carried out on the new “Front of House” which will form the entrance to the Museum and new shop premises. The cost of this work will take most of our funds for the next 6 months. Shop and Catering Sales are a very important source of income to any organisation and we shall be upgrading our Shop stock and offering most if not all of London related books and publications that appear after the New Year. If you are a regular buyer of books and London related models please consider the Cobham shop for your next purchase, mail order can be arranged if you do not have the time to visit.

I am presently engaged with the task of drawing up next year’s Budgets. As usual the fixed costs of actually running the museum take up a major part of our income leaving only a small surplus for improvements to the vehicles. 1998 will have to be a year of consolidation following our investment of over £10000 in the building during the past 12 months. I am keen to see a greater proportion of our income directed to restoration projects but at this moment in time it is very difficult to allocate funds. I have noticed that a large number of members make a separate donation to the Museum in addition to their annual membership renewal from 1998 these donations will be shown separately within our accounts and where possible the funds generated from this source will be allocated to vehicle restoration projects.

The last two Open Days have contributed handsomely to our income and I would like to thank all of those members and helpers

that made the August and October Display Days such a success. I would like to particularly single out the "Catering" team at the October day, it was absolutely freezing yet they maintained a good service and brought in a much needed income, next year we will arrange some heating!

Enough said for now in the next report I shall give more details of the 1998 Budgets and hopefully announce that the long running dispute with the former directors is at an end. It would be nice to be able to delete "Legal Fees" from our budgeted costs altogether.

Alan Charman

1998 OPEN DAY VOLUNTEERS – 5 APRIL 1998

Firstly, thank you to all those who have returned the Blue Form which was included with the last magazine. At present I have had 38 responses, but that falls far short of the number needed to mount and control a successful Open Day.

If you are still thinking about volunteering, have misplaced the form or are not sure what you will be doing so far ahead, *please volunteer your services now* if you can. You can always cancel nearer the time if you have other commitments. A problem in past years has been well intentioned members turning up to volunteer on the day without any prior notice of their availability – with the current size and importance of the Open Day we must plan ahead.

If you do not have the Blue Form for some reason then send me your details without it, not forgetting to mention if you have an existing arrangement with one of the Project Leaders.

Finally, don't forget you will not get a response from your assigned Project Leader until between 2 and 23 March 1998. This is to enable final allocation of volunteers to take place. Thank you for your support – it is appreciated.

John Rawlins, Albany Close, Esher, Surrey KT10 9JR

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Mike Nash

Back in February 1993, when I took over as Membership Secretary and we had just 96 members, I considered that my first objective was to halt the slide in numbers which had been occurring for some years. This was quickly achieved and I soon realised that Cobham had far more potential than was evident at that low point in its history. Now, just under five years later, and with countless hours having been spent championing the cause, it is with great pleasure that I can announce that membership has passed the magic 500 mark. My grateful thanks are extended to all those who have helped me to achieve what at one stage was very much my 'fantasy' target. If I am to single out one person for special mention, it would have to be our Chairman, Peter Plummer, whose tireless leadership and total dedication to Cobham's cause (and indeed that of the movement) is a lesson to us all. Not least to me, for Peter's frequent encouragement and appreciation of my own efforts have often served as a tonic at times when I've been flagging. It has been a privilege to serve alongside Cobham's most loyal servant and indeed such a talented Committee. Great progress has been made in 1997. Now it's up to us all to make sure that 1998 is even better.

As a result of Roy Adams' letter, the subject of membership fees has since attracted much debate, with a number of prominent members suggesting that the rate is far too low. Certainly, much membership income is swallowed up by this very publication, but then you want a good magazine don't you? The Open Day and Display Days provide the bulk of the Trust's income for all other activities and without it Cobham would very quickly go bust. Members enjoy free admission to the museum on all other dates, and indeed, can do so on these three or four crucial fund raising days each year in return for a little help behind the scenes. Now, is that really so much to ask? As far as I'm concerned, those that don't want to help and yet still expect free admission thereby reducing their effective

membership fee by some £9 should think very carefully. Is £3 really all you're prepared to contribute towards Cobham's progress. Is that all you feel four issues of this magazine are worth? Sorry folks, but that isn't what I call support, it's called taking the p*** and I feel rather sorry for you.

I would welcome further suggestions regarding the membership fee (not necessarily for publication) with a view to establishing a new rate for implementation at the next AGM. In the meantime, as I received no feedback at all about the suggestion to charge 'late payers' at £15. I will adopt this procedure for the time being in the hope that it encourages more members to pay by Standing Order and perhaps Deed of Covenant.

We welcome the following members to the Trust:

614	Steven Hook	Haslemere		
615	Paul Soper	Congresbury		
616	Richard Jones	Ashford, Middx.		
617	P.D. Penny	West Byfleet		
618	C.L. Bateson	Staines	RT4421	MN
619	Mr/Mrs T. Spooner	St. Mary's Platt		
620	Paul Collins	New Addington		
621	Dan Cranefield	Chalfont St. Giles		DD
622	David Piggott	Hanworth		DD
623	Richard Quinton	Crowborough		AC
624	Mark Stoggall	Romford		DD
625	Mike Scott	Tunbridge Wells		MN
626	Colin Hockley	Burley-in-Wharfedale	RT981	
627	Paul Barrett	Bagshot	LeyNat NPJ 472R	AF
628	Kenneth Hartshorne	Burley-in-Wharfedale	RT1574	
629	John Lovell	Minehead		
630	Malcolm Hodgson	Keswick	RF404/508 'RE' THU 354G	MN
631	Colin Rivers	Ashford, Kent	RF679	
632	Graham Waltham	Tolworth		RV

Recruited by: AC – Alan Charman, AF – Alan Fairbrother, DD – Display Day, MN – Mike Nash, RV – Robert Vince. Please can all members try to recruit at least one new member during 1998.

BEYOND THE GATES

John Hinson

I must apologize for the absence of this column in the Autumn magazine. I have a number of excuses on tap – after all, our Editor did say in that issue that “some features have had to be carried over to later issues” – but that kind of excuse would be unfair. I was just too bogged down with work matters to finish it in time. As a result, some of this news may now seem a little old...

In July we took part in the South Coast Run (organised by the Routemaster Operators & Owners Association) and thoroughly enjoyed it. Having gained a reputation amongst some for an aversion towards Routemasters, I thought I had better make the effort to look at a few more closely. There were, understandably, quite a number of RMs on the run but I found it a pleasant change for the preserved examples to well outnumber the less attractive “in service” examples. There were many finely restored vehicles and others well on the way, some that caught my eye were RM196, 308, 642 and 737. RM254 was (dare I say) much improved by the provision of period adverts and of course the beautiful RMC1477 was present, too. Perhaps the one I was most impressed with was Steve Fennell's RM835 which has been restored to Clydeside Scottish livery. How nice, at last, to see one specifically restored to “up north” livery rather than just rallied in “as withdrawn” condition.

We also had the pleasure of following RM642 (in RF453) back from Chatham in August all the way to Vauxhall. It was nice to be in central London in the company of a vehicle that looked completely at home in those surroundings. I found it amazing that we had, coincidentally, chosen identical routes for 50% of our journeys.

At the Chertsey running day (July) there were two freshly restored modernized Green Line RFs that looked delightful together, RFs 28 and 213. Both have been seen around at rallies before (213 for a while in NBC green) but now bear immaculate original livery. Both also appeared at the Amersham running day in October, too, along

with similar RF48 which will soon look as good but at the moment looks very typical in "in service condition" with some corner panels in fresh pink primer.

A couple of the volunteer vehicles for Chertsey did not make it, and two vehicles from local members stepped in at short notice to plug the gaps. The only too well-known RP90, which had just been rostered the odd journey on Green Line 716 to Walton ended up spending most of its day deputising for a red RT (!) on route 237A. And if you think that was bizarre enough, then what of Ken Wade's Lancaster Corporation AEC Regent No 73 appearing on the 461 to Walton! I made the time to take a trip in that one, and a very pleasant journey it was. Well done, chaps, for keeping the service going.

The last rally of the season for most of us was the gathering at Stoke D'Abernon with its associated free service on route 462. It was the first time I have seen RF315 in its green livery as applied by its previous owners (London & Country) but it is now owned by our Treasurer, Alan Charman. I understand he is keeping it up to PSV standard and the vehicle may be hired through Memory Lane Vintage Omnibus Services. I also took a ride on RF530 which looks as nice inside as out. It doesn't look over-restored, it just feels right and brings back memories.

On display at Stoke D'Abernon I saw Paul Brophy's RF486, which I have bumped into (not literally) at so many rallies this year. This is another vehicle that changed hands not so long ago (it was Roger West's) and it is nice to still see it around so much.

Also on display there was Peter Penfold's RF4, one that doesn't make too many public appearances. It bears signs of some recent repanelling and should look nice when finished. I notice Dave Kriesler's RF10 is also undergoing some body repairs. With similar RF13 expected out from hibernation shortly, restored to Hampson's of Oswestry livery, we can expect quite a few nice 1RF1 buses about in 1998.

Elsewhere on the RF front, some more good news is that RFs 404 and 508 have passed into the safe hands of recent recruit Malcolm

Hodgson from Keswick in the Lake District, who also owns 'celebrity' Bristol RE THU 354G. Malcolm and a couple of friends plan to fully restore both RFs for rallying and occasional vintage tours in the Lake District. All three vehicles are now safely stored inside the very factory where Leyland Nationals were built, at Lilyhall near Workington, and it is hoped that 508 will be out and about late in 1998.

One surprise vehicle to emerge, after many years of storage in the north, is RLH32. Having been given a very thorough clean, inside and out, it doesn't look bad at all. It is presently undergoing some mechanical work just round the corner from where we keep our own buses near High Wycombe, and whilst I understand some more long term repairs will be necessary, I think there is a good chance we will see it rallied in 1998. I notice there is a shortage of a few seat-bottoms – if anyone knows of any, even ones that may need re-covering, please call Richard Proctor on 01932-560251.

I continue with my programme to educate myself, and other members that know nothing about non-LT vehicles, by telling you a little bit about a Bristol RE belonging to a recently joined member by the name of Steve Lane from Woking. He tells me that his vehicle, BHN 693N, is a Bristol RELH6L which defines it as a long coach chassis (hence the first 'L' and the 'H' for high floor-level) with Leyland (hence the second 'L') O.680 engine and it was new to United Automobile Services (fleet number 6093). Steve tells me he rode on the vehicle when it was barely two years old, when it worked route 505 between Newcastle and Berwick.

The coach was later allocated to Stokesley garage, and was withdrawn in 1989 and sold to a firm by the curious name of Catch-A-Bus of East Boldon. In 1991 it passed to Star Travel, near Durham. Steve bought the coach for preservation in 1995 and it is now part of a collection of five REs which Steve is involved with.

Before he could even move the vehicle, Steve had to put the engine back together and he says he sometimes wondered about his sanity working on the vehicle on the side of a hill in driving snow!

(Relax, we've all been through that). Eventually, the vehicle was fit to move, and it made its way south, via the Halifax bus rally, to St. Leonards (near Hastings) where it was initially stored. One day we will see the vehicle out and about, and I look forward to that.

Amongst the vehicles I have heard of as "for sale" recently are RM1842 (BFW544B) seen at Shoreham rally, caravan, externally tatty, untaxed, contact Ian 01507 313830 or 0374 887550; GS28 (BSV 910) – ex caravan, I believe. There is a risk this vehicle may be exported if not saved, contact R N Nicholas 01938 561621; 1096F – 1959 Ford Thames van "fully restored", contact N Anscomb 01293 820907. Note that two of the above no longer retain their original registrations.

Is anybody lacking the correct brass plate showing the fleet number and chassis number on their RT? Michael Lane, at 29 Hazeldene Drive, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 3NJ has an enormous pile of these that came from Aldenham Works some while ago and which probably represent about a half of the class. He intends to dispose of them to stall-holders at rallies etc. eventually, but anybody interested in specific vehicles should contact him as soon as possible. Amazingly, Aldenham seemed to often make new plates for vehicles, so even if your RT already has its plate, he may have a spare to go on your mantelpiece. I certainly found a brass plate to replace the stamped tinplate one on RT4275.

Finally, I have spare copies of London Bus Magazine numbers 37 and 42 which I would like to dispose of. Both contain "Twenty-Five years Ago" chapters, for 1956 and 1957 respectively. If anyone is interested, they are available to the first to contact me for the cost of the postage. Perhaps you could send me some notes about YOUR bus (for this column) at the same time? □

John Hinson,

The Shambles, Graham Road, Wealdstone, Middlesex HA3 5RE



RE-scued Bristol... As featured in John Hinson's 'Beyond the Gates', this is Steve Lane's Bristol RELH6L, BHN 693N, which was rescued last year from the North-East of England. Your Editor has been fortunate enough to have driven three of Steve's other RE buses, both of Gardner and Leyland variety and found them to be most likeable machines and very lively too. (Photograph: Steve Lane).



Early Atlantean... A handful of AN vehicles still soldier on with London & Country but the first of the class, AN1, was a most welcome attendee at Duxford, complete with net curtains and converted into living accommodation. The owner is from Great Yarmouth and he hopes to track down another early AN so that this one can be returned to standard internally. (Photograph: Mike Nash).

MUSEUM DEVELOPMENTS

David Jones

I was pleased to report that the Trust's final application for full registration as a museum with the Museum and Galleries Commission was considered at their meeting in October and duly approved, something which few other road transport museums have achieved. We can now continue with our plans to become a proper working museum, with help from grants which registration allows us to seek. Already the Science Museum's PRISM fund has helped with the purchase of T31 (subject to the Trust becoming fully registered) and an application for assistance is now being made for STL2377. Additional funding is likely to be available for both environmental improvements and restoration projects. The fact that we have made the considerable effort to get our house in order to achieve this is an assurance that any funds made available will be well spent.

The new foyer area is under construction and the electrical stores are being re-sited to the nearby bomb shelter, allowing their former location to be converted to a "staff" entrance and disabled and parent facilities. Graham Ruddock is planning informative displays for the Byfleet Road end of the building and has been instrumental in securing the loan of an RT chassis from Dick Garbutt for use as an exhibit. A formal "Education Policy" is to be drawn up as well. Plans are in hand to rearrange some vehicles in the "dead row" to allow STL2093 to be properly exhibited as an example of the problems encountered with restoration.

There will inevitably be further changes in the way in which Cobham is run – we need to be seen to be more professional, bearing in mind that our visitors will be paying to see what is going on, and good housekeeping in public areas will be a necessity. Whilst this will, in some cases, be difficult to adjust to, it has to be borne in mind that the ultimate aim of us all is to ensure the continued preservation of the buses, from which we can still gain a great deal of pleasure, which is why we're all here! □

BOOKS

LONDON'S UTILITY BUSES

Ken Blacker.

Published by Capital Transport. £19.95

Capital Transport has published what will probably become the standard work on the London Utility bus as they have previously done with their superbly produced volumes on other London classes.

This book is to the usual Capital format being hard bound on quality paper with generous illustrations. Ken Blacker has done some detailed research and come up with some fascinating and comprehensive coverage written in his usual accessible style.

Including the appendices, the total number of pages is one hundred and seventy six. The first chapter of the book gives an overview and outline of all the Utilities as supplied to London and defines the utility vehicle. Chapters two to eight tell of the various Leyland Titans Bristol Ks, Guy Arabs and Daimler CWs with their varied bodywork in the order that they were delivered to the LPTB.

The ninth chapter deals in detail with their entry into service with route allocations and garages, which evidently were chosen because they had the highest entrance doors and the "utilities" were higher than the usual standard. Following on are chapters detailing the day to day operations in the capital or mostly its suburbs and the gradual running down and withdrawal of the fleet as standard RT family vehicles became available. One interesting chapter is devoted to the Green Line Daimlers that operated the East London to Essex routes. The utilities were overhauled at Chiswick and a chapter deals with this. Ultimately their bodywork started to fall apart and overhauls ended and mass withdrawals were undertaken. However many were sold for further service at home and overseas and much illustrated information is given on this new lease of life which ensured that many vehicles worked for longer outside of the capital than within.

The appendices include a fleet summary with stock, registration, and body numbers with makes of bodies. A monthly summary of new

vehicle licensing and allocations and details of Daimlers sold to Belfast and Guys sold to Edinburgh and a variety of vehicles sold to Ceylon.

This informative, quality publication is a "must" for the shelves of all dedicated London bus enthusiasts who want a complete history of all LT vehicles and slots in between the wartime RT volume and the RT story, (which really should be updated and re-printed). It would make the ideal Christmas present.

Phill Cruise.

TROLLEYBUSES IN NORTHWEST LONDON – A PICTORIAL SURVEY

Produced and published by The London Trolleybus Preservation Society. £15.

This photo album of trolleybus memories has just been published by the LTPS and can be obtained direct from them. It features the vehicles and routes that operated from Stonebridge Park, Colindale (Hendon) and Finchley depots in the area from Barnet in the North to North Acton in the South and Sudbury in the West to Paddington in the East.

The illustrations mainly date from the latter years of the system but a number of early ones are included where appropriate. How many know that an aeroplane once collided with a trolleybus, for example! Most of the illustrations are in monochrome but eight pages in the centre of the book are in colour.

Of the vehicles themselves the majority are the C and N classes that provided the bulk of service from SE and CE with a selection of others such as the Js and L3s from Finchley and other vehicles that reached the area from depots outside the main scope of the book. Contemporary illustrations of the LTPS's own C2, 260 and L3, 1521 are included. Connecting with the first volume on West London, the 630 and 628 illustrations show some of Hammersmith Depot's D, K and P class vehicles. Highgate trolleys make a minor appearance too.

The photographic quality is very good, helped by the glossy paper, and 128 pages ensure full coverage that includes depot views,

overhead shots and details of traffic notices and associated paper work.

I spent many happy hours travelling on the routes illustrated with my fellow "spotter" who has remained my oldest friend and the realisation that this was all of thirty six years ago comes as a shock. Looking back at this treasury of photos it is only yesterday! I can thoroughly recommend this book to fellow trolley bus devotees, it will bring back many memories and is excellent value for money too.

Phill Cruise

LONDON TRANSPORT BUSES AND COACHES 1961

John AS Hambley

Published by Harold Martin and Redman Ltd. £13.95

Having jumped a few years, this volume in the now large series of photographic albums from John Hambley has probably reached a time that many of us remember well. 1961 was the year that I started as a bus spotter, long before anoraks came on to the scene too, thank goodness! The trolleybus replacement scheme was well underway and a number of illustrations are of the replacement RMs and the first batch of experimental RMLs. The RT family dominate as would be expected, but there are also many fascinating pictures of sold out of service PSVs and service vehicles.

The usual appendices of contemporary garages and updates to the captions of earlier volumes complete the book. The illustrations of the 1961 edition are up to the usual crisp standard that, with possibly one exception, we have had in previous volumes. Good value for money, with an excellent selection of photos and informative captions make this a worthwhile addition to the groaning bookshelves.

Phill Cruise

LONDON'S WARTIME GAS BUSES

A G Newman

Published by Capital Transport Publishing. £5.95.

This book has sixty-four pages, being in landscape format with the soft covers as found on Capitals usual A5 sized publications. It is on rather a specialised subject and was produced as the result of a talk given to Friends of the London Transport Museum. The introduction gives some background with details of the pioneering work done during WW1 by the LGOC with gas powered B types. The main section of the book concerns the conversion of ex-LGOC petrol engined STs to producer gas from the beginning of the second world war, using units mounted on trailers. I am sure most Cobham members will have heard of these. The details given in this interesting book should broaden that knowledge. I must admit to thinking that it could be heavy going but was pleasantly surprised and the interesting illustrations helped to make this a good read at a modest price. I wonder if any of our engineers could come up with a producer gas bus powered by best bitter?

Phill Cruise

PLEASE KEEP OUR MUSEUM TIDY

A quick reminder to members that now we have achieved full Museum Registration it is very important that we keep Cobham tidy and presentable. This extends not only to the 'shop floor' where tools and equipment should be put away after use, but also to the canteen. Please wash up your cups, plates and cutlery afterwards rather than leave them for someone else to clear up, as seems to be the case at present.

Members are also reminded that in the interest of safety and hygiene, smoking is now restricted to the balcony area only. Please don't light up in the canteen, nor on the ground floor. Thank you for helping to keep Cobham looking organised and professional. □

FROM THE NEWSLETTER 25 YEARS AGO

Compiled by Bill Cottrell

May/June 1972

The major news was a report on the Bus of Yesteryear Rally at Phoenix Road Commercial Vehicle Park, St. Pancras. There were nine entrants in the pre-1940 class (a figure we would have trouble matching today). The Park Royal Trophy for post-war LT vehicles was won by RF10. The Reg Stack Memorial Trophy for the most promising contribution by young persons was awarded to the owners of the same, Dick Daniels and Dave Kriesler.

At the end of July, D142 will be shipped out to Japan where it will be the centrepiece of exhibitions in Tokyo and other cities on behalf of the Department of Trade and Industry. It will return home around Christmas time.

ST922 is still plodding round route 100 without too many problems apart from, recently, signs of overheating apparently due to a partial blockage in the reconditioned radiator.

From the exciting to what is almost becoming the routine – the Group's "private bus museum" at Weybridge which is now fully booked up with 35 buses. Water and toilet facilities have been restored, also the telephone, and electrical work is in hand to be connected up as soon as the local electricity board have decided the premises actually exists on their records. Following an attempted break-in, additional security work was rapidly put in hand and the building is now fully operational, although there is much work to be done including the construction of a clubroom, decorations and the inevitable cleaning and clearing of the grounds. Amongst the vehicles installed are the Dennis, Q83, 933J, T448, T792, G351, CR14, 2 Paris buses, Birkenhead Guy, HCVC Titan, Lowestoft Regent 2, RT1173, B214, Provincial Regal, Dennis Ace, Blue Bus Daimler, whilst scheduled to put in an appearance shortly is LT1059, 971J tree-lopper ex-front entrance STL, FUF63 Brighton Regent, ex-

Mulley PSI, Leyland Comet coach, ST922 on completion of route 100 duty, chassis of 1036TV and various other bits and pieces (literally).

Mid July 1972

The chassis of the former Turnover Bus 1036TV has been recovered from Silver End and now lodges at Cobham pending decision as to its future. Meantime the local council have submitted the demand for rates of some £1250 against which we have entered an appeal, which should give us hours of fun in the next few months.

Mid-September 1972

The group was incorporated as a limited company on 17th July 1972 and its operations were transferred to the new company effective 1st August 1972. Work on improving the appearance and amenities at the Group's museum premises at Cobham, Surrey continues with further clearing of the grounds and guttering, erection of new fencing along the southern border, glazing of external windows utilising toughened glass from RFs, and glazing of interior windows with material from RTs. Work has commenced on the erection of canteen facilities and accommodation on the first floor, by kind assistance of RT1173 Group.

Visitors to the premises on Sunday afternoons are on the increase and one was a former employee of Vickers who gave us some interesting history concerning the building and Silvermere lake behind. Apparently three similar hangers were built in Redhill Road for experimental work. Sir George Edwards was then head of Vickers Experimental Department and in his team was one Barnes Wallis. The dambusting bouncing bomb was tested on Silvermere lake, Grand Slam and Tallboy for penetration of U-boat pens, magnetic rings attached to Warwick aircraft for blowing up mines, barrage balloon cutters fixed to leading edges of aircraft wings, were all developed. Originally there were additional office facilities attached to the building on the Redhill Road side but these were dismantled some years ago when the building was let for agricultural use only.

Vehicles arriving since the last newsletter – tree-lopper 971J (ex-STL1470) from Ipswich and now taken over by the RT1173 Group, STL2377 towed in from Jack Mulleys at Ixworth and LT1059 from Winkleigh,

John Shearman returned from his world-wide journeying to report on an STD in Yugoslavia and a utility Daimler he had seen. The STD is 171, HLW100 at NoviSad and the Group has asked British Leyland to make initial enquiries of the operator with the view to ascertaining its current status and condition and the possibility of bringing it back to the UK. The other is D205 with Ceylon Transport Board which when last seen was in complete condition and a likely candidate for return to the UK.

November 1972

Improvements to the premises continue, the latest amenity being the lighting and power supply which is now partially operational. Signs have been fitted to the gate posts, and an additional notice is displayed at the car park entrance at weekends inviting people to view the vehicles as a day member for 5p.

Vehicle News

RT4482 ex-Amersham and District Bus Preservation Society vehicle has been sold to an organisation in Worcester for use as a children's summer camp transport vehicle, RT3236 will be repainted red and probably sold to Conn Murphy in Canada. RTL1163 was recently towed from Richmond to Cobham where it was fitted with a replacement engine from RTL305. T448c rests temporarily at LPC Coachworks where it is having the rear end rebuilt and an internal refurbish. ST922 ceased operations on route 100 on 28th October and after some private hire work, has now returned to Cobham for the winter. It is estimated the bus covered 15,000 miles on service and has proved to be very reliable.

RT3915 after having the staircase and platform rebuilt to offside exit, has been exported to America.

RLH14 was sold in Germany after attending a British week there, while RLH45 was withdrawn from the Lesney fleet and exported to New Zealand.

Christmas 1972

Two RF buses are gracing the museum at present, ex Wimbledon Coaches, which have to be found good homes – a veritable give-away at approx. £200 apiece.

There will be an Open Day on the premises on Sunday, January 14th between 10 am and 2 pm.

Fanfare for Europe takes place in Brussels from 5th to 7th January to mark Britain's entry into the Common Market, with Princes ST922 taking part in the celebrations.

Thus concludes a glimpse of the goings-on in 1972, the year that saw D142 and ST922 put back on the road and the establishment of Cobham Bus Museum, a truly remarkable year. □

Thanks to Bill for a fascinating insight into just how active things were at Cobham during its first season. Our achievements during 1997 are a fitting tribute to those pioneering efforts of 1972 and I hope that Bill will still be compiling this occasional column when our 50th anniversary occurs in 2022!



KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE – DAVID JONES



An ardent AEC fan of 1957 vintage, I have been interested in buses since early trips to Battersea Fun Fair and Clapham Common brought me into contact with RTs, RTLs and brand new RMs. Even at primary school the sight of Margo's pink RTs caught my interest as fellow pupils were taken on outings (what would BUSK make of such things now?). My secondary school overlooked the Oval, and, once I had started cycling to school, lunch times would often be taken up with a visit to nearby Camberwell or Walworth garages.

At crunch time I had a choice of joining the insurance industry, National Express, British Rail or London Transport. It was the latter that was generous (or daft) enough to offer me a place on their traffic administration training scheme, which meant three years of postings to various Underground or Bus departments. Buses eventually became the chosen path and I now run the coach and bus hire operation of Stagecoach East London at Romford garage – a 24 hour-a-day, year round job, as is being a husband and father of two.

During my training period I was sent on a day release study course

where one of the other students invited me to join the group which went on to purchase RF503. This took me to Continental Pioneer's yard at Richmond where I encountered RF672 and its owners, whose preservation objectives were more in keeping with my own than those of the RF 503 group, and who joined when 503 was "subbed" by 392.

My involvement with RF672 brought membership of the then LBPG and in the early 1980s I served (as in jail sentence!!!!) on the Committee with Geoff "Ding" Singer, with whom I jointly produced the group newsletter. If Nashers thinks his are controversial, he should see some of ours! My latest involvement with the Committee began a couple of Christmases ago following the departure of Roger West (a case of go east, young West?) with a view to continuing his work on gaining full registration for Cobham with the Museum and Galleries Commission – a task which I have now successfully completed. My remaining work is to ensure that the documents relating to almost everything in the museum are brought up to the standard required by the MGC and that new arrivals are also correctly documented as well as helping administratively with the transformation of Cobham from a shed full of dead buses to a living museum for the education and enjoyment of future generations. □

DISPLAY DAYS 1998

The dates and full details for the 1998 Display Days will be confirmed in the next issue.

Expect there to be at least three, each with a special theme and perhaps a few surprises!

A LOOK AT THE NATIONALS – PART 2

Mike Lloyd

One of the things that I found surprising about the Nationals was their individuality. I expected that identical, standard vehicles would behave in identical ways just as, I suppose, one Ford Escort or Mini behaves just like another (not that I've ever owned an example of either) but in fact the buses were very much individuals. This was apparent especially when driving them. Sometimes in the heat of the moment I might be told to grab some tools and "that one over there", and rush off to a broken-down bus somewhere. In these circumstances the last thing on my mind was the number of the bus I was driving, but often I'd be driving along and think, "Hello, this must be 82 (or whichever)", and I was almost invariably right, so distinctive were so many of them. I've certainly noticed this effect with RTs in preservation, for instance, but put this down to maintenance and the age of the various components; I certainly did not expect to find such individuality in the fleet of Nationals. It worked in various ways, too. I've mentioned that 77 was no good, ever. At Hatfield, 325 never seemed to be any good, no matter what was done to it. By contrast, at St Albans in my time there we had 356 and 367 which were so utterly reliable that we hardly ever set eyes on them. Out they went early in the morning, back they came late at night, day in, day out, all their lives. It made you wonder why this should be, certainly I could never explain it logically, it was just something we accepted.

Even less logical and more inexplicable was the strange case of SNCs 141 and 142, almost a case for Mulder and Scully to look into. These were examples with odd registrations, but that wasn't all that was odd. SNC141 (GPD 295N) and 142 (XPG 242N) started their lives together at Tring. When that garage closed, they moved together to HH where I tended to refer to them as The Terrible Twins. 142 carried "TG" on its running number holder for ages almost as an act of defiance, and I admit that, whenever the letters were painted out, I rubbed off the paint to reveal them once more, just for fun, you

understand. These two coaches were perhaps typical of the better Nationals, they worked well and didn't give much trouble, being average to good specimens, and as London Country slowly and painfully got its act together, so they too slowly improved, settling down to a reliable and uneventful life on the 708 Aylesbury to East Grinstead route. Perhaps because their non-standard registrations marked them out, perhaps for some other reason, I rather took a fancy to the pair and I always thought well of them for just getting on with the job, something so many of their sisters seemed incapable of doing. All this changed, however, when one fine day someone in Head Office, where they knew nothing and cared less, decided to have some fun moving a few vehicles around the fleet, and it was decreed that 142 should go to Amersham. I remember trying to persuade the Garage Engineering Superintendent and even the Traffic Superintendent, to see if we could hang on to 142 and get rid of some other, perhaps more troublesome, vehicle, and while there was some sympathy for my views, eventually Head Office had their way. Call it coincidence if you like, but immediately 141 went into a decline. She would suffer annoying failures, mysterious leaks, odd silly breakdowns, all quite out of character. I wasn't the only one to notice this and one of the Green Line drivers asked me if I'd noticed how much trouble 141 had become since 142 went away. Most of my fellow mechanics thought I was mad but one or two agreed that 141 was now a lot worse than previously, but that isn't the end of the story.

One day there was a phone call between the engineers at HH and those at MA. I don't recall why, probably one or other garage was trying to borrow a spare part or a special tool which was quite normal practice. Having sorted out the immediate business, we turned the conversation to general matters, such as the usual topic of how many vehicles we had been short for service that morning and how the lost mileage was looking – this latter was the main criterion by which success or failure was measured, never mind how many people you carried or how much money you took, how many miles you lost was what counted. The Amersham engineer remarked that they were

doing well and would have done a lot better if it hadn't been for... "That bloody heap of sh** (you know what) 142 you sent us. What a (expletive) wreck, don't you blokes do any maintenance? etc., etc." It happened that I was the one on the phone at the HH end, and I was incredulous. I told the chap how good and reliable we had found 142 and that it never gave us any real trouble. He told me of a whole catalogue of problems they'd had with the bus and offered to send it back – an offer I was happy to accept but of course it wasn't our decision and it didn't come back. You can laugh if you like, but it remains my belief that those two were missing each other.

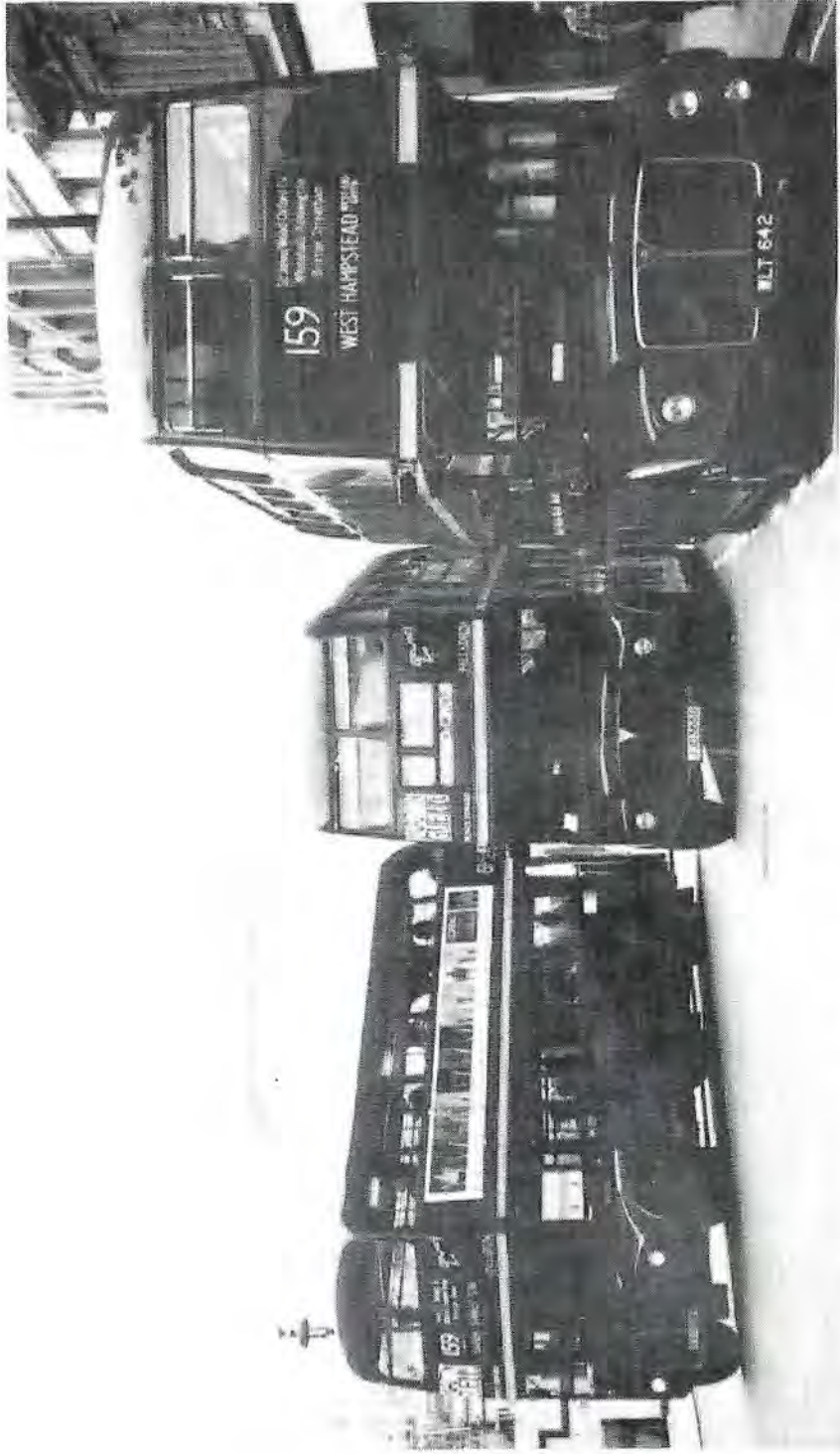
A few weeks later, 142 was being used by the driving school for type training and appeared in the yard at HH while the crew went for tea. I looked round the yard for 141, but she wasn't in. To my surprise I was later accosted by one of our drivers who asked me if I knew what had turned up in the yard again. "Yes", I told him, "142's come back home."

"Can't you find 141 and park them together?" he asked. "It might make 141 a decent coach again."

As a tailpiece to this story, 141 and 142 were both sold by London Country, and both ended up with one of the constituents of the once-great Midland Red. I hope they were again happy together. Sadly, 142 went the way of all flesh some years ago, but 141 is still soldiering on and is currently operating in Yorkshire where I intend to go and see her, just for old time's sake of course.

Curiously, there was at least one other case of a National with its own preference as regards work. It was LNB69, originally allocated to Tring for the short 387 route between the town, the railway station and the village of Aldbury. The bus replaced the curious XMB15/MBS4 of not so blessed memory and was, perhaps by a long stretch of the imagination, therefore a sort of honorary AEC. Anyway, when TG closed it came to HH with less than 2100 miles on its clock, never having ventured further from home than the aforementioned pretty village with its photogenic pond and ancient stocks. Unlike other LNBS at HH it was all over green which made it a bit





Routemaster Run... Saturday July 12th saw Peter Simmonds take his R1642 out for a run along route 159, on which he works from Brixton Garage. His ever improving vehicle is seen in the company of service buses RM11361 and RML2366 at Trafalgar Square. (Photograph: Peter Simmonds).

different, our remaining examples of the class having been used initially on Green Line work had white upper parts. Anyway, 69 at her new home still found herself working her old route as often as not but of course inevitably she would also be allocated to the very much longer 301 service from Aylesbury to Watford. She didn't like this long distance nonsense, and showed her disapproval by various breakdowns and failures, including on one occasion the rather desperate ploy of setting her rear end on fire. Oddly, no such occurrences ever manifested themselves when she was on the good old 387. Who said buses are just machines...?

Many people regarded the National's greatest failure as its engine, the "headless wonder", so called because unlike conventional engines, it did not have detachable cylinder heads. However, I feel that the engine itself was by no means a bad one, the problems arose rather from the installation and the auxiliaries. We found that National engines lasted about 2 to 2½ years. In the good old days, LT changed RT engines at this time scale because if they did so, it prevented the engines from failing spectacularly a few months later. Better to overhaul an engine with a few months life left than to run it on and have it self-destruct when it would only be of use as scrap. If the same philosophy had extended to the National, engines blowing up would have been rare indeed, but accountants seemed to take the view that it was better to extract maximum life from the unit – if it happened to knock holes in itself in the process, too bad. To illustrate that the engine was not at all as bad as had been suggested, let's take a couple of examples. One was another SNC, this time 157, a vehicle which was incredibly reliable as far as we at HH were concerned. One day, however, the Foreman received an irate phone call from his opposite number at Chelsham wanting to know when we were going to do something about "That bloody 157 of yours, it's running us out of oil, every time it comes past here we have to put a gallon in." Checking the fuel sheets, completed nightly on run-in, showed that the vehicle had a healthy appetite for oil, but nothing alarming. Nevertheless, we kept it in one day to see if there was a leak or some other

problem. Investigation showed the entire power unit awash with oil and dirt, and when we had cleaned everything down we found that just about every single nut, bolt, pipe union, everything on the engine was so loose that it was a wonder the whole thing hadn't dropped to bits. Yet this vehicle had worked day in, day out on our longest and probably most demanding route without ever giving any mechanical trouble. Of course we tightened everything up, it took most of a day, and the staff at Chelsham had no more cause to complain, but it was in my view a very good engine that would run in that condition for so long.

Similarly, one cold winter's day the management decided the time had come to put antifreeze in all the buses. On the Nationals there was a drain plug on the radiator and all we used to do was drain out about a gallon of water and top up with neat antifreeze, sending the bus straight back out on service again and relying on the water pump to mix up the antifreeze solution. Alas, SNB79 had a weak radiator and attempts to remove the drain plug resulted in ripping it bodily out of the radiator leaving a gaping hole. The culprit (not me!) went to report the problem, leaving the waterless bus in the garage doorway where its next driver found it and, unknown to us, drove it away on service without any coolant. I was assigned to go out and recover it and roared madly off in another bus. I missed it at the Bus Station and followed its route anxiously, looking for a seized-up bus at the roadside. Unfortunately, it was on the 317 service which followed quite separate routes according to the day of the week. I took the route I knew, but it seemed that 79 went the other way and I returned to the garage to report my failure to catch it. "All we can do now," the Engineering Superintendent suggested, "is wait for the phone call." And so we did. We waited, and we waited, and no-one rang in, and the time passed, and still no-one rang in, and then to everyone's surprise, SNB79 came into the garage. "This one's fuming a bit", the driver pointed out. The Superintendent was not amused. Almost jumping up and down, he yelled, "It would, wouldn't it – there's no bloody water in it, you're lucky it didn't blow up!"

Anyway, we allowed it to cool down, replaced the damaged radiator then as a precaution changed the engine oil which had been well cooked. That engine continued to run to my certain knowledge for two years and gave no trouble. Not bad for a "duff" design.

No, the real trouble with the engine was that it had started out as a vertical design and to fit it under the bus it was laid on its side. This naturally affected the circulation of water and oil, so to correct the problems, various external pipes were incorporated. These pipes were thoughtfully arranged to chafe on each other so they gradually wore away and leaked, and while as we have seen loss of coolant was not a serious matter, loss of lubricant most certainly was. In the end, we used to wrap the pipes with bits of rubber hose secured with cable ties wherever they touched. It looked very tatty but it kept the vital fluids where they were needed.

The turbocharger was another problem with these engines. It was too small for the work it had to do and when it failed, usually prematurely, it resulted in power loss, smoky exhaust and the engine running on its own lubricating oil. Leyland learned their lesson here, as the Olympian and Tiger engines had a more substantial unit that gave very little trouble. Our neighbouring operator, United Counties, once modified a National engine to run without the turbocharger and reported that it made no difference to the vehicle's performance. Although turbo removal on a large scale basis did not follow this interesting experiment, it was proof to my mind that the unit was inadequate. I once saw a Ford car with a turbo and the device looked the same as that used on the bus, which tells us something about Leyland's knowledge of turbocharging at the time.

The fuel pump was also inadequate. It would not last a year without needing recalibration and was remarkably unreliable compared with its predecessors. I once met the man who had been responsible for the specification of the pump at CAV and I told him what a load of rubbish it was. He agreed entirely and pointed out that CAV had been forced to cut the quality down to a minimum because Leyland refused to pay for a better item. CAV had reputedly told Leyland that

the pump as specified wouldn't do the job but, as usual, Leyland knew best. Similarly, the injectors were not much good either. American Bosch supplied them and they were known as AMBAC from that name. Unlike conventional injectors, they were much more difficult to service, and they too would not complete a year's service on our admittedly high-mileage buses. On several occasions I have seen a set of injectors removed from a bus being tested and only one or perhaps two of the six would be working correctly. No wonder Nationals were smoky!

The worst bit of cheeseparing of all was the compressor. The National was absolutely dependent on air for every function. Not only did it have air brakes and electro-pneumatic gears, it was air suspended, with air doors, air wipers and even an air throttle. To supply all this air there was a compressor no bigger than that fitted to an RT or RF and a massive series of tanks, pipes and valves. The compressor had a water cooled head and was pressure fed with oil from the engine lubricating system. As a result, and also from its getting its supply of air from the engine air intake at the back of the bus, all it did was pump a mixture of oil, dirt, water and a little air into the system. Every National had its air system contaminated by oil and many of the failures we experienced were the direct result of the poor design of the compressor and ancillaries.

This necessarily brief look at the National cannot hope to give a detailed history of my experiences working with the vehicles. It does show, I hope, that the bus could have been very much better had Leyland invested more in its early development. The concept was sound, but the detailed specification let the vehicle down badly. Over the long years that the bus has been around, operators have found ways round many of the problems, often simplifying the electrics, removing unnecessary features that were only there for show, and even fitting new power trains when they couldn't come to terms with the 510-series engine. Now the National is going into preservation, it's a part of British bus history if not a part that many people admire unreservedly.

What would be my advice to a preservationist of a National? First of all, get together enough material to ensure that you can put the vehicle into its original condition now, while you still can. Over the years literally hundreds of modifications have been made by the various operators and there can be few Nationals that are running as they were built. One day it won't be possible to get hold of the stuff, so even if you don't intend to put it back to original condition immediately, at least ensure that you can. Then build up a supply of spare parts such as compressor, fuel pump, injectors, power steering pump and ram, etc. Even on a low-mileage, preserved vehicle, you will need them, believe me. Finally, get hold of a copy of the Leyland Maintenance Manual and stick to what it says. In retrospect, many of the problems with Nationals arose, certainly in LCBS, because staff took the view that "We never had to do all this to the RT/RF/RMC, we aren't going to bother doing it now." Leyland designed and built the thing and they knew how they wanted it maintained, so follow their recommendations and you will probably find the vehicle is a lot more reliable than you expected.

Most of you will ask me, would I ever be tempted to preserve a National? Not me, I've seen too much of them and I didn't like them to start with. Mind you, if 141 came up for sale, at a good price, and I had somewhere to put her.. □



NON LONDON VEHICLES

Roy Warren

As you may have noticed in the list of new members in the Summer issue of the magazine, there were three names from Luton, all naming a Bristol FS and a Bristol RELL as their vehicle owned. This is not a coincidence. We are all members of the "712 Preservation Group". I am the Chairman of the group and we own a Bristol Lodekka FS 6LXG, ex-United Counties fleet number 712, (KBD 712 D). The group has existed in its present form for some 8 years or so, in which time the vehicle has been repainted twice, and appeared at many transport events in the south of England.

The group also owns a share in a Bristol RELL6L (UXD 129 G), originally purchased by Luton Corporation Transport which was later taken over by United Counties. The vehicle is being restored and is now road worthy and has been seen at some events, Cobham being one. It was used as a display stall for the "British Bus Preservation Group". It is our intention to restore it to Corporation Livery

The group also has connections with the Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Group, near Darlington, and we often have one of their vehicles on loan down here. Their vehicles are "United" Bristol K5G, 1942 (GHN 189), Bristol LSG, 1948 (LHN 860), Bristol LHS, 1969 (NDL 769G), and ex-Darlington Corporation Daimler CCG05, 1964 (AHN 451B). All vehicles have spent some time with us over the last few years and we have taken them to many shows. GHN 189 and LHN 860 have both appeared several times in the Television programme "Heartbeat" which some of you may have seen, and this creates extra interest with the vehicles at events, particularly with the younger members of visiting families. □

WILL SOMEBODY PUT ME OUT OF MY MISERY?

Gordon Edridge

I suppose it all started when I lived in Tattenham Corner and the 164a stopped outside my front drive. I had seen all those photographs of RT1 which appeared in the press in July 1939 and which have resurfaced whenever the RT has been the subject of a book. For years I accepted the statements which appeared in books and articles that the choice of blinds for the photo shoot was all by chance and that they were just a set lying around Chiswick or words to that effect! On thinking about it, where did those stencil plates for the 164a appear from and the narrow ultimate destination blinds were not actually lying around. Probably it was much more to do with the lettering on the stencil plates, if you could get 164a on it legibly anything else would be relatively easy. Also, by using Sutton you could have the running number A1.

Really authoritative books such as *RT - The Story of a London Bus* by Ken Blacker refer to this question. "Almost from the time it was built RT1 had carried a set of destination displays from Sutton Garage".

More recently, Alan Townsin and Tony Beard's delightful book *The First RTs states...* "The set of 164a destination blinds and Sutton (A) garage plates had been fitted to show the complete effect and it is not thought that there had been any intention to operate the bus from there". However, some of the most frequently used photographs show the front view with the final destination ALDGATE and the intermediate blind used on the Sunday 93 route to "Dorking; North Cheam; Ewell; Epsom; Ashtead; Leatherhead".

My niggle is which route from Sutton in 1939 served ALDGATE? All the other final destinations in the pictures relate to Sutton routes. At around this time Merton and Streatham were putting out buses on route 5 from time to time but was there an intention to use some from Sutton? Did the outbreak of war stop something from happening? Any ideas? □

T MINUS SIXTEEN HOURS AND COUNTING

Whether one was interested in space flight or not, the events around the 1968 Christmas period were indeed sensational. Boldly going where no man had gone before, Apollo 8 blasted off on 21st December, on a six day mission, to become the first manned spacecraft to orbit the moon, as a prelude to the "giant leap" which was scheduled for that forthcoming July. The day following the safe return of the crew, another well planned operation commenced as I accompanied Derek Parsons and Brian Moore on our mission to retrieve T504.

Snow had fallen but not enough to impede our journey to Oldham where we arrived about midday on Saturday 28th December. Fortunately our relationship with Mr Winterburn had not deteriorated despite having made numerous unfulfilled promises to remove the vehicle from his yard as soon as possible. Arrangements had finally begun to slot into place and, following a meeting with Tony Belton regarding the hire of the London Trolleybus Preservation Society's Dennis Lancet coach as a towing vehicle, the post-Christmas date had been finally fixed.

As previously arranged, the Dennis had been driven to Oldham a day or two before the planned move and its driver had then returned home. Mr Winterburn had kindly ensured that its batteries remained charged up especially as the vehicle was spending a period in the prevailing sub-zero temperatures. John Prior, the driver for the tow was not due to arrive at Manchester Piccadilly until the early evening and the interim period was spent in disconnecting the prop shaft and removing one of the wheels in order to inflate its tyre at a local garage. Some sheets of perspex had been purchased in London and cut to size to replace the broken cab windows to alleviate some of the icy chill which Derek, acting as "driver", was likely to endure as we made our way South. I had brought two ex-British Railways locomotive oil lamps with me which were positioned front and rear on the T and I also wired a couple of cycle batteries into the rear lamp which amazingly lit up after many years.

The Winterburn's tractor was then brought into use and the 10T10 was slowly removed from the yard although, in a final act of defiance, it proved unwilling to ascend the final slope and the Dennis had to be brought into action, somewhat earlier than anticipated, to pull both vehicles onto an adjoining strip of land which provided access to the street.

At 7.00 pm, John Prior rang the Winterburn's from Manchester Piccadilly and was duly collected by Derek. On their return, John supervised the attaching of the solid bar to T504, a slight delay occurring when it was discovered that the oil cooler would have to be removed as it would undoubtedly have suffered damage.

The vehicles left Oldham at 9.00 pm with Brian Moore in Derek's Cortina Mark I estate bringing up the rear. And thereby hangs another tale as Brian, who had only recently passed his driving test and had yet to purchase his first car, became separated from the convoy. Having no maps, I wasn't much use as a navigator and we I am sure managed to drive along every major thoroughfare in Manchester City Centre before finally extricating ourselves and heading towards the M6 where a dull red glow in the slow lane soon turned out to be the back lights of T504. From that point on and throughout the hours of darkness the Cortina acted as rear marker, there being no rear light display board available for vehicles towed by the Dennis!

The first stop was for about one hour at Knutsford Services where we arrived about 11 pm. A later stop was made for about one and a half hours for sleep (why didn't we stay at Knutsford?) although the numbing chill of that December's night stopped me from getting anything but the odd forty winks. We warmed up again at Watford Gap services and then on through the night to Newport Pagnall where Brian decided to remain for an additional hour for some more shut-eye; the party regrouping about 9.00 am on Sunday morning at Toddington.

It was decided to contact some LBPG members by telephone in order that they could meet the convoy at the end of the M10. Alan

Allmey's telephone went unanswered (he was finishing off his Christmas break in the West Country) but a call to Don Allmey proved fruitful and he, John Warner and Bill Cottrell met us at 11.20 and took many photographs of our newly-captured prize.

Due to the poor weather conditions, Francis West had declined to accompany us on the rescue mission, opting to join the convoy at Southgate for the last leg of the journey. At Woodford the Dennis was directed to the side of the road by the Police who took great interest in its tax disc before allowing us to continue. Finally at 1.00 pm the T arrived at Few's Lane on the Padnall Estate in Chadwell Heath. Here, parking for the bus had been arranged in a yard that also provided open air storage for RT17, which the Group had purchased three years earlier from Ferodo Ltd of Chapel-en-le-Frith to provide spares for RT113.

At this point I would have liked to record that work continued apace with the restoration of T504, but sadly this was not the case.

The Group's initial acquisition, RT113, had been garaged in the Eastern National garage on Canvey Island since 1966 and already the initial flourish of activity that surrounded its first few years as a preservation project was on the wane. Some twelve months after its journey to London, T504 was towed to Canvey Island with RT17 following a short time later – the Group consolidating its three-vehicle collection in the former paint bays of the Eastern National Garage.

Over the next few years working parties were held but nothing was done regarding T504, which, everyone assumed would get "the treatment", once RT113 was finished. I seem to remember spending one week of my annual holidays during the early 1970s in local bed and breakfasts just to progress the work on the 2RT2 a step nearer the day when it would finally take to the road.

A letter was received from Michael Selt to ask if the Group would sell the T to him but his offer was declined after which the aforementioned person wrote and dubbed us selfish; I like to feel that my written response was more than prosaic.

During 1973, rumours began circulating that the garage on



(Top) T504 in its role as an ambulance during World War II and probably the earliest known view of the vehicle. The coach had been in service just a little over a year when it was adapted for this role. (Lower) As the towing of T504 to London was mainly accomplished during the hours of darkness, photographs of the event are limited to those taken in the London area. Here, the vehicles are seen at South Mimms during the morning of Sunday 29th December 1968.



(Top) The arrival at Few's Lane, Chadwell Heath with Francis West just visible through the door of Tony Belton's Dennis Lancet. (Lower) T504 departs the Group's garage still looking much the same as it did when acquired eight years earlier, seven of which had been in covered accommodation.

Canvey was to be sold and the Group was made aware that its occupancy would soon be terminated as the Eastern National Omnibus Society would be taking over the premises. Despite Alan Allmey's intervention on our behalf, we received a notice to quit the site in 1974 and we immediately began looking around for an alternative in which to house our two vehicles and one chassis (RT17 had been dismantled thus far for spares).

A garage which I discovered in Chadwell Heath had recently been vacated by the local removal firm of Gooch (to whom Graham, the former England Cricket Team captain is related). Whilst the landlords were quite happy to allow us to use the premises for a maximum of two years (we were finally asked to leave in 1982) at a peppercorn rent, we failed to take into consideration the view taken of the Group by the local Council. The battle of the rates therefore began which was not finally concluded until 1976, when I managed to negotiate a 50% reduction, but then there was still a considerable amount outstanding.

Alan Allmey had always expressed an interest in acquiring T504 for the LBPG and the Group made the heartbreaking decision to sell its much-prized but neglected 10T10 in order to clear the debt; its space in the garage being sub-let to maintain the viability of the premises.

T504 became the property of the LBPG on 7th November 1976. Naturally, we were saddened by the loss of the 10T10, but realistically, the vehicle was capable of being (and was!) restored much earlier by this course of action; both RT113 and T504 making their debut at the 150 Years of London Buses Rally in Hyde Park in July 1979.

Of the three members who discovered T504 in Oldham in March 1968, Maurice Bateman left the Group the following July and Brian Moore in 1977. Francis West died in 1973 and amongst those attending his funeral were Alan Allmey, Brian Moore and Tony Belton. Francis had always considered the RT to be the only "proper bus", intensely disliking Routemasters because they continued to replace

his favourite vehicles. As the funeral made its way to Enfield Crematorium I looked in vain for an RT to come within sight and sound of the cortège. But Routemasters had invaded Francis's home town of Wood Green and there was nothing but this type in evidence. I was just giving up all hope as the procession reached the gates of Francis's final resting place when, as if by magic, an RT appeared on route 217 heading in the opposite direction. Francis would have been mighty pleased!

OUTLINE HISTORY

T 504 (ELP 228); class 10T10; chassis no. 06622651 (AEC); axle ratio 5.2; body no. 18127 (LPTB) 30 seats; plate no. N 8489 (1/5/38)
 completed vehicle into stock: 3 March 1938, unladen weight 6t.15c.0.
 Changes in seating: 1 September 1939—9 stretchers (as ambulance)
 21 July 1945—30 seats; 16 November 1945—slats; 11 March 1946—30 seats

TRANSFERS

3/3/38	Chiswick	CSu	Delicensed
26/4/38	Staines	STu	Stored
1/5/38	Staines	ST	Licensed as coach
1/9/39	Hendon	AEa	Converted to ambulance
15/5/44	Seven Kings	APa	Ambulance
15/6/44	Grays	GYa	Ambulance
1/11/44	Chalk Farm	CFa	Ambulance
1/9/45	Chalk Farm	CF	Hackney License
11/3/46	Chalk Farm	CFu	Converted back to coach
16/3/46	Hertford	HGu	Stored
3/4/46	Hertford	HG	Licensed as Coach
18/5/48	Hertford	HGu	Delicensed for overhaul
1/8/48	Hertford	HG	Relicensed ex-overhaul
15/7/51	Hertford	HGu	Delicensed for overhaul
24/8/51	Kingston	K	Licensed as Central Area bus
15/9/52	Sidcup	SP	
6/5/53	Chalk Farm	CF	Licensed for Private Hire
1/10/53	Fulwell	FWu	Withdrawn pending disposal
28/5/54	Chiswick	CSu	Stored

Overhauls

19/5/48 to 30/7/48
 17/7/51 to 24/8/51

Body Overhaul
 Body and Chassis Overhaul
 repainted red ex-green; reclassified 10T10/3

Initial Disposal – 26/7/54 W. North Limited (Dealers), 94, Vicar Lane, Leeds, Yorkshire

Subsequent Disposals – Evans, (Dealers), Leeds, Yorks (-/54); Brunt Esq, Oldham, Lancs (-/54) for conversion to mobile showroom but plan not proceeded with as business (not vehicle) was acquired by Telcamit Ltd. in late 1959. H & A Winterburn (General Dealers), Block Lane, Chadderton, nr Oldham, Lancs. (-/59). Chassis was to be used as basis for mobile crane for use in yard, but found not suitable for conversion and vehicle retained complete and stored at Chadderton premises until discovered by members of 2RT2 Preservation Group (10/3/68). 2RT2 Preservation Group acquired vehicle 1/4/68; towed to London for storage 28-29/12/68. London Bus Preservation Group, Cobham, Surrey (7/11/76). □

ADVERTISEMENTS

FOR SALE Brand new Cromard piston liners for Leyland O.600 and O.680 diesel engines. Made by Laystall Engineering Co. Ltd., Wolverhampton. All are unused and are still contained in their original wrappings and boxes. £35 each.

John Knox 01524 775

FOR SALE London Transport service vehicle 1096F. 1959 Ford Thames 300E 7cwt van. Fully restored and running. Reg. no. WXR 859. MOT'd and taxed (exempt). £2995 ono.

Norman Anscomb 01293 907 after 8 pm.

AEC/WILLIAMS OR RT-GT

Part 2 – Engine removal

First remove the battery leads, it is only too easy to have quite a serious accident by failing to do this or being dependent upon a single terminal isolator. Drain all oil from the engine and if it is convenient and you are working with a pit, remove one of the filler plugs from the fluid flywheel and rotate the engine until it is at the bottom and collect the oil from the flywheel. Check whether it is oil coloured or silver as it discharges. Drain the water from radiator and block remembering that there is more water in the block that will drain out of the tap at the rear than there is in the radiator. Remove the three nuts securing the front bearing of the bonnet and the two bolts supporting the rear and then remove the split pin and clevis pin from the body bracket on the support arm and with the aid of at least one other person, lift it clear.

The wise owner will have spent many days before embarking on this task spraying penetrating oil on every nut and bolt that is to come out. Remove the two nuts securing the long slot headed bolts that secure the lower section of the radiator. Remove the top hose and the nut securing the copper pipe to the radiator air bleed and the radiator will then hinge forward and be restrained by the bottom hose to prevent it rolling right over and squashing you. This will expose the heads to the two rear securing bolts, the normal hexagon variety, for removal. There is a good chance that electrolytic action between the steel bolts and the aluminium of the radiator will have gone a long way to locking these pretty firmly in place and more than gentle persuasion might be necessary to remove the rear bolts than the front ones which were nickel plated but not quite so easily replaceable as spares. In all these operations it is best to leave the front two bolts loosened and nuts in place and remember that without the hose the radiator could quite easily topple forward. An able bodied helper is now essential. After removing the bottom hose, whilst keeping the

radiator upright, remove all four bolts and lift the radiator off. As a last resort wedge some timber planks underneath the bottom of the radiator fairly closely and walk it off, remembering that its two supporting brackets rotate on bearings on the end of the dumb irons. Remove the bearings and spacer washers and put aside for safe keeping. The dismantling task can now commence.

First job is to remove the fan so first get the fan belt off by releasing the tension. The four square headed screws on the back of the fan pulley should be loosened off and the two halves of the pulley screwed apart. Note that the pulley is threaded "wrong way" and therefore to loosen the parts away from one another to release the fan belt you need to screw them in the opposite direction than you would have anticipated. Once sufficiently loose, remove the fan belt and then the nut from the centre of the fan and extract fan and pulley complete from the water pump. The water pump on the 11.3 is basically identical to the 9.6 with one exception being the top outlet that on the RT leads to the cab heater. Although these connections are identically threaded screwed-in inserts they are impossible to remove without causing irreparable damage and thus if you wish to use the new water pump you will need a plumber to make a small fitting to go from 1 in diameter on the 11.3 pump to ½ in diameter for the RT heater. Otherwise you will need to remove the water pump from both units putting the RT one onto the 11.3 engine. The water pump must come off anyway as the front engine mounting cannot be fixed with it in the way. Do not reassemble the fan to the new engine at this stage as it both gets in the way and can be easily damaged during engine replacement. Remove the crank shaft pulley securing nut and remove the pulley, probably not as easy as removing the unused 11.3 unit and almost certainly needing a good effort of persuasion coupled with some hefty bolts. Remove the dip stick by releasing the clamp on the sump and the bolt from the exhaust manifold flange and commence what will undoubtedly be the most difficult task, that of separating the exhaust manifold from the exhaust system.

There is the obvious joint at the end of the manifold but unless the

nuts slip off easily with the aid of a socket and several extension bars, there is little or no chance of success at this position. There is a joint at the bottom of the downpipe relatively easily accessible from underneath and two bolts can be removed fairly easily, one with medium difficulty and the one of course that will not undo at all is virtually inaccessible, is the joint beyond the flexible coupling, where all four bolts are accessible but because of its exposed position, may well be considered accessible for a hacksaw. Unless you can separate the manifold downpipe joint, it will almost certainly be necessary to get the manifold off the engine so the exhaust will be separate or it will jam up on engine removal. One or two bolts, depending upon which bracket is used, secure the bottom of the exhaust downpipe to the bell housing. To remove the manifold, the strength of the socket is required and unfortunately there is no way a socket will find its way on, so a good quality combination spanner is going to be essential with the probability that the studs will unscrew from the head rather than the nuts coming off. With the fuel shut off, move the two flexible pipes to the dribble pipe return and pump feed.

Working underneath now, remove the cabin heater return pipe where it connects to the manifold box on the off-side of the engine and the aluminium pipe connecting the water pump to the bottom hose, which is further secured by a bracket off the front off-side sump bolt. Remove the two sump bolts that secure the bracket which steadies the power feeds to the starter motor and unbolt these from the starter motor itself, together with a single small wire which activates the solenoid. Bend and secure well out of the way. Remove the securing bolt for the starter motor screwed in the side of the bell housing, the straps can then be loosened off and as these have probably been painted 3 or 4 times, they may well need cleaning of all paint and dirt and liberally coated with oil before they can be sufficiently undone for the starter motor to be freed. When it is moved back, lifting it out in this position is virtually a two-man job, it is possible to take the engine out with the starter motor in but it will almost certainly jam partially on the underside of the cab structure as the engine is

removed and great care will be needed to avoid causing damage.

Inside the lower deck undo the three screws securing the flywheel housing and store it well away from the seats. Undo the 8 bolts securing the front cardan shaft to the rear of the fluid flywheel and remove the split pin washer and clevis pin from the throttle connection at the rear of the engine. Back on the underside, undo the stay bar from the offside rear of the bell housing and take out the eye bolt that secures it through the bell housing. The metalastic bearings will probably have long since expired but a pair for a Rover 800 anti-roll bar can be modified to fit. Undo the lock nuts and nuts securing the rear engine mounting upper strap and then remove the strap through the floor hatch, peeling off the upper rubber mounting.

Returning to the front of the engine, loosen the two large bolts clamping down the front engine mounting but leave them in place. Undo the nut securing the large bolt vertically through the steering box to the front cross member and tap this upwards until it clears the cross member to the point where it fouls the cab structure. Undo the nuts from 8 bolts, 4 each side, securing the cross member to the dumb irons at the front of the chassis. On the off-side this will probably prove relatively easy due to oil and grease from the engine, which on the nearside may well be a frustrating task, requiring the application of heat. Note that the rear top bolt on either side has a smaller head. On the nearside this bolt passes right through the headlamp support bracket and there is an awful length to have become rusty, lots of penetrating oil may be necessary but may not get through and the need to revert to a persuader may well be necessary. Leave 2 bolts in each side at all times when all the bolts are in a position, which can be removed when required, and you have safely removed such things as the towing hook which might otherwise drop off at the crucial moment and break a toe; get ready to remove the beast.

First remove the cab emergency window or you will almost certainly break it with the crane. Using a commercial engine lift or a Hiab hoist on a lorry, position such that it can draw out parallel with the centre line of the bus, connect to the hook on the engine beam

and just take the load. Once the load is taken take the bolts out of the front engine mounting and remove the top cap. The engine can now be lifted marginally and the bottom cap removed, cross member bolts knocked out and cross member removed. With minor lifting and pulling forward the bell housing will separate from the rear mounting but some tipping will be required to get the lip of the rear of the bell housing over the bearing over the mounting itself. "Slow and careful" have to be the watch words.

A certain amount of wiggling and tilting up and down will be necessary to ease the engine out but avoid doing as Dr Spanner's Helper did, resting the sump on the track rod which bends easily under the weight. Once the engine with all its associated filth is out and free, stand it on timber blocks beneath the oil reservoir of the sump at the rear and directly beneath No. 1 cylinder at the front making sure you have left enough room all round to work on it, particularly at the rear.

It goes without saying that if the facilities such as steam cleaning exist, you will certainly reap the benefit of it in the future but one way or another the task of dismantling now has to commence. First remove the bolts securing the alloy rear extension bell housing and separate this from the rear of the engine, which exposes the fluid fly wheel. A good number of nuts secure the outer part of the flywheel and when the two halves are separated the remaining oil below the filler plug line will come out causing an unholy mess, or if you have not emptied it, the two plus gallons of oil which rapidly releases itself will spread over a very large area, so drain it first. Beware, the outer casing of the fluid fly wheel is substantially heavier than it looks and unfortunately appears to be manufactured without the aid of any handles and at least two pairs of oily hands are beneficial in preventing damage to fly wheel and toes. If the oil that you drained out was silver in colour, then you are probably looking for, at the very least, a new set of bearings.

The crank shaft bearing on the 11.3 for a normal dry plate clutch has to be removed after taking out the circlip. On the fluid fly wheel



The Durham Gallery... Roger Stagg's rapidly improving RT2043, having acquired its 11.3 litre engine only days before, combines a test run with the chance to pose for PD's lens, as RF672 looks on. (Photo: Peter Durham).



Northerly Regent... Two recently joined members hail from Burley-in-Wharfedale and both own RT buses. This fine study has been sent in of RT1574 which is the pride and joy of coach operator Kenneth Hartshorne and presumably rubs shoulders with RT981 of Colin Hockley. Please can more owners send in good quality photographs of their vehicles for publication. (Photograph Kenneth Hartshorne).

no such circlip exists but whether or not you have access to a new bearing the old outer race must be removed to gain access to the spacer ring that is fitted behind the outer race. A good internal three leg puller will perform this task providing the puller screw is long enough to reach the bottom the crank shaft recess or that you can find a suitable spacer that will fit in between the jaws. Alternatively, contact Dr Spanner for a simple tool which requires only the addition of a 3/8 in bolt. There may well be a lot of accumulated grease and grit in the bottom of the crank shaft recess and as this non dry clutch will provide a lot of oil travelling at high speed and it will soon effectively wash it out with not very nice results, so ensure that the depths of the cavity are completely cleaned before inserting the spacer and the outer bearing ring which should end up flush with the end of the crank shaft. With the cabin heater, return manifold and bleed pipe, removed, carefully remove the three 5/16 in wired up bolts, covering the position where the oil filter manifold would sit and, presuming that if it was not possible before engine removal, the starter motor has to be coaxed out of its resting place. Lift the engine and lay it on its off-side, supported on blocks clear of the sump. Remove remaining sump bolts and remove the sump complete.

Lift the engine and lay it on its off-side, supported on blocks clear of the sump. Remove remaining sump bolts and remove the sump complete. Remove the 2 BA bolts that restrain the fuel pipe and dribble return and remove the bracket from the water chamber cover. Undo the two screws that secure the dribble pipe and the six dribble pipe connections to it and disconnect the fuel feed to the pump. Remove the appropriate bolts from the new engine and secure these in position, remembering to have all of the dribble pipes nutted but loose before tightening anything up, remove the fuel pump by way of its two straps and two bolts to the drive shaft and clevis pin into the throttle spindle at the rear of the engine and pull off the return spring. Remove the return spring anchor from the block and transfer to the new engine. Remove the pinch bolt from the throttle lever on the pump with Woodruff key and transfer to the new pump. Remove

the pinch bolt from the throttle shaft on the nearside and Woodruff key and withdraw to the off side. Two oil seals are fitted in recesses either side of the engine and replacements are still available. As the 11.3 does not have a grease nipple on the throttle shaft, well grease the hole before inserting the throttle shaft through the new oil seals, replacing the Woodruff key and bolting on the nearside arm: Important! Remember nearside arm up, offside arm down. The pump to arm rod is at around 30 degrees up from the horizontal. Assuming now that all is well with the pump and you have done any re-painting in this area that you wish to do, the pump can be replaced and the throttle linkage reconnected, noting that the flat section on the clevis pin fits into a similar section on the linkage and if properly installed with washer and split pin will prevent it rotating. Hook on the spring and a full and free movement (including the reverse movement to stop the engine) should be possible from the off-side arm. Check top dead centre on the fly wheel on No. 1 compression against the mark on the pump wheel tighten up the two bolts. Clean up the exhaust manifold and with a liberal application of fire gum at the expansion joint, replace the exhaust manifold with new gaskets.

On both engines dealt with so far, the RT manifold holes had to be cleaned out to $\frac{1}{2}$ in diameter and then eased somewhat before they would slip over those on the 11.3 head. In theory this should not be the case but for some reason it was required. Don't attempt to install the exhaust manifold when the engine is on its side as it is only too easy (Dr Spanner's Assistant speaks from personal experience!) to drop a nut down an exhaust port. Fortunately it was a steel nut and a magnetic bendy rod brought it back again.

If you have doubts about your oil pump now is the time to carry out some changes using a suitable puller to remove the gearwheels from both pumps on the 11.3 and the single pump on the 9.6. Once all the wires have been cut open, the bolts can be removed, the internal gears which make up the pump being changed between engines and a nice new drive gear installed on the 11.3. By now of course the plumbing would have been removed from the 9.6 where it is fixed

into the end caps by 5/16 bolts. The 11.3 litre engine however uses 3/8 diameter bolts and it may be found necessary to drill out the 9.6 holes to take the 3/8 bolts, although if this is necessary it is a simple job in only sheet metal. Don't forget there is a third bolt within the oil box which stays at 5/16, re-using the one from the 9.6 unit. Securely wire up all bolts and finally pull the front main bearing caps up to 125 lbs-ft and insert new split pins.

Thoroughly clean out the strainer gauze from the oil box, probably easier done by removing the sump cover bottom plate and recover from safe-keeping the bottom half of the rear main bearing oil thrower from the 11.3 and replace the old one in the sump by carefully tapping in after a smear of gasket compound and blowing any excess gasket out of the return holes. A smear of liquid gasket compound all around and the sump can be eased onto the 11.3 unit remembering to get the O-ring and O-ring retainer on the front journal properly in position if that type is fitted before bolting up and tightening all round. Unfortunately there will be a hole in the bottom of the chamber that hides the fuel pump drive pinion, which originally contained a bolt from the front engine mounting. The lazy way would be to re-screw a bolt into the hole with a coat of Loctite and the neat way will hacksaw it off flush afterwards. The engine can now be stood upright again and the cabin heater return manifold bolted on together with the bleed pipe.

Ease the main flywheel on, using a smear of gasket seal on the joint. Fully tighten, using self locking nuts or split pins. With the help of a least one other person, the back of the fluid fly wheel can be replaced but if a new fly wheel bearing has not been used then a small elastic band around the rollers will keep them in place whilst it is fed in and will soon disintegrate without causing damage. If your fly wheel has 4 studs as well as the securing bolts, it will be a lot easier to replace, otherwise a tool is necessary to rotate the two halves until the holes align; not an easy job when a thin even layer of gasket compound has been wiped round the joint. If therefore you can put 3 or 4 studs in, it will make your task that much easier and fly wheel

assembly will be nipped up and tightened up in no time at all. Remove one of the blanking plugs, turn the fly wheel to ten-to-two, and fill with SAE 30 oil.

Offer up the rear bell housing and secure to crank case and sump, remembering that the off-side bolt below the centre line is the eye bolt for the restraint bar, replace the Woodruff key and crank shaft pulley in position and tighten up the bolt fully. Use the bolt from the 9.6 engine as it is different from the one on the 11.3. Loosen off the injectors and with a socket and the crank shaft pulley and the long bar, slowly pull the engine over. A squirt of Redex into each cylinder by way of the inlet ports will ease things up a little. Check the tappets, 10 for inlet, 12 for exhaust. Bolt the oil filler neck down on the 3 or 4 fixings with a good layer of gasket sealing and treat the engine to 5 gallons of good oil.

Unlike the RT injector pump, the 11.3 has neither a dipstick nor a filler hole and oil has to be put straight into the spring cover. As it trickles down at an infinitesimally slow rate, it is easier to pour about half a pint of SAE 30 in whilst holding the cover like a letterbox and then secure the cover, allowing it to drain down the excess to run back out of the overflow pipe. Take the drain plug out of the rear of the pump governor and top up with oil through the filler until it runs out of the overflow then replace plug and filler.

The RT engine mounting is fixed by 4 studs on the front of the crank case and these studs are present on some 11.3 units but absent on others although where they are absent the holes are drilled and tapped. At the worst therefore you will have to extract and replace the studs from the old unit or obtain new studs. Bolt the cast iron mounting to the front of the engine and place the rubber doughnut round it gap to the top, followed by the steel enclosure gap to the bottom. Ensure all hoses are tight and that the hoses themselves are sound. This is the only easy time to change a hose, particularly some of the cabin heater hoses which are almost inaccessible once the engine is back in. A particular problem is the elbow hose on the rear bulkhead but independent car accessory shops do sell preformed

fabricated elbows for this purpose, enabling the use of two short sections of standard $\frac{3}{4}$ in heater hose although the second bend which is secured by a bolt to the back head needs to be removed and have its horizontal leg reduced by about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in.

Engine replacement is a virtual reversal of its removal, except you should not this time be suffering with seized up bolts and you will probably have taken the opportunity to steam clean and repaint the engine bay and even perhaps done some repairs, replacements to the rubber between floor plate and cab side whilst you could get to the nut heads.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- 1 Don't accidentally knock the bottom rear engine mounting rubber out with the lip on the end of the bell housing, or you will have to take the engine out again to replace it,
- 2 Don't forget the sealing rings that go between the various joints in the exhaust pipe.
- 3 The front engine bearing upper and lower caps are not symmetrical, the bigger section faces the engine
- 4 Don't forget the clevis pins, washers and split pins in the throttle linkage,

Finally, when all is up and running if you don't know exactly what you are doing, get the pump adjusted by someone who does, as the full ungoverned power of an 11.3 litre engine could lead to a damaged fluid fly wheel, damaged gear box, damaged rear axle or, if you keep all of those intact and you still believe you can stop safely, you may leave the body behind. □

MORE ON REXINE

Roger Stagg

My attempts to find suppliers of rexine and rexine substitutes have progressed positively. Materials have been sourced from William Collingburne (telephone 01748 105, contact Lisa Hepworth), which match virtually exactly in texture the rexine material used on RT and RF window cappings. This material "buckram" is available in cream, regarded by those who have viewed it and compared it with original samples as a virtual match. The green is slightly too dark but very similar to that used on Green Line RFs although general opinion is that once installed inside the vehicle you would need to put a piece of original against it to know the difference. The advantage of these materials is that they have a woven texture similar to that used on the original rexine and that they are stretchable. I can confirm, having now completed all of the cappings to the nearside lower deck, that they can be shaped without any problem and do not shrink away. They are also attachable using Unibond PVA adhesive which has the advantage of being cheap, non instant and does not cover your hands in an in-situ latex glove! As it is water soluble until it has set, any that gets in places that it should not can be wiped off with a damp cloth. This material takes cellulose paint without special primers and as I had not discovered the cream and green before setting to work, the cappings were all covered with the brown which had been used for the main panels. Those following a similar path should know therefore that exact matches for colour and satin finish can be obtained in cellulose or enamel finish from Alpha Coatings of Gillingham, Telephone 01634 707, referenced as Bus No 2 Cream and Bus No 1 Green. Bus No 2 Green is the Greenline colour. For my part however, although I shall be forced to do the other half of the lower deck matching those already done, I shall certainly do all of the upper deck cappings in the self coloured material. This material is available at 42 inch width at a price varying between £7.20 and £9.20 per metre plus VAT and carriage, dependent upon the quantity ordered.

Of all the samples of brown rexine removed from 2043 from various hidden places where it had not been over-painted, I have five reasonable size samples of which there are three completely different types, both in texture and colour. What appears to have been the original is quite heavily embossed in mock leather style and is a very obvious two colour material.

Rexine still make this pattern but not in this colour. The other samples are more evenly coloured, a semi-milk/plain chocolate brown, one with a fairly pronounced grain and the other with virtually no grain, in fact very similar to that used on the cappings. I have now used a similar material to the cappings in brown and can report that it looks far more authentic than the heavily embossed vinyl based material seen on some restorations. The official colour names are: for the cream, "Don", for the green, "Arun", for the brown, "Thames".

I have not yet managed to re-source the material that is as durable, thick and of the right colour for the seat-backs, as this seems to have been a completely plain material with no grain or patterning but I have over covered one with the Arun and am more than pleased with the result. Others may have more advice. □



CHATHAM DOCKYARD RALLY 1997

Roland Graves

The North Kent Vehicle Preservation Group's Biennial Rally was held this year in the unique surroundings of Chatham Historic Dockyard.

As Cobham members will probably remember our previous events had been held in Sevenoaks town centre. The success of these meant that we were reluctant to move to a new site. Unfortunately the main car park display area in Sevenoaks was scheduled to be redeveloped into a shopping centre. This made it impossible to continue in the town.

The search for a new venue saw us looking at several possibilities until the Dockyard offered its facilities. We could have use of the whole of the old naval dockyard area and be able to run our usual bus services from outside the main visitor entrance. There were drawbacks, we would have to move our date to the end of August and there would have to be an entry fee.

Our main sponsor, Invictaway, which now encompasses both M&D and Kentish Bus, was enthusiastic as they could see an opportunity to raise their profile in the Medway towns. We decided that we would go for an M&D theme this time, trying to get every preserved ex- M&D vehicle there on the day.

One other tradition of the Sevenoaks events has been the photo opportunities, posing suitable vehicles in correct locations for the enthusiastic photographer. Trying to find suitable locations in Medway Towns proved difficult. Sevenoaks had a plethora of picturesque places like Westerham, Otford, Ide Hill, Brasted, Knockholt and many others. Everywhere we looked at in the Medway Towns that had been route termini in the 50s and 60s proved impossible. Either it had changed beyond recognition or was in the centre of housing estates where the march of the motor car had taken over. After much searching we identified two places that would do. One was Gillingham Green, a terminus until the early 70s, the other Cookham Wood just outside Rochester with a turning circle. It also happens to be

opposite HM Prisons Cookham Wood and Borstal! Don't be fooled by Gillingham Green either, there is no green, just a street by that name outside the Church. Although modified considerably we could still pose suitable vehicles for photographers.

However there was a much more exciting prospect than these in Dock Road outside the Dockyard itself. Opposite the entrances to the yard there is a long brick wall at the side of the road. It was here that M&D and the Dockyard had recently replaced most of the stone tablets engraved with local destinations. Each of these was the pick up point for the many workers services that ran at shift change time each day. Two or three times a day, a fleet of M&D buses would line up against the stops ready for the flood of homegoing workers to all parts of North Kent.

We decided that we would recreate this scene at 1.00 pm on the day. What a site it turned out to be, too, with nine assorted buses lined up at the correct point with appropriate destinations displayed.

Like all events, things came together just in time. On the Saturday we had just over 200 entries of all types, some 100 of which were buses. Squeezing everything in was going to be a task and we spent a part of that evening laying out the site and checking spaces. Actual numbers on the day were somewhat down due to a poor weather forecast and the devastating news of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. We did manage to get just about every M&D vehicle that was mobile including a Harrington Cavalier from Bacup, Lancs. The display these made was quite brilliant and was complemented by a super line up of East Kent vehicles. To set vehicles off to best advantage we grouped entries into companies: M&D, East Kent, Central LT, Country LT, provincial buses and provincial coaches. We also had a line up of four pre-war Leylands, two ex-Jersey TDs, an ex Singletons Leyland 6 wheel Tiger TS3t and a Lioness charabanc dating from 1929. Cobham was well represented with several vehicles including T504, RF672, RP90, TD95 and RT593.

The free services saw a variety of buses giving the visitor ample chances to ride on and sample bus and coach travel of the past. The

photo opportunities went well, with suitable M&D vehicles posed and paraded at the two sites. The morning photo shoot nearly didn't happen though. The buses were there but no photographers!! The transport bus for them, RP90, has missed the turning. It did arrive albeit from the opposite direction. Passengers had seen parts of Gillingham never intended! Paul Morris and Mike Nash blamed my instructions.

The Rally prompted many comments from visitors about the variety and quality of vehicles on display. Some rarely seen and recently restored examples added to the success of the day. I must not forget that there were other types of vehicles than PSVs on display. A fine line up of cars ranging from pre-war to the classic cars of the 50s and 60s. A group of 105E Ford Anglias made a nice sight. Commercials were represented with types from an eight wheel AEC Mammoth Major through to smaller Bedfords and even a 1913 International pick up truck. The services were also there. Many army types including the ubiquitous Jeeps to national fire service Austin trucks. The military were parked up outside the Admiral's House on the "street" within the site. This area is lined with trees and has grass verges which made a really attractive cameo. As chairman of the NVPG it fell to me to choose a vehicle from the commercials and military exhibits for our club award. I eventually decided on a 1939 Chevrolet Naval Staff Car. This was built in Canada and used by US Navy. It was all the more appropriate for an award as it was the only Navy vehicle at the event.

NKVPG would like to extend thanks to all the many Cobham members that helped us on the day. Special thanks to Peter Starks and Graham Ruddock who came down the day before and helped to set out the site and marshalled on the day.

We hope that visitors and entrants alike enjoyed the day. Our sponsors and the Dockyard were pleased with what we achieved leaving us the opportunity to use the site again. □



Chatham Scenes... The North Kent Vehicle Preservation Group's successful event at Chatham Historic Dockyard in August provided some superb backdrops for photography. RT227, RT593 and RF19 line up in front of the towering dock buildings (top) whilst below is pictured the rare beast recently acquired by member Brian Catchpole, a 1958 AEC Reliance, new to M&D with Harrington Wayfarer coach bodywork, but with a bus front grafted on in 1963 for dual-purpose work. (Photographs: Roland Graves)



Second Time Lucky... Although a caption appeared in the last issue the photograph didn't! So here it is, Ward Jones's magnificent ex-East Kent 1948 Leyland Tiger PS1/1, CFN 104, which is closely related to our own TD95. It has appeared at a number of events in 1997 including that at Chatham Historic Dockyard which provides a most suitable backdrop. (Photograph: Roland Graves).

REGAL RESCUE !!! – almost

Jeff Warr

Saturday 27th September found me arising at 3.00 am for a 4 am departure to drive to Cannock, Staffs, (we preservationists must be mad or dedicated, it's hard to tell which) arriving at the Cannock barn at 7.30 am, which is when the tow truck was supposed to arrive. It eventually turned up at 9.00 am with the driver not even knowing where he was going with a truck that is strange to him. (Read on, it all unfolds).

Due to the close proximity of vehicles within the barn it was felt safer to winch RF512 out by steel cable/chain. That was all fine. The problems started then, with the driver not knowing how to operate the towing boom properly. He extended the boom properly but couldn't manoeuvre it because he hadn't re-inserted the locking pin. Eventually pushing the boom back in by reversing truck and boom into a tree, locking pin, in we finally got hitched up to and lifted my "baby".

We left Cannock at half past midday. After having lost each other within the first mile of leaving Cannock, we eventually re-met at junction 7 of the M11 to proceed to the barn at Ongar, he must have been steaming because I never caught him up until then, and said he "I've been here 20 minutes".

Having arrived at the barn at 4.30 pm, after to-in and fro-in of the vehicle to manoeuvre it into position, we eventually left the barn at 5.30 pm, a long day considering I left home at 4.00 am), and £300 lighter. However, RF512 is now in a safe haven awaiting commencement of the restoration process.

RF512's condition

Doors and all front panels have been removed, although inside the bus; most non quarter-drop windows on either side seem to have been smashed; most seat cushion moquette is very tatty; two of the four batteries are missing; the first step into the bus seems rotten;

here is little or no paint on the bus and the two rear corner panels (being steel) are rusty. I'll have to have new ones fabricated in aluminium; prop shaft disconnected from diff – a towing requirement. Other than that she is OK. (famous last words)

I hope to have her in a rallyable condition for her 50th birthday in March 2003. My RT3175 comes first. Her 50th is in May 2000. Here endeth the lesson. □

SLIDE AND SOCIAL EVENING SATURDAY 7TH FEBRUARY 1998

Now that the good Reverend is safely installed in his new parish, complete with function hall, near sunny Hounslow West, we thought it high time that one of those rather jolly evenings was held where we have some noggin and natter and the Chairman (amongst others) brings along a selection of slides depicting models in exotic lingerie, sorry, livery. Therefore, the above date has been set at the invitation of Simon Douglas Lane. There will be a £5 entrance fee to cover the generous helpings of food provided, but please bring your own refreshments.

The venue is at Good Shepherd Hall, 360 Beavers Lane, Hounslow West from 7pm to 10.30pm, adjacent to the south side of the A30 between Hatton Cross and Hounslow West tube stations (Piccadilly Line), both of which are served by the 203 bus. If arriving by car you can turn into Beavers Lane from the southbound carriageway of the A30 after Henly's Corner, which is just five minutes from J3 of the M4.

To book your places do please leave a message on 0181-570-4035 or drop Simon a line at the above address *before January 25th*. This will assist with calculating the volume of food to order. These gatherings are usually great fun so we do hope to see a packed house. □

SHORT TURNS

Compiled by Mike Nash

Some Sad News...

We were sorry to learn of the death in October of member Jas (James) Stirling who was a well known and much respected preservationist, both through his association with numerous vehicle projects and his model shop 'Allsorts'. Another familiar figure at events close to Cobham was Bev Sears who died suddenly during November. Bev's catering bus, RMC1495, known as 'Gus the Bus', was always a welcome sight for preservationists and indeed workers at Weybridge Industrial Estate where the RMC was based during the week. Both Jas and Bev will be much missed and our thoughts go out to those close to them.

M&S now WFS...

No sooner had the last issues cover star, Marks and Spencer liveried Ley-Nat NPJ 479R tasted fame, it was promptly de-licensed for disposal by London & Country, whilst its partner in crime, SNB511 was transferred to Leatherhead for the Christmas K50 route. The Brooklands free service is now in the hands of relatively rare (and much disliked by drivers) Dennis Falcons (302/3), whilst it is hoped that NPJ (258) can be secured for preservation to prevent a one way trip to Barnsley.

Rumour at Chatham...

So impressed were our friends the Routemaster Association (RMOOA) with the Historic Dockyard site at Chatham following the NKVPG's event there in August, that they have decided to hold their own annual event there in 1998, the date in question being Sunday July 5th. Full details are yet to be confirmed but it is likely to billed as a 'London Transport Day' and will no doubt be to RMOOA's usual high standard in terms of organization. Meanwhile, RMOOA now have in stock re-manufactured window rubber for Routemaster window pans. More details from Graham Lunn, Pooley Avenue, Egham, Surrey TW20 8AB.

Business as Usual...

Recent visitors to our museum will be aware that the foyer is now being extensively rebuilt into a purpose built shop. In the meantime our man Gordon Edridge is busy ordering new lines ready for the launch of the new shop at Open Day 1998, the first of which is now in stock. These comprise custom made red cordex Binders which take 12 issues of the Cobham Bus Museum Magazine. Priced at just £4, they are also available by post from Gordon at Fairholme Crescent, Ashted, Surrey KT21 2HN, price £4.50 inclusive of p/p or £8.50 for two. Cheques/postal orders in favour of the LBPT please.

Know your Body...

Member Christopher Sullivan wishes to remind members that he has Body Overhaul Records for a large number of LT vehicles including many RMs and RFs. These are available to members for a small fee so why not drop him a line (enclosing s.a.e.) to see whether he has the records for your particular vehicle c/o Grantham Green, Borehamwood, Herts, WD6 2JQ.

Swiftly Secure...

Good news from the South Coast is that Hugh Harland has found permanent and very safe accommodation for 'Video Bus' SMD91. It is now based at Shoreham Municipal Airport as part of the 'Thomas Collection' of Civil Defence and Ancillary Vehicles, though remains under Hugh's ownership. As a result it is likely to be performing some special duties on behalf of local charities, the first of which has been to act as 'Santa's Grotto' during December. Readers will be relieved to know that Hugh wasn't performing as Father Christmas, nor Sharon as Santa's elf! Well done to them both for ensuring 'Swiftly's continued preservation and for flying the Cobham flag in the Brighton area. □

63 MILES... the collection of SNB257

Andy Barnes

In the last issue 'A Tale of Twelve Nationals' described my fondness for the Dunton Green Dozen and how I eventually came to own such a beast, namely SNB257. The story continues...

Having purchased the vehicle of my dreams, all that remained for me was to collect it! Therefore, we set off from Orpington at some unearthly hour of the morning/night, bound for the Sherburn-in-Elmet yard of W. North's. The journey to North Yorkshire was fairly uneventful and we even had time to call at the local bakery before the yard opened.

On arrival we were greeted by our purchase which was parked by the fence 'ready to go'. Having collected the necessary documents, everything seemed to be going well, especially when the boss told us we could take any spares we wanted from almost any National in the yard. Such an offer was hard to refuse and we spent a good couple of hours removing useful parts from 257's less fortunate sisters.

Around mid-morning it was decided that two of us would go to get the tax disc. As the bus was changing from PCV to PLG use this was not so straight forward as it sounded and we were prepared to go into Leeds (the nearest Vehicle Registration Office), though first we thought we'd try our luck at the local post office as I thought there might be a clueless old biddy on the counter who would give us the disc without question. There wasn't!

We decided to take the train into Leeds as we didn't fancy driving through the city and trying to find a parking space. We caught the train from South Milford station, arriving in Leeds at around 12.30. Making a mental note of the return train times at 12.58 and 13.25 we made the short walk to the VRO which I ignorantly thought would be a post office type affair, a bit of a queue perhaps, but nothing too serious. I was wrong. The queue went round the office three times and then down the stairs! What was worse, upon reaching the counter, you had to leave your application whilst it was processed! Thus we

hung around with what seemed like a representative of every car/truck/bus garage in West Yorkshire until our number was called after half an hour, only to be greeted by an Indian supervisor who couldn't understand why anybody would want to register a bus as a PLG. After a frustrating conversation which included words like 'historic', 'preserved', 'private' and 'no passengers', he eventually gave up and we were at last granted our license. I was starting to tire of doing things legally! Suffice to say that a quick dash through the streets of Leeds ensued and we made the 15.25 train by a whisker!



On arrival back at the yard we quickly got going and 257 was driven through the gates of North's for the last time. After a fill-up we joined the A1 and settled into a nail-biting (and tedious) journey. My friend Mark was to drive, with Steve and myself as passengers. The fourth member of the party, Stuart, was to drive back and await our arrival in Kent, whilst manning the telephone. In order to pass the time (and

take our minds off the unthinkable) we decided to make use of the toolkit and remove various non-authentic 'Diptac' features. Mark would look back occasionally in worried fashion, only to see another grab-rail being snapped off!

257 was holding about 45mph without being 'floored', so progress was slow, if steady. After around 90 minutes our work was interrupted by Mark shouting 'the oil light's come on'. We dashed to the front and glared at the dashboard in disbelief, hoping it was some sort of electrical fault. It wasn't. Luckily, the A1 is blessed with numerous lay-byes so we pulled over, only to find the back of the bus doing an impression of a bonfire. I am not very mechanically minded but even I could tell we were in deep you know what! Luckily, I am good at keeping cool in such situations and summoned a local recovery service.

This was probably the lowest time, as we sat in the lay-by about nine miles from Grantham with the light failing and a constant stream of heavy traffic storming by, shaking the bus from side to side. After around an hour the recovery truck arrived. The engineer was not exactly "type-trained" on LeyNats but eventually reached the conclusion that the turbocharger had given up. We arranged to drive 257 for a couple of miles so that the chap could follow behind and 'observe'. Apparently, although 257 reached about 40mph, a large flame was coming from the exhaust and it was not long until the mobile bonfire effect returned. We were stuck!

On phoning Stuart he advised us to cut our losses and sell the bus for scrap, even arranging a price of £600 with a Barnsley breaker! But I was having none of this, especially after coming this far, so we crossed our fingers (and wallets!) whilst the mechanic did his best.

Obviously the only solution was to tow 257, but the mechanic was coming towards the end of his shift, having allegedly not slept for at least eleven days! In the end we managed to negotiate a tow as far as South Mimms which would at least get us to within the M25 area. That was the easy bit, as the mechanic was faced with the task of removing a half-shaft in pitch darkness and with inadequate

equipment. He was on the verge of giving in when the last bolt gave way. After knocking up a makeshift axle cover from a cardboard box and hooking up 257 we were ready to continue. On enquiring where the three of us were to sit we were told to get in the bus and keep our heads down. He assured us that this was 'perfectly safe', if blatantly illegal.

I would rather forget the next three hours. Suffice to say that being on suspended tow doing 60+ mph is not an experience I wish to repeat. It was a good job that I didn't suffer from sea sickness, as the rocking motion was more typical of sea transport, added to which the wrecker seemed to be going faster and faster!

The other two managed to get some sleep but I endured the entire journey wide awake. We eventually arrived at South Mimms just before midnight and the mechanic deposited us at the first available space, took his money and promptly cleared off! We were left in the lorry park which was at least free on Good Friday/Weekends. Stuart came to get us and we secured 257 as best we could, which in reality was little more than wedging a seat cushion behind the doors, as most owners will know. I had visions of returning to find broken windows (or worse). God knows what the bleary eyed truckers made of its vulgar Northumbria livery first thing in the morning!

After a poor night's sleep, the next morning was spent on the phone, trying to get myself out of what seemed a serious predicament, especially on Good Friday. There was little point in trying to mend 257, the only priority being to move it somewhere secure. A further problem was that 257's new home was not really accessible by tow-truck so that option was out. In the end it was agreed that the local recovery firm (Lantern) would collect 257 and tow it to the safety of their depot. All that needed to be done was to find someone to repair the bus, and preferably quickly as I was to be charged £20 storage per day.

Luckily, Steve had a stroke of luck as a 'friend of a friend' agreed to help out. The hunt for a turbocharger commenced and eight days later we returned to South Mimms, parts in hand. After a couple of

hours our man had finished the job and 257 was once again ready to roll. Needless to say the batteries had gone flat (never a National strong point) although in fairness the side lights and hazards had been on for some three hours. 257 was jump started with a recovery truck, fueled and watered and set forth on the final (hopefully) leg of the journey to Kent. As I had a few things to sort out first, I followed on in the car a few minutes later, praying that when I caught the bus it wouldn't be on the hard shoulder! But after a surprisingly long time, I caught up with 257 which was chugging along nicely. The oil light was still coming but only when the engine was idling which we were advised was OK for the time being so we pressed on, thankfully without further incident.

On arrival, we gave the bus a good clean and put a set of blinds in. 257 was starting to look respectable as it received its first TLC for several months. After taking mechanical advice we decided that 257 was fit enough to attend Cobham's Open Day the following day. I was a nervous wreck as we once again took to the motorway. It was worth it though as 257 achieved fame for the first time in its twenty year history. Better still, it was reunited with its old sparring partner SNC117 and two other Northumbria exiles for a unique line up at Brooklands. Little did the many onlookers realise the trouble we had been through in order to get it there. Welcome to the world of bus preservation! □

LETTERS

NEVER ENOUGH VOLUNTEERS

From Gareth Crowther

With regard to Roy Adams letter in the previous issue and his invitation to reply to Simon Douglas Lane's charge of 'stupefying apathy', I can only agree with Simon and his valiant effort to find the volunteers necessary to run what is a crucial event for the Trust.

As chairman of an enthusiasts' group I can understand Simon's frustrations all too well, having attempted to organize various things only to find little or no response from the membership. Thankfully, friends and colleagues turning up helped rescue the day on every occasion.

Roy, like myself, has his own vehicles to maintain and keep up to a very high standard. I noted this when some of Roy's vehicles were kept at a now defunct location in the Stroud area and I look forward to seeing his TD when fully restored.

I have no doubt that Simon was not knocking any member who is actively involved in preservation. I believe that the people Simon was directing his comments towards are those who live nearby, yet don't lift a finger to help in organizing or assisting in what is a massive event, and then have the gall to complain when they have to cough up a fiver to a thoroughly good cause, i.e. the very future of Cobham.

The frequent calls for assistance with all aspects of running the museum are a necessity as the Trust continues to develop, and yet those who sit on the fence and watch the others doing all the work are often the very same people who expect free admission on Open Day and Display Days thereby reducing the real value of their membership fee to just £3. And that's exactly the kind of 'support' that almost killed Cobham just five short years ago.

I find it rather sad that a society with some 500 members has to buy in labour to operate its one major fund raising event of the year,

which for all intents and purposes provides the bulk of the capital to keep the museum open and to fund the very worthwhile restoration of some really classic London buses for a further season.

It is worth remembering that what is a remarkably modest membership fee is largely swallowed up in producing the excellent magazine, so how can the Trust possibly be obsessed with profit making? It is a registered charity, with all the disciplines that such a status demands. But the Trust is most definitely on the right side of the fine line between fund raising and profiteering. Funds have to be raised and members need to become a touch more willing if the Open Day is to survive. It is a prestigious season opener, so please support Simon's efforts, not resent them, for Cobham's sake.

Regarding Roy's other comments, I have no problem with paying £5 for a days' unlimited vintage bus travel, a glossy programme and admission to two sites. I had two vehicles entered and with the sales stand had sufficient complimentary programmes for myself and all of the sales team to get in free. Despite this, myself and two others paid our fiver knowing it was going to such a worthwhile cause. As far as I'm concerned, no one should begrudge paying for such an excellent event. And I must take issue with Roy on the subject of stall fees, too. These are not exorbitant. I've paid more elsewhere and taken a lot less than at Cobham. It offers excellent value to stall holders, given the potential revenue available, and it was one of the best trade days for our group this year. I heard of no complaints elsewhere either.

Let's hope the passengers take note and that next year sees a considerable increase in volunteers. I for one will be available for duty come hell or high water and I hope my letter stirs a few more into action. The Trust is now a pacesetter within the movement and I feel sure 1998 will be a another great year for us. But just think what could be achieved were the active work force to double!

MacDonald Road, Lightwater, Surrey GU18 5XZ

From Jonathan Wilkins

I should hate the London Bus Preservation Trust to become bogged down in a spate of navel-gazing and acrimony, when it is clearly essential that continuing the 'good work' is the priority. The recent letters from Roy Adams and Simon Douglas Lane might highlight a change in the Trust, and two sides of an argument which appears to be repeated throughout the world of 'common-interest' societies. Perhaps the Trust is just changing from a small, but active, group of enthusiasts into a bigger organisation. From my limited perspective, the aims and activities of the Trust seem to have expanded enormously – with a similar increase in the amount and scope of back-stage operation. People expect so much more these days, and the troublesome big events may become a victim of their own success in the end.

For my sins, I am the chairman of the North Wales Geology Association – and I marvel that many of our members never seem to come to meetings, when all that is required is to sit moderately still and soak up the wisdom of our speakers. We have field meetings, when some physical exertion is required – and they are populated almost entirely by the same few diehard geologists. The same is echoed in every society of which I am, or have been, a member. It is correct that members should be reminded that events do not happen by themselves – maybe a little more tact could be deployed in print, but the gentleman concerned obviously thought that a point needed making.

The activities of Roy Adams seem almost Herculean. I don't own a bus, or even an antique Transit, so I will always have a different outlook. On the other hand, my narrow boat needs a lot of attention, and needed to pass an aquatic MOT test this year, and will need some more attention in dry-dock before my insurers will be appeased. I am also active in cyber-space and have progressed my web pages on London Country to the point that I think they are worth visiting. I was delighted to hear that the Trust's web-master, Kevin McGowan has decided to link my site to the Trust's pages.

What unites us, I hope, is a passionate feeling that London buses are worth preserving – too cold a description, preservation is not enough – and I was under the impression that joining the Trust helped in some way, while endorsing the activities of the 'active' members. Even if I were in my old home town of Hitchin, then Cobham would be almost as remote as it seemed in the 70s, when it was just another name on a Green Line timetable. How about from North Wales? I had to work hard to visit the RF day last year, and I wasn't able to this year. Perhaps there is a point though, that a different class of membership could be introduced for those who actually participate. This would be a more pointed gesture than free entrance to an organised event. From what I read, the Trust's active members are achieving a great deal, and I thank them for that.

The geology newsletter which I send out quarterly is only 4 sides of A5, and costs nothing to produce save time, a small budget for paper and a bigger one for postage. Cobham Bus Museum Magazine is huge in comparison, and must cost a great deal (of time, also) to produce. On the other hand, is it a profit-earner? What is the nett income to the Trust from a member who does nothing save read the newsletter? I am not suggesting for a moment that the Trust should become a publishing house, but frankly, it is the best read I have yet found. The subscription is less than that of certain other London-bus-interest societies, it is less glossy, but the articles are excellent because they are written by people who do things, not just watch them happening.

My appreciation of articles by Mike Lloyd has already been expressed elsewhere, but his piece on HH Nationals was excellent. The country must be full of recollections regarding this vehicle. I admit to having hated them when they ousted HF Swifts/Merlins (sharp intake of breath) from the 303/A – for a start off, they had slippery vinyl seats! I lived on the Stevenage Road on the outskirts of Hitchin, and when our stop was moved downhill from the corner by the 'New Found Out', I could see it from my bedroom window. A little later, the double bends were modified by incorporating a traffic

island to (presumably) protect vehicles waiting to cross into Blackhorse Lane. A short while after this, one of the reviled Nationals suffered an apparently serious transmission failure just north of that junction during the late afternoon, and it stayed put for some hours, while causing absolute chaos. I particularly remember that some fitters arrived from SV in a Metro-Scania SuperBus, which they backed into a narrow driveway by the side of the Willows Service Station. I don't know if the National left under its own power, as it had gone when homework was over. It just shows the effect of traffic-calming measures, though!

Here in sunny Deganwy there are several 'foreign' Nationals in Crosville's local fleet, mostly Gardner-engined, and what a ponderous racket they make, too. I was surprised a few years ago to see some London & Country two-tone green, Leyland-engined Nationals plying the Conwy Valley, one bedecked with day-glow orange stickers proclaiming "Snowdon Sherpa – the green way to see the countryside". Shortly afterwards they were repainted into red/white Alpine colours, just as Crosville took over the Alpine routes. Never did understand that! They were YPL 386/7 and 443T. They have disappeared only recently, as has NPD 127L, which was used by Alpine for school bus contract. Now that the bunch of Mercedes bread-vans C302-6 SPL have also passed on, my only company is the summer performance by topless JPL 105K for Guide Friday. As I work in a low first-floor office/lab, the hourly passage of this vehicle with its commentary breaks the monotony a little.

Can any readers shed light on a question that has been dogging me for years? Why did SV keep a couple of RTs, which I only ever saw on the 303C short turns from Stevenage Industrial Area to Hitchin Station? Wouldn't ANs pass under the Wymondley railway bridge? Couldn't a SuperBus be fitted with a conventional ticket machine? The conductors spent the middle of the day on the 383 between Oakfield Estate, Hitchin and Weston, which when I last used it (1976) was provided by an SM SuperBus!

Gannock Park, Deganwy, Conwy LL31 9PZ



Back in Action... Following repairs to its clutch and gearbox, D142 made some successful runs to Stoke D'Abernon during the last Display Day and its appearance was much appreciated by those who ventured out on that bitterly cold, though sunny day. (Photograph: Mike Nash)



Plane Handsome... A pleasant surprise at the Science Museum, Wroughton was to find 4RF4 NLP 645 nestling under the wing of a Comet 4B, and looking very smart in its original BEA livery. Hopefully this will stir Donald Allmeijer into action whereby his own resident example MILL 740 can receive the attention needed to see its return to the road. (Photograph: Mike Nash).

From Graham Lunn, RM 2116 Group

THE WRONG SIDE OF BUS PRESERVATION

In response to Roy Adams letter we felt that a debate should be opened on the worrying aspect of the cost to vehicle owners for them to take part in events.

Firstly, we own RM 2116 and have done for the last ten years but we first started preserving buses more than 13 years ago so we hopefully have plenty of experience on the subject. The main costs to any vehicle owner is firstly diesel and secondly storage, especially that undercover. In Roy's letter he mentions charges at shows. We are not going to name any but he is right to say that we should not be expected to fork out any more money. After all, there would be no show without us. But the biggest point that we want to mention is that of stall charges. Many of us run a stall to support our vehicle. Even if the takings are only enough to cover the diesel home it helps. But sadly, the cost of these is getting silly because organizers charge the same fee to commercial stall holders who in my opinion are only there for an extra day's trading.

An example from your average event that 2116 attends would be £2 for the vehicle entry, £20 for a stall and let's say £40 of diesel. That's £62 just to show our bus at an event. Commercial stallholders costs other than the stall fee are minimal because most claim the travel costs back through their business as expenses. What's more, they stop us making money because they can afford to undercut our prices. So it appears that we bus owners actually fund many events, though admittedly not all. Sometimes we're out of pocket before we even get out of bed! It's high time we bus owners were treated with more respect by organizers. As I said before, without us etc. etc.

Yes, Cobham does need more help, but we need to attract non-owners so that bus owners can spend more of their days off working on their own vehicles or rallying them.

After 13 years on the scene, 2116 will be taking it a bit easier in 1998 and will only be attending selected events. After all, in the last

five years she has been out every Sunday, up and down the country. We were however, delighted to attend Cobham's Display Day and RF Event on October 26th. Happy motoring to all and a good 1998.

Pooley Avenue, Egham, Surrey TW20 8AB

From Roger Stagg

What's all this about 25 years of National Service? I was in the last input for National Service and that was almost 40 years ago!

Teston Road, Offham, West Mailing, Kent ME19 5NE

From Stephen Le Bras

On the very day the Autumn issue arrived (yesterday), I received Coach and Bus Week with a road test of RF136, and your memories of March 14th 1972 were very pertinent to me as March 13th is my birthday and I well remember seeing ERM35L being launched. I joined LOTS later in 1972 when I met a fellow enthusiast at Addlestone garage whose father was, like me, a PSV Circle member. He had personally just joined LOTS and 25 years on I am still a member.

You also mentioned the possibility of preparing a history of the RF next year for Ian Allan. I went to school by RF bus from Walton/Sheperton to Kingston and I had a class mate who had followed the progress of the red RF since 1952. I took plenty of B&W photographs and colour slides which I must get round to sorting some day.

Finally, I see nothing unusual in the saga of Leyland National preservation. I photographed them when new and 25 years on an example of an ex-Alder Valley specimen (BeeLine 364) – still plods round Windsor. I do not regard the contravision National 213 in quite the same way as, on leaving the bus at Staines, I was practically run over by a wheelchair, as my eyes re-adjusted to the light.

6 Queen Anne's Court, Peascod Street, Windsor, SL4 1DG

From Phil Jelly

I felt I must write in support of Roy Adams' letter in the last magazine. I too live in the Bristol area and cannot travel to Cobham as often as I would like. I was another of the apathetic members came to Cobham on the day before last year's OpenDay to help. I had given up two days' work as a part time driver for a First Bus company in Bath. A loss of some £50 in wages. I was disappointed at the lack of organisation and was only pleased that I had done something at the end of the day.

Before I became a Cobham member I had come to the open day as an ordinary member of the public. I enjoyed looking for bargains to add to my model collection from the stalls. I enjoyed looking at the exhibits and I enjoyed riding on the buses that had been so much part of my youth. I was brought up in London and left in 1974 – just about the end of era of the RT, which has always been my favourite bus.

Now as a "distant" member, what have I gained? I came up early for the 1997 Open Day with some friends (non-members) and was told that help would probably be needed in the afternoon. As I am unable to come to Cobham regularly, I had a lot to fit in. If I had been told to reserve an hour to sell programmes on the gate or something similar I have no doubt I could have arranged my day accordingly but it seemed clear to me that a much greater commitment was necessary. I therefore paid my £5.00 entry fee and enjoyed the day. My friends did wonder why I paid another £12 two weeks later as they could not see the advantage of membership. I must admit that since Roy's letter neither can I.

I agree that £5 is excellent value for money – it does not seem fair that members should pay the same as any other member of the public. For 1998 I don't mind coming on the Saturday again to help, but I can't commit myself to anything on the recent form sent through as I do want to enjoy the Open Day. I think to agree to help for an hour on the day is quite sufficient. I even think a "couple of hours" mentioned in your (the Editors) reply is too much. This would be over 25% of the day and I would find that difficult as a "distant" member

and I have to say that I did not get the impression that even a couple of hours was expected last year, more like the whole afternoon. Perhaps Roy is right and I ought not to renew my membership in 1998.

I am sure however that I will as I still support the work that is done at Cobham. As a compromise I am prepared to work on the Saturday and do no more than one hour on the Sunday. In return I feel I should have free admission on the Sunday or at the very least a reduction of at least £3 and pay no more than £2. Well done Roy on your letter. It seems to have spurred me into action.

Witham Road, Keynsham, N.E.Somerset, BS18 1QZ

From Graham Ruddock

I read with interest, and some foreboding, the recent correspondence concerning the Open Day and the need for support from members on this day. Then it struck me that this is, in many ways, healthy. The committee of an organisation such as the Trust has a choice when a magazine is offered to the members. They can ensure that the magazine contains no hint of controversy, with the editor being asked to arrange that any article or views which might cause differences of opinion not be printed or be edited. The committee, of which I am a member, does not do this, and I hope that the dialogue on the Open Day will lead to many of us reflecting on its role, its finance and its staffing in a democratic way.

Gordondale Road, Wimbledon Park, London SW19 8EN

From Alan R Charman

I am writing this in my private capacity rather than as a member of the management committee.

I have read with interest the comments of both Simon Lane and Roy Adams relating to volunteer support and the Open Day in

particular. I have been associated with the Bluebell Railway for a number of years, volunteer resources are a much discussed topic even on a railway that is in its 36th year. It is generally accepted that from the membership comes the volunteers and expertise needed to operate the Society or Trust. However no more than 10% of the membership can be considered as active helpers at any one time and the regular team is made up of less than 5%, if you relate this to Cobham then we can expect 60 volunteers and a hard core of 25 or 30 members!

Having said that, the membership is very important including the 90% that visit but cannot find the time to regularly help, I was a member of Bluebell for 12 years before the children had reached an age where I had some spare time could offer some help. We probably have a similar situation within our own membership.

So what is the solution? Simon needs volunteers for Open Day in April, so we must enlarge our membership. I firmly believe that Cobham has a potential of 2000 members from which will come 200 volunteers and helpers, so let's stop berating the existing membership and go out and recruit another 1400. As for Roy's proposal that membership should include free entry to Open Day, well I will cover that one in my official capacity as Treasurer, watch this space.

Hampton Way, Herontye, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 4SG

From David Boshier

I felt that I should respond to the letter from Roy Adams reproduced in the last magazine, but before doing so, permit me to comment on another subject. The "Autumnal Bus Gathering" on Sunday, October 26th was attended by myself with RCL2223 which is of course owned by members AVS Graphics. The opportunity to take the bus to an event this year has not arisen due to its busy work schedule through the summer months. However, the bus was enjoying some attention at Fifield prior to returning to BBC TV on a training exercise. I

thought the event was well organised and appeared to be quite popular especially with the RF buses being put to work on the 462. Myself and Steve Hemmings enjoyed a wonderful Sunday roast outside in the autumn sun at a very good little pub in Stoke D'Abernon accompanied by the regular tones of RFs at work.

Concerning the comments of Roy Adams, I have written to Roy and expressed my support for his views, but more important as he so rightly points out, are to express ones thoughts in the magazine, I trust that opportunity will be given. It is extremely difficult for someone such as myself who is actively involved with the restoration of a decrepit vehicle to find time for other activities in life over and above running a business (in my case). Time is very limited, and for those with families, even more so. I made it very clear when I rejoined Cobham after a long absence, that I would not be able to make a contribution in physical terms. This was after considerable effort on the part of several members of the committee to capture me back into the fold.

Running Cobham Bus Museum is no easy task, the committee have worked absolute wonder in recent years since the period of near "zero" activity. It is always very easy to sit back and criticise a committee for the way it goes about its task. However, I would hope that the committee is not beyond listening to the membership and taking note and hopefully acting upon constructive suggestions.

I therefore would wish to make some suggestions. I feel that the membership should not be charged entry to the Museum on the main Open Day or come to that any other day. Members are entitled to some privileges! I would also refuse to pay such charges if pressed to do so, I find the very suggestion very much an affront!

On another note, I believe the quality of the magazine to be excellent despite the fact that we were subjected to a rather large rendition on the so-called virtues of the Leyland National in the last edition! I would therefore suggest that consideration is given to increasing the membership subscription to £18 per annum. Frankly, the production of the magazine must run very close to a deficit. I

personally, would have no problem with the increased subscription providing the entrance fee for members to the museum is dropped for good!

The matter of stall fees at Cobham Open Day was also raised, I should like to go a little further with my thoughts on this subject. From time to time, I myself have a stall with a view of raising some extra cash for our restoration of RT1312. At the last Open Day, I paid the extortionate charges and as such was treated in the same way as a trader operating in a commercial fashion. Frankly, it stinks! I can think of other vehicle owners and members who have a stall to help run a preserved bus, why should they be treated as "just another trader"?

The Trust is fortunate in having a healthy membership but as with so many other voluntary organisations, clubs and societies, a small group of regular volunteers are making progress possible. We need to look at ways of increasing the membership still further by encouraging those who do not and perhaps are not in the position of being able to take on a vehicle. This would take the pressure off members actively engaged in maintaining and restoring vehicles. Unhelpful comments and insults aimed at the membership will only go to reduce the membership from the healthy figure it now is. Perhaps we should remember that the London Bus Preservation Trust or Group as it was originally known, was not formed to be based entirely on Cobham Bus Museum. I would hope that we haven't lost sight of this.

I would like to think that Roy's letter and the others that followed it will be viewed very seriously by all concerned. I would also like to think that a debate on these matters and many others could be opened up from time to time rather than restricting such debates to the AGM.

Hythe Park Road, Egham, Surrey, TW20 8DA

From M W Lloyd

Thanks for your last letter and the photo of SNC 141 which was much appreciated. Oddly enough, I rarely photographed Nationals unless they had been in accidents so until now had no photo of the old girl. I look forward very much to seeing 117 in Lincoln green, I think this is a great idea and often wondered what they would have looked like in the proper livery. When the Green Line golden jubilee came round one of the suggestions I made was that representative vehicles should be painted in older liveries (imagine an SNC in the old apple green a la T219!) but in the event they just painted some RB and RS coaches in the gold livery – pity! Unfortunately, most of the people I know in preservation are my sort of age (half a century) and have no interest in Nationals and other “modern” stuff.

Whilst writing, I would like to express some support for Roy Adams' views in the current magazine. Cobham has been phenomenally successful in recruiting new members in recent years, BUT many of them, it is apparent from the published lists, live many miles away from Cobham. Obviously people join to express their support for the Museum and their interest in the preservation of London buses, but not everyone is able to make the trek to the Museum itself at a time when volunteers are most needed. In any event, it seems a good rule of thumb that of any voluntary society, only about 10% of the membership take an active part, no matter what the society in question is all about. If I were to come to Cobham, my costs and time would be greater than Roy's as I live further away, and I am by no means the most far-flung member. I would love to be more involved with the Museum, the buses and the Open Day, but it is just not practical for me to travel such a great distance there, do a day's work and then drive all the way home. Like Roy, I'm not a teenager any more! What is more, whoever chooses the date of the Open Day does rather have a happy knack of clashing with something else as far as I and my family are concerned. I do agree that it seems very sad that those members who live nearer, or rather some of them, don't get more

involved. Perhaps that is something that the Committee could look into. Why do people stay away? I have heard things up here which suggest that sometimes newcomers are not made to feel welcome and wanted, but then I can't really base any comments on reports and rumours. Is there a case for having a nominated person, committee member or not, to welcome newcomers and help them to settle in and do their bit? It can be very daunting to turn up hoping to find a useful job to do and finding oneself ignored because everyone else is just too busy to bother – just a thought!

If any rich Cobham supporter likes to subsidise my moving house to be nearer the place, then I'll be glad to come along week after week to do my bit, but while I'm over 200 miles away all I can do is write for the magazine and try to answer any cries for technical advice by post.

Queen Street, Highfield, Wigan, Lancs. WN5 9HY

From John Hinson

I am sure I must not be the only member to throw up my arms in horror on reading your statement in the editorial of the Autumn issue. You can't just run away from the editorship, or rather, you mustn't!

Whilst I am by no means as long standing a member as many, my membership goes back far enough to remember year after year of uncertainty in the way of newsletters or magazines. It is no small task, and many tried and failed. By contrast, you have not only managed to produce nearly twenty issues, but have expanded it into a massive publication which has surpassed, by far, any previous efforts.

I believe that a newsletter or magazine is the only thing that keeps even slightly distant members in touch, and I certainly can never wait for the next issue. It is essential that it continues.

If you really must hand it over, we must just cross our fingers for as enthusiastic successor as you have been.

The Shambles, Graham Road, Wealdstone, Middlesex HA3 5RE

OPEN DAY 1998

AN UPDATE FROM THE SUB-COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

After the last issue of CBM, I was grateful to Mike for letting me answer Roy Adams' letter from the West Country: we in fact met at the Hibernation Day and had a long and amicable chat and we saw each others point of view.

We had our second Sub-Committee 18th November and the information I want to tell you is as follows

Brooklands: until the Sunday Traders appeal against the Local Authority in the first week of December we shan't know whether the traders will have summer only or all year trading on the Runway. If they get permission for all year trading then the managing agents will have to issue one of the three prohibition notices they are allowed to serve annually for 5th April 1998. I will keep you up to date on the position.

The Police are not being helpful about providing cover for the Redhill Road junction: the sub-committee agreed that we must have police cover as we shall not have enough volunteers to cover that duty (see below), and it will cost us £40 per hour for the day between 10.00am and 5.00pm. I have yet to find out whether that rate is per person or for a two person rota. The provision of loos at Brooklands is expensive because there is no water main into which to tap.

Suggestions have been made for a longer Vintage Route because Addlestone Garage is no more. We will also be checking up to see that the Silvermere turn is there for us in 1998. We have agreed on a lower rate for stallholders (£35) who are registered charities or non profit making organisations. With the new foyer works at Cobham more stallholders will have to be accommodated at Brooklands.

Simon Kaye and Andy Baxter will be the joint Site Controllers at Cobham to relieve me: thank you to them both for volunteering!

32 volunteers had offered their services by 18th November; 102 are needed. The Shop is going great guns under Gordon Edridge and will be stocked with a new and exciting range of goodies. Our next

meeting is in mid January 1998, and any further news will be imparted as soon as possible after the 14th January.

My thanks to my Sub-Committee for their continuing hard work. A Blessed Christmas and a Contented New Year to all our readers!

Simon Douglas Lane

VEHICLE NEWS

Peter Plummer

- STL2377 John Bedford, Roger Stagg and Ian Barrett presented the technical drawings prepared by Roger to the Science Museum in October. Our project for the re-framing of the lower deck body was warmly received and it has been suggested we submit our application for a 50% grant under their Prism Fund scheme. Our half of the cost can only be met by the capital held by the London Bus Preservation Trust Ltd. (formerly the London Bus Preservation Group Ltd.) and it is therefore vitally important to resolve the legal ownership dispute with the Directors of the LBPT Ltd, if this project is to proceed.
- RT2775 The rubber platform covering has been fixed and therefore the platform is virtually complete. Most structural work on the lower nearside is complete and once one window pan and visors have received attention paneling up can proceed. The offside wheel arch timbers have been removed to reveal a steel arch which is borderline salvageable. The lower deck offside floor covings are in poor condition and complete replacement seems necessary. Two lower deck window pans have been replaced or repaired.
- T448 Brian Down attended the museum recently after long absence due to personal and other transport commitments. He and Andy Baxter stripped down and removed the front nearside wing structure to reveal a considerable amount of corrosion due to a missing inner arch panel.
- G351 Front axle and spring overhaul continues whilst a new king pin for the nearside is sought. Perhaps one of our members knows of one? □

VIC'S CHRISTMAS QUIZ

- 1 Which livery is T31 painted in?
- 2 What was the nickname of London's first trolleybuses?
- 3 Can you name the former Driver Training Centre for LT staff?
- 4 Are there any RM buses operating in London still fitted with AEC engines?
- 5 Who owns the last RT built and what is its fleet number?
- 6 What was special about RF700 apart from it being the last of its class?
- 7 What was Baker Street famous for as regards an LT service to the public?
- 8 Where was LT's bus overhaul works located?
- 9 Which town had blue and yellow liveried SuperBus services?
- 10 Which RM's were painted red and yellow?
- 11 How many RCL Green-Line coaches were built for LT?
- 12 The majority of vehicles at Cobham are of which make?
- 13 Which member loaned the Aldenham lettering to Cobham?
- 14 Which special task did RT2775 perform many years ago?
- 15 How many RP coaches are known to survive and which are they?

Answers by post please to the Editor. The winner will receive a gift voucher to spend in the museum's new shop on Open Day.

ANAGRAM COMPETITION

You may remember that in the last issue I suggested a competition whereby members came up with witty anagrams from the 'LONDON TRANSPORT ALDENHAM WORKS' letters now proudly displayed in the museum and on long term loan from member Christopher Sullivan. Well, your Editor was completely underwhelmed by the

response (sorry, but SDL's phrase 'stupefying apathy' somehow seems appropriate again!) so thank goodness for Jonathan Wilkins of Deganwy whose lone entry means he came both first and last with the following excellent suggestions :

London Transport Raffle : DALEK HAS WON RM
Cobham Museum Barbecue : RAM HANDLES WOK
Brooklands Open Day : LEND MARK A SHOW
New Driver on Green Line : RS HAM WOKE LAND

Jonathan's effort wins him a £20 voucher to spend in the Cobham Shop when next he ventures down from darkest North Wales. Meanwhile, the lukewarm response from the rest of the membership is exactly why your Editor is considering a quieter life. If only the effort put in to moaning about SDL's comments could be directed more positively we could really go places! Think about it.

MUSEUM CLEAR-UP WEEKEND 4th and 5th October

Blessed with good weather for both days, volunteers were applying paint, consolidating timber supplies, re-routing unsightly electric cables, tidying stock, cleaning the bodywork workshop, clearing redundant items from the rear of the site and "gardening".

Our target was to complete the west side of the building this year. We made it. In addition, two bays of the east side are almost finished with paint. Member Paul Brophy donated a number of superb storage crates which although too large for our racking can be modified by reducing the width by 18 inches, requiring about three hours work on each crate. The eventual use of these will be to transform the environment with tidiness – a most important aspect for full museum registration.

Peter Plummer

My thanks to the following for their attendance – Ian Barrett; Paul Brophy; Dave Kriesler; Gordon Edridge; Simon Kriesler; Mr Baldry; Roger Stagg; Andy Baxter; Brian Dabbs; Rod Lucas; John Greene; Norman Davey; Paul Wheeler; Bill Cottrell; Nick Abbott; John Messer; John Bedford; Tony Lewis; Kevin McGowan; George Townsend; Richard Hussey; Colin Prince; Paul Morris; Graham Ruddock; John Rawlins; R Caldwell; Ken Wade; Peter Starks; Terry Andrews; Philip Millard; Leo Morey; Chris Plested; Alan Davidson; Alan Trenchard; Peter Plummer

DIARY DATES

Saturday 7th February – SLIDE/SOCIAL EVENING – HOUNSLOW WEST
See elsewhere this issue for full details. Hope you can make it.

Sunday 5th April – COBHAM BUS MUSEUM 25TH ANNUAL OPEN DAY
With tighter organisation, much more at Brooklands and a new vintage bus route, this promises to be another great event for the Trust. Please make every effort to attend and where possible lend a hand. Full details next issue. Please refer to the appeal from John Rawlins.



LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST

COBHAM BUS MUSEUM · REDHILL ROAD · COBHAM KT11 1EF · 01932 868665

MAGAZINE EDITOR – MIKE NASH

Stroudwater Park, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0DT

Chairman Peter Plummer, Northdown Road, Longfield, Kent DA3 7QN.

Treasurer Alan Charman, Hampton Way, East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 4SG

Secretary John Bedford, Albany Court, 38 Alexandra Grove, London N12 8NN

Committee

Ian Barrett, Cox Lane, West Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT19 9NA.

Dr Graham Ruddock, Gordondale Road, Wimbledon Park, London SW19 8EN

Richard Hussey, Hillcross Avenue, Morden, Surrey SM4 4EX

Paul Morris, Groveside Close, Carshalton, Surrey SM5 2EQ, 0181 8394

Dave Jones, Epping Close, Romford, Essex RM7 8BH.

TELEPHONE CALLS To avoid causing excessive disruption at home, especially during the late evening, telephone messages for committee members should be channelled through Bill Cottrell or Paul Morris (see above), who will pass them to the appropriate person.

Your co-operation will be appreciated.

REGISTERED AS A CHARITY NO 293319

**DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS
TO NEXT MAGAZINE
STRICTLY 20TH FEBRUARY**

Thank god that's over!!! – Ed



25

YEARS

OF

**COBHAM
BUS MUSEUM**

1972-1997

**THE LONDON BUS
PRESERVATION TRUST**