

COBHAM BUS MUSEUM

MAGAZINE



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Front cover Re-united Reliances – the only two surviving RPs in original condition were re-united late May when RPs 21 and 90 posed for the camera. RP21, formerly part of London & Country's vintage fleet, has been found to be in much better condition than had been previously reported and it is hoped that it will be rallied with RP90 later this season.

FROM THE EDITOR

Bill Cottrell

I must start by paying tribute to Mike Nash who took over as membership secretary and magazine editor five years ago when morale at the LBPT was at an all time low. He has produced twenty meaty issues at regular intervals. During this time, the membership figures have risen from under one hundred to over five hundred. Bearing in mind that the magazine is the only point of contact with the Trust for most members, and most of those members have remained loyal to the Trust, bears testimony to his skills as editor in the development of this journal. It was my intention to take over for one issue to give Mike a break for the summer in the hope that he would continue afresh, but external commitments, such as having to work for a living, have been the factor in him giving up the role. He will continue with his membership duties and I will endeavor to edit at least the next four issues to maintain some sort of continuity. Magazine number twenty had seventy-two pages, consisting of twelve pages of photographs, twelve pages of information from various committee members, ten pages of regular features, eight pages from the editor, five pages of letters but one third, twenty four pages, was contributed by members. This shows how much your input is needed. Thank you to all who have shared their efforts and I look forward to hearing of the reminiscences and experiences of many more of you. Just write it down as you would tell it, any format is acceptable. To focus your thoughts, I am looking to feature the XA, XF and XMS classes in Winter issue, so if you were involved with the operation, maintenance or just chased them with your camera and notebooks, let me have your memories on these short lived classes. In the meantime, articles for the Autumn magazine will be most welcome (and necessary).

I have managed to track down a former regular contributor, Dr. Spanner, who passed me a crayoned note out through the fence of his current abode. He hopes to be about in the community again soon and looks forward to receiving questions on mechanical matters, and

giving hints on maintenance. He promises he will get to work on his column as soon as he gets a few moments alone. Another former regular feature is also being revived, 'The Couch Potato's Guide'. This item reviews old British 'B' movies that appear either mid-afternoon or the wee small hours, usually on channel four, and sifts them for their interesting content, the brief glimpse of an STL, the distant outline of an RT, etc. To take on this task I have managed to engage the services of one Desirée Parker-Knoll, a woman who was no stranger to the back row of many cinemas in the forties and fifties.

Whilst compiling the '25 Years Ago' feature, I noticed I edited the Newsletter for January 1972. This consisted of one double-sided foolscap page of photographs and the same amount of text. It was typed onto a stencil and run off on a duplicating machine. Oh those far off innocent days, when I used to think that 36B could only refer to a bus route in Peckham, and if anybody had talked of megabytes of RAM it would be in the context of being attacked by a particularly ferocious male sheep. Today, with the advantage of my crusty computer with its rusty spoilchecker to assist, it's once more into the breach... □

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Peter Plummer

Response to our appeal for additional volunteers resulted in the best organised and most profitable Open Day ever. Despite appalling weather in the week leading up to the event and the days afterwards, we were blessed with acceptable sunshine and cloud, with only a downpour in the early evening whilst we awaited the arrival of the last few buses to be put away to make us realise how lucky we were. I extend my gratitude to the Open Day sub-committee for a job well done. The day saw the inauguration of our new visitor reception area and shop which was officially opened by the Mayor of Elmbridge, Councillor Gordon Chubb and his wife, and was attended by Ms.

Morag Barton, our curatorial advisor, Mr. Philip Hammond, MP for Weybridge, and his wife and family, and Mr. John Butler from the Council of the Transport Trust. The increased revenue enabled the Trust to make the final payment on the purchase of AEC Regal T31.

During April and May, STL2377, by now housed in the paint bay workshop, was prepared and reframed by contractors Cox Brothers of Maidstone. The quality of workmanship is befitting this important pre-war London archetypal double deck vehicle and was completed two weeks ahead of schedule.

The Trust received a vehicle donated by member Mr. Norman Anscombe for which I, on behalf of the Trust, express our sincere thanks and appreciation of his kind gesture and support. The Ford 100E London Transport service van 1096F, sporting a pristine Chiswick Green livery dating from 1959, was delivered to Cobham by Bill Cottrell on 10th May.

The RT chassis on long term loan from member Dick Garbutt is progressively being cleaned and painted by John Rawlins, Phil Cruise and a small band of volunteers. This educational display will be brought up to full operational standard as a demonstration unit for visitors and schools.

Work has recommenced on RT2775. After a thorough inspection, I decided the lower deck coving panels were too corroded for the vehicles intended PCV use and all three offside and one on the nearside are currently in the process of being replaced. Both rear wheelarches are now complete and repaneling has already commenced. Andy Baxter has replaced a broken lower stub pillar on the nearside of P3 but it would appear the vehicle is not now scheduled for use until September this year. My team have assisted John Broadhurst on the museum grounds by collecting and delivering thirty kerbstones to enable our on site street scene to progress.

My thanks to all volunteers, a truly impressive quarter. □

TREASURER'S REPORT

Alan Charman

Open Day has come and gone and what a success for our "New" shop. Sales exceeded all expectations. Thanks must go to Gordon Edridge and his team for all the work and effort that went into our new venture.

Profits from Open Day were enough to cover in full the additional cash requirement to adequately stock the new shop and this should now be self financing without becoming a cash liability to the Museum, which is always a major concern when establishing a new business venture. Open Day receipts were again within our expectations, thanks to Simon Douglas-Lane and his committee for their sterling efforts. The number of visitors has declined slightly since 1996 but we still calculate that more than 3000 people visited Cobham on 5th April.

Donations towards RT2775 continue to arrive and we have ordered many of the parts required to complete the restoration, many thanks to those members that have added that little bit extra to their membership renewal cheque.

In an effort to make a visit to Cobham more attractive to the casual visitor, as well as the dedicated enthusiast, we have enhanced our Museum bus service to offer a forty minute journey to include Weybridge Town and Station, Cobham Village and Stoke D'Abernon Station before returning to the Museum. This will be operated by an assortment of interesting vehicles and the route is a fully registered commercial service using the former LT number 462. (See timetable in this issue)

By the time that you read this the AGM will have passed and our proposal to increase the membership fee to £20 will either be passed or rejected. I feel it is necessary to explain some of the thoughts behind the increase. First of all the magazine, which has grown into an excellent publication, costs approximately £9 per member per annum to produce and distribute. There was a feeling

amongst the committee that membership should also include entry to the Museum whenever it was open to the public and should also include a ticket for the Open Day in April. Taking all of these items into consideration, and assuming that each member will visit at least once a year, the cost per member is £15, leaving £5 to put towards a restoration project.

Lastly, another plug for the Cobham shop. We stock all London related models and can offer a reservation service, together with our own Cobham exclusive products, and books from the major publishers, please use the shop and remember that the profits from our shop go towards restoration projects. □

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Mike Nash

After a very quiet period leading up to Open Day things have certainly taken a turn for the better. Phill Cruise and his team managed to sign up some 18 members on the day and since then there has been a steady influx of new recruits resulting in the bumper list you see below. The excellent news that Graham Smith has been appointed our Publicity Officer with Chris French assisting will no doubt also have an impact in this area. The Trust really does get stronger with every month.

This means that yet again I am able to post a new all-time high of 535 members which is excellent news. These days, by far the majority of new members do not yet own a bus, but we hope that by joining Cobham the interest stimulated may encourage more to do so, thus helping to perpetuate what for the time being seems to be a very healthy movement.

May I ask that those members who have received a Renewal Notice with this issue respond promptly. In the last quarter I had to send out no fewer than 41 second reminders which really is a poor show. Thankfully, more and more members are choosing to pay by Standing Order and Deed of Covenant which is of great help in

keeping down both administration time and the Trust's overheads. Please do consider these options if you haven't already done so. Lastly, a big thank you to the many members who have included additional donations towards the Vehicle Restoration Fund as a result of the additional box to tick on the renewal form. Without doubt RT2775's future is looking very bright!

A warm welcome is extended to the following whom we hope to see back soon to Redhill Road, please do remember to return to me your Members Details forms without delay. Thank you.

647 Robbie Robson	West Molesey	ND
648 Tony Fawkes	Milton Keynes	CB
649 John Arundell	Bagshot	
650 Michael Callard	Slough	DJ
651 John Cook	Chatham	
652 Terry Cooper	Sheffield	
653 Alan Good	Rainham	
654 K. Gray	Islington	
655 Stuart Heath	Rudgwick	
656 Arthur Jolliffe	Croydon	
657 Hugh Ramsey	Dunstable	
658 P. Rogers	Bracknell	
659 Peter Smith	Twyford	
660 Peter Smith (!)	Harrow	
661 Harold Turner	Ashford, Kent	
662 Ms. M. Ward	Weybridge	
663 Owen Whitehand	Sudbury	Atlantean & Bristol LH
664 Richard Zarywacz	Caversham	
665 Jack London	Newark	
666 David Luck	Walthamstow	
667 G. Addison	Walton-on-Thames	
668 Jim Cowdery	Chudleigh	
669 M. Pulley	Truro	
670 Tim Sargent	Claygate	
671 M. Phillips	East Grinstead	
672 Duncan Law	Walthamstow	Bristol K6B & RELH6G
673 Ken Pitt	Redditch	
674 B. Bunker	Wallington	
675 Adrian Forward	Norbury	
676 A. Thompson	Potters Bar	
677 D. Adams	Hornchurch	
678 Rufus Isaacs	Gerrards Cross	
679 William Mead	North Kensington	
680 Lawrence Williams	Dagenham	
681 J. Downing	Northampton	

682 Edmund Malinowski	Yateley	GE
683 G. Grenside	Godalming Maintains 1933 Dart for Dennis	RH
684 Ian King	Headley	RH
685 Stan Hawes	Horncastle	
686 Paul Fisher	Sevenoaks	
687 Chris Frost	Godalming	RH
688 Mike Sheppy	Feltham	RLH 48's Conductor! GS
689 Andrew Collins	Twickenham	

Recruited by: CB – Classic Bus Magazine DJ – Dave Jones(560) GE – Gordon Edridge GS – Graham Smith ND – Norman Davey RH – Richard Hussey

FROM THE NEWSLETTER 25 YEARS AGO

Bill Cottrell

January 1973 – Fanfare for Europe

As part of the celebrations to commemorate Britain's entry into the EEC, 60 invited preserved vehicles made the trip from London to Brussels for the purpose of giving publicity to a petition handed in to our new masters for the better understanding of the problems of old vehicles. Of the 60, 10 were commercials and the LBPG interest was represented by the ST. The ST, as always, performed perfectly...

No. 1F, CDS Cobham

Back to Boxing Day 1972 when the 'phone rang and a voice said 'What you need is a breath of fresh air and some exercise to work off the plum pud, I'll pick you up in 20 minutes.' As the voice belonged to Don Allmey I went back to bed for an hour and 1 hour 20 minutes later he arrived. We then set out to somewhere near Bracknell to collect a rather nice 1953 Ford 10 cwt. van, similar to the ones LT had in the 76XF series in the service fleet. This one is ex-Malmesbury Rural District Council. It was towed back to Cobham and has been made

into a runner, No. 1 in the service vehicle fleet. All that is needed is a couple of pints of Chiswick green paint to make a nice looking van.

Feb/March 1973

Breakdown tender 833J has been busy of late handling tows of members vehicles, GS33 Markyate/Richmond, RTL1163 Richmond/Cobham and return, RTL305 chassis to Cobham for breaking, STL159 chassis to Cobham for dismantling, GW713 to Cobham ex-Finchley, RTW124 Crystal Palace/Cobham for engine removal to fit RTW75, RTW124 to Ottershaw for breaking, RTL554 Richmond/Essex for engine. Who said the breakdown tender had retired?

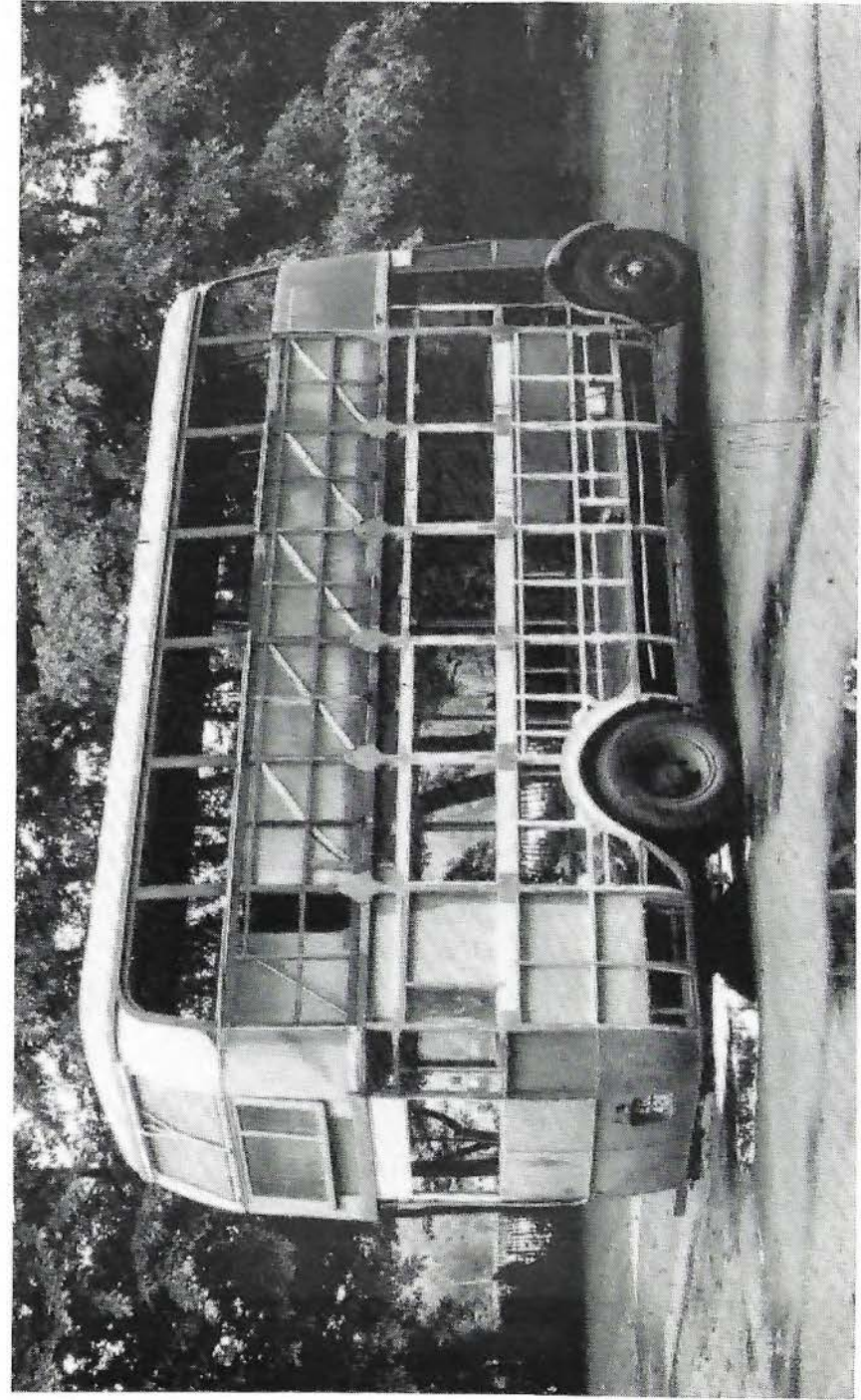
RTs 3886, 4192, 3159 and 3877 sold to Vancouver through Ted Brakell.

April 1973

The newsletter carried an obituary for Francis West, a respected member of the 2RT2 Preservation Group.

In sharp contrast to the more modern former LT Atlanteans and other buses on a boat out of Southampton during the next two or three weeks will be Jim Atkinson's 1914 B-type, B214 destination Hong Kong and hopefully full restoration. It has been reported for some time now that the engine for the B-type has been rebuilt and providing motive power for a junk in Hong Kong Harbour. But the increasing problem has been what to do? Whether to bring the engine back to the UK and install it in the chassis during periodic home leaves – or take the chassis out to Hong Kong, do the installation and complete restoration out there in off duty time and ship the complete vehicle back. Well, Jim has opted for the latter and shortly B214 in dark green WW1 livery, engineless, will leave Cobham for warmer climes to return, if all goes to schedule in about 12 months time.

RTW29 has been acquired from Barry Monk by Mr. S.T. Addison of Herne Bay.



In the frame... The elegant lines characteristic of later examples of the STL class show to advantage in this photograph taken at Cobham on 2 June, when reframing of the lower deck of STL2377 was virtually complete. The vehicle will be moved to Dorking for repainting. (Photograph: Henry Law)



STL2377 at Bristol in 1978 (Photo: Michael H C Baker)

The Open Day

January 14th turned out to be the warmest and sunniest day of the year, so far, like the first day of spring, it was. When I arrived at Cobham buses were already moving out into the yard. A spare set of batteries had been on charge all week, so, with the help of a set of jumper leads, most could be started. T792 with T448 were the buses chosen to work the Weybridge station to Cobham Bus Museum special service. The timetable was worked out by the RT1173 Group who acted as inspectors for the day to make sure their schedules were worked to time. Unbeknown to them, British Rail had chosen Jan. 14th to repair the line between Weybridge and Byfleet and the 15T and 9T9 arrived just as 150 would-be rail travellers expected the railway emergency buses. Fortunately, a London Country MB soon arrived and the chaos was tactfully sorted out.

The Open Day attracted about 200 people throughout the day. The ST and the Dennis did two trips each around the block. All the journeys were filled to capacity. Visiting buses included a Dennis Lancette ex-Aldershot, a Guy coach ex-L.U.T., a Leyland Comet of Brown Bros., and the LPC owned Bedford OB, now resident. Free soup, sandwiches, tea and coffee were provided by the HCVC so that anyone who paid 5p to become a day member certainly had their moneys-worth.

To clarify, the above was a review of our very first Open Day and it is interesting to contrast it with the following report on this year's. □

REVIEW OF OPEN DAY 1998

Simon Douglas Lane

I write this review of 1998 mindful of a deadline of 20th May, and recognising that plans for 1999 are not quite tied up yet. On personalities we say good bye to Andy Hayward who has borne the heat of battle on the bus service for eight long years and not surprisingly he has had enough! Thank you Andy, Simon Wallis and all your team of helpers, because it was a thankless but essential task. Thank you too to Peter Starks who has organised the Brooklands site under great uncertainties for three years: thank you to him and his posse of helpers. We replace them with Steve Fennel on the bus service, and Roger Stagg assisted by Ian Robertson for Brooklands or wherever our second site is for 1999.

On the publicity front, Bill Cottrell and Mike Nash have dealt with publicity (external and with Ian Allan) and with the advent of a Publicity Supremo in the form of Graham Smith, it seems right to have that area under one person: thank you Bill and Mike for your assistance over the years as well. I will list the Sub-Committee at the end so you know who is doing what!

And now to the 1998 event, a cold and windswept day, and bedevilled by many problems in the closing stages. People just do not answer phone calls or letters these days: three letters and umpteen phone calls did not prevent grief in the early morning at the Silvermere turn: Andy Baxter and Simon Kay sorted that out! Our friends in the Surrey Police were hard to track down on the question of definitely providing cover for the Redhill Road junction, but one charming policewoman appeared and that was all right. Then of course we had shared facilities with Wendy Fair at Brooklands: I did dread the worst but it turned out all right.

I know that a gremlin got into the system and said there was a bus service to Cobham Village when the sub committee had decided there wouldn't be: apologies! I know that the Photo Buses seemed to be running as a third bus service and that won't happen again: sorry

to confused bus passengers! I know that there were delays in plaques and programmes being given to bus drivers as they arrived, but Debbie Morris had packaged a large number of packs and I thank her for her hard work! I know that we need two Stall Controllers and next year there will be: I know that although we had a full complement of volunteers, 26% of them were non-members: the problem continues and I mention it again – no apologies! And the Shop – what a tremendous asset to the Trust and well done Gordon Edridge and his team for a wonderful result: All in all the day raised some £28,000 gross and we also kept our costs down: I can only thank my committee and you, the public, for making the day so successful, and with the added civic seal of approval from the Mayor and the Member of Parliament. We can still do better and I hope we will for 1999.

And now to 1999: RT 60 year so let's hope for a good turn out of Class 6 RTs on the Vintage Service, including Evadne returned from the sick bay. There is a cloud hanging over Brooklands in the form of a Planning Application for a major development on the Southern Runway, and I am already in discussion with the relevant parties to see what contingency plans we can make for our event next year. So OPEN DAY 1999 IS ON SUNDAY 11TH APRIL, and as the Sub Committee meets during the year so we will keep you advised on what is going on.

OPEN DAY 99 SUB COMMITTEE

Chairman – Simon Douglas Lane: catering, comfort facilities, site liaison;
Site Control Cobham – Andy Baxter and Simon Kay;
Site Control Brooklands or alternative – Roger Stagg and Ian Robertson;
Bus service and movements – Steve Fennel and Paul Wheeler;
Volunteers(both sites) – John Rawlins; Revenue Control – Debbie Morris
Publicity – Graham Smith; Shop (Both Sites) – Gordon Edridge;
Stalls – Brian Hine and another; Membership (both sites) – Phill Cruise

A DAY OUT ON T31

John Rawlins

On the run up to Open Day a weekday trip was planned to distribute Open Day promotional material for handing out to visitors at various passenger transport points around South London, ending up at the LT Museum in Covent Garden.

We met at Cobham and had three drivers, Alan Bond in command, with Tony Lewis and Bill Ackroyd backing up. Gordon Edridge and I were on board to make the deliveries. The T looked fine, as she always does, and we set off around ten o'clock with Tony driving for our first stop at Leatherhead Garage. We had an enthusiastic reception and a look over newly delivered Arriva DAF/NCME deckers for the 85 route. Next stop, Chessington World of Adventures, with Bill at the wheel, where our reception was polite rather than enthusiastic. With Alan at the controls we set off again, but only reached Hook, just south of the Ace of Spades. A loud bang and loss of power brought us to a standstill. With the bonnet side panel off the checks began, petrol supply, electrics, but although she would start, no more than a tickover could be raised.

Then a car pulled up behind and it was to prove our knight in shining armour. A fellow member, Graeme Brazier en route to work offered to take Tony and I back to Cobham where we picked up the Towbus and returned to connect up the T and tow her unceremoniously back to Cobham. I am told this had not happened before.

Back at Cobham attempts were made to find the problem, without success. After the towbus had pushed her back into the building and a period of reminiscing in the canteen we called it a day. It was a disappointment have not made it to Covent Garden and delivered the promotional material, but it turned out an interesting and informative day in the challenges of bus preservation. Thank you, Graeme!

Postscript to the above, the fault was quickly diagnosed by Andy Baxter as a broken spring in the magneto and repaired accordingly. □

DENNIS DEVIANTS

Seb Marshall

Waking up at five in the morning, not the warmest of late and discovering the starter on your car has given up the ghost, is not the best start to the day. Well this was the predicament I found myself in on the first Sunday in May, the morning of the HCVS London to Brighton Run. Not the end of the world one might say, hop back into bed and forget all about it. Fair enough, and like most of my contemporaries who were just getting into bed for the first time that night, at that moment it looked like the only option.

But with a little perseverance I was on my way. Why? Well I was involved in taking one of the entrants, the Museum's 1925 Dennis. Why, I hear you all cry, would a young man rather freeze and exhaust himself on a slow drive to Brighton, than be tucked up in bed with whatever takes his fancy?

Well, let me introduce myself, I'm Seb Marshall, more commonly known as the son of Prince Marshall. Now to some of you that name will bring back fond memories, others the reputation, and to some of you, you won't have the faintest clue. But who cares.

We all become involved with old vehicles for different reasons, mine just happens to be my father. From as early as I can remember, I was always out with him and his vehicles and the two main events that stick in my mind were the London to Brighton and the Grand Transport Extravaganza at the Tramway Museum in Crich. My sole ambition when I was five was always to be old enough to drive the vehicles as well. Why? Because when you're young you always want to be grown up. That and probably when I needed to go to the toilet, I didn't need him to pull the Dennis over to the side of the Hogarth Roundabout for me to do so. Don't ask me why I remember that. Alas this was not to be done by my father's side as he died when I was eight and not long after his collection was broken up. I never thought I would become involved with the ST and the Dennis ever again. But life moves in mysterious ways and if you hold on to a childhood

dream it might just come true. I walked into Cobham one day and low and behold, I met a wonderful, helpful bunch of people and that is how I came to be in this position.

So moving swiftly back to the 4th May 1998. I got myself to the museum for just after six. I was obviously the last to arrive. The Dennis was already out, should I say gleaming in the morning light? Well it was to me. Having said that, teams of people had been on it the day before tarding the bus up for its big day. Alongside it was the Tow Bus, our little companion for the day.

I was sharing the driving with Bill Cottrell. The weather was overcast, Bill jumped into the cab, who's to argue, he can have the cold belt down the A3. Except I stupidly jumped up beside him, half an hour later "What Esher already?" Bill bellows to me with a big grin on his face. I had to laugh, and hey! that warms you up a little. With a stop for fuel just after the Wandsworth roundabout (only 69.9 four star!!!) we arrived at Battersea Park. What a lovely sight, and I'm glad that the start has come back here. What with Purley a couple of years ago, I did wonder if it would be Brighton to Brighton the following year. Good show HCVS, you grabbed it back in time.

We engaged the self starter, otherwise known as young Simon Kriesler, (always handy to have around, young keen and eager!) and left the park at around 7.45. This time with myself behind the wheel, slightly warmer with a cup of coffee inside me and the improved weather. Our trundle south started without any entrants around us. At Clapham Common we managed to sit at two sets of lights, thanks to a mini cab driver cutting in front of us. It was not until we were on the South Circular heading up the incline towards Streatham that I realised I was not immortal. I stupidly listened to Bill who convinced me to change up a gear. Not on a hill, not in the Dennis. In there somewhere? Not that I could find. Hence we ground to a halt. Then off we crawled up the rest of the hill, me not daring to try that again. I glanced at Bill who had a grin from ear to ear, he'll pay for that!

After that we passed a couple of steam wagons and a Shelvoke and Drewey dust cart. I pulled in just before the turn for the M23, so we

could change drivers and I could go to the loo. Bill took over, while I hopped in the back and gave D.K. a chance to ride up front. On the upper deck going past Gatwick airport, both Ian and Brian were lucky enough to catch a plane take off right in front of us and thunder over our heads, on their respective video cameras.

Not before too long we turned into the half-way halt at Pease Pottage. It was here that we really first saw Mike Sutcliffe's Chocolate Express (it had flown past us at Battersea). Bill took the opportunity to park up behind it, making this the first time the two buses had got together. Why? Well with only a year between them, these are the only two Dodson bodied, Pirate buses in restored existence.

The Express does look immaculate and in my opinion more Edwardian. That is not to say it overshadows the Dennis in any shape or form. What you have to take into account is the Express has done very little in its preserved life, and was restored relatively recently. That is not to knock it in any way. But when you take into account the Dennis was restored over quarter a century ago and has not stopped working until only recently, the old girl don't look bad. She has a 3000 mile tour of Japan, a 1000 mile tour of England and the 100 Route service under her belt. Not to mention numerous other excursions, with very little tender loving care, if any at times. It is only recently with the change in museum management that any attention has been lavished. Not that I'm complaining, because I hold the same philosophy as my father, which is a bus is only a bus when it is carrying passengers and if it gives people pleasure, which this vehicle certainly has, then that's what it's all about. But maybe it is time for a proper repaint and tidy up, instead of a quick tart up. How about the deep maroon of Redburn's or perhaps the midnight blue of Dominion, both firms the bus spent some of its life with. Anyway just a thought, as yet again I've strayed from the day.

We left Pease Pottage with myself again at the wheel, the weather still trying desperately to improve. I like this part of the run, off the main roads and down leafy village lanes. The twists, turns, narrow lanes and hills defiantly make for more interesting and challenging

driving, especially in something as old, slow and cumbersome as the Dennis. We soon picked up quite a following of entrants and public, whom I must say were very respectful, as I can't recall one motorist tearing past me at this point, which although surprised me, I was certainly grateful for. On one of these hills we ground to a halt, as a Great War Pierce Arrow, had expired half way up, his back-up crew already to hand. Unfortunately this made a steep and narrow lane even worse, but hey, this is all part of the fun.

Heading towards Burgess Hill I have to admit I did get confused with some of the roundabouts. I had boldly said to Bill "I know the way" and taking my word for it he had put the map away. At one roundabout we sat looked at the signs and followed what we thought to be the right one, only to see the Towbus go off the other way. Panic set in, as we started to ascend yet another hill, the other entrants followed us, the Towbus toured the roundabout as we looked for a convenient place to turn around. Unfortunately with road works ahead this looked likely to be some time. So we said "blow it" and decided to make our own route to Brighton. We actually discovered we were on the official route after all. Just as we were about to join the M23 we pulled into a layby for me to pee again, and Bill to do some driving. The drive into Brighton, as most of you well know, is notoriously bad, but much to our surprise this year it was a breeze, even with the road-works in the centre of town.

Before we reached Maderia Drive, Bill kindly offered me the "Glory bit" and so in the traffic we yet again swapped drivers. Then it happened, what a hero I am, I stalled her. Bill shook his head with disgust, I had to laugh as young Kriesler leapt to his call. We were soon mobile again and doing the final stint along the seafront. We collected our packed lunches and wheelie bins and parked up, soon to be joined by the Chocolate Express again. We arrived at midday and all being fair had a jolly good trouble free journey down. Everyone then went off and fed and watered themselves. I spent the rest of the afternoon soaking up the atmosphere and enjoying the other entrants, old friends and the ubiquitous 40 winks.

With the prize giving over, the Express winning our class, and Ian Barrett's RT coming second, we decided to head back. This is always the down part of the day, when the glory is over and everyone is tired and wants to get home. As you can well imagine speed is the essence and we were in the wrong vehicle. But low and behold, it was at this time the sun decided to make it's appearance for the day. What luck! We then maintained our trouble free record all the way back to Cobham, arriving just before eight o'clock. I hope everyone had a good day although long and exhausting, I sure know I did.

Since Brighton the Dennis has been out the following two weekends promoting the Trust, on the first to the local Mayor's birthday party and on the second Bill and I took her to her place of birth at the factory friends' and family day. The weather for that was undeniably superb and there was a interesting gathering of Dennis and assorted employees' vehicles.

All it leaves me to say is thanks to the following for their help and support in making it a trouble free month of events for the Dennis: Bill Cottrell, Ginger John, Andy Baxter, D K Simon and family, Ian, Ken Wade, Colin Prince, Peter Burrows and Leigh, Brian Dabbs, Blackie, Paul Morris, Tony Lewis, Richard Hussey and to anyone else I've forgotten. □

Editor's notes – this article has been slightly edited as it may be read before the 9 o'clock watershed. And, yes, we were really given a wheelie bin, as in "Where's yer bin?" "I've been to Brighton". "No. I mean, where's yer wheelie bin?" "I've really been to Brighton." Try this merry badinage with your now privatised ex-council refuse disposal operative and watch his face light up (probably due to the glow of the flames after he has set fire to your dustbin).

BOOK REVIEWS

CLASSIC BUS YEARBOOK – 4

Edited by Gavin Booth, published by Ian Allan. £12.99

Devotees of Gavin's excellent bi-monthly magazine will be keen to add this to their shelves. As usual there is something to please every enthusiast whatever his (or her) favourite era. As usual, London vehicles appear on a number of pages but there is also a particular Cobham connection in this volume as our own Alan '007' Bond has contributed a feature on T31 in his usual entertaining style. Hopefully this may stir a few members to pitch in with Alan when he takes the old lady (no, not Sandra) on this year's Trans-Pennine Run (ring 01753 642497 if you're interested).

Elsewhere the book includes features as diverse as Victoria Coach Station in the 1950s through to RTs in the States, along with some of your favourite Classic Bus regulars. My only comment would be that at £12.99 for what is effectively the equivalent material of two or three issues of the parent magazine it does perhaps look a touch expensive. But that won't stop it selling by the bucket load so why not indulge!

Mike Nash

GLORY DAYS – RT

Kevin McCormack, published by Ian Allan. £14.99

This long awaited title, the first in a series is similar in style to the popular Heyday landscape albums, though with a substantial amount of text and more photographs, both in black and white, and colour. Kevin, who is a Cobham member of course, has compiled a book of considerable merit. It is both lightweight enough to be of pleasure to non-London devotees whilst being an absolute dream for RT fans. You cannot help but come away with considerable affection for the what is arguably the most influential double-deck design of all time. Covering the story from the earliest days right up to the present, the text covers much ground without ever getting too intense

and the selection of photographs, many of which are provided by Cobham regulars, coupled with entertaining captions really are excellent.

This series of books looks set to become a big success for Ian Allan Publishing and members may be interested to know that the second in the series will cover RFs and is currently being compiled by yours truly. Each editor will be given very much a free hand as regards composition which will ensure in turn that each volume will have very much its own identity. It is planned that "Glory Days – RF" will be released at next year's Open Day and will entirely feature photographs from Cobham members, for which in return I will be making a worthwhile donation to the Vehicle Restoration Fund. Therefore, if you have good quality snaps which you wish to be considered for inclusion do please get in touch with me without delay.

Meanwhile, grab yourself a copy of Glory Days – RT, you won't regret it!

Mike Nash

The above titles and many others are available from the Museum Shop. All items purchased help contribute to our various restoration projects so please make Cobham your main supplier for all bus related reading and model requirements. Also available, a growing range of new and second-hand memorabilia. Thank you.

BUSES OF LONDON FLEETBOOK 1998

Published by London Omnibus Traction Society, £5.00

Probably the best value fleetbook around today, this is the latest in the pocket sized publications by LOTS to feature the London operators. The 1998 edition reflects the changes that have taken place on the London scene over the past few years and brings us right up to date. There are 128 pages including photographs, some in colour featuring fleets from Armchair to Wycombe Bus Company, all in a pocket sized book some six by four inches in size.

This, for anyone having just returned from another planet, is the spiritual successor to the old Ian Allan ABC of London's Buses and is invaluable for the enthusiasts of buses in and around the Greater London area and bus 'spotters' alike. Excellent value and even cheaper if you are a LOTS member.

Phil Cruise

LONDON BUS FILE 1950-54

Ken Glazier, published by Capital Transport, £10.95

This is a handbook which contains a complete list of all buses and coaches owned by London Transport over the years 1950-54. Vehicles that either joined or left the fleet are listed in addition to the dates that they were formally taken into stock, or out of stock. The format is identical to the old Capital Transport London Transport Buses. The book is divided into many sections detailing each class with a complete list of vehicles in stock illustrated with monochrome photographs of various types. There are 144 pages and types detailed range from LT through to RM (1) in the double deck fleet and LT to GS in the saloons. What is surprising is the variety of vehicle types to be enjoyed by the enthusiast in the early fifties which spanned a working life from 1930 to the late 1970s. By the end of the period under review the London scene had nearly reached the ultimate in standardisation as far as the oil engine fleet was concerned. The selection of illustrations is up to the usual high standard that can be expected from Capital and I cannot remember seeing any before in other publications. This is a book which can transport you back to an arguably more interesting and happier time and unfortunately be a reminder of the heritage of technological skills and infrastructure that has been lost for ever. This book is a must for all who are interested in London Transport buses of (can it really be?) over forty years ago.

Phil Cruise



(Top) RF315 at Fort Halstead during a tour of Dunton Green routes last autumn.
(Bottom) Amazingly, the first RFs, the 27ft 6in long private hire examples, are now 47 years old, despite only lasting 12 years in LT service. This year's East Grinstead Running Day saw another reunion for two of the breed. Here we see ex-Hampson RF13 getting rather close to provide a much needed boost to RF4 carrying passengers on the 494 to Oxted. (Both photographs: Graham Smith)



(Top) Superbly turned-out RF633 travels along the East Grinstead High Street on route 434 on the occasion of this year's Bluebell Railway Vintage Bus Day.

(Bottom) Thorn amongst the roses?

MB90 at Barking some years ago. The lean to the off-side front was cured by changing the spring and swinging shackle. (Photograph: Chris Sullivan)

BUS AND COACH PRESERVATION MONTHLY

Edited by Nick Larkin, Kelsey Publishing, Cudham, Kent. TN16 3AG. £2.40
 This is a new monthly which does for buses what Practical Classics has done for cars. It even has Nick Larkin as editor. The first edition features Cobham's own Dawn and Roger Stagg along with their RT2043 and the story of its purchase and restoration. Other features include practical advice on servicing problems, preservation projects, some of which are real basket cases and articles on bus fleets using classic vehicles, Bedford OBs, model buses and coaches and the start of an A-Z of World buses. Issue One contains 55 pages, most in colour, printed on good quality paper and I read it from cover to cover in one long sitting which is a rare occurrence for me these days. The style as mentioned is very much in the 'Practical/Popular Classics' mode and not too heavy or over technical, yet informed enough to appeal to most tastes.

This is a first class new magazine which is just the ticket for all bus enthusiasts but especially so for those involved in the practicalities of bus preservation and conservation. It deserves to succeed.

Phil Cruise

COUCH POTATO'S GUIDE

British Classics Collection

HMV Shop, Oxford Street, London (Tottenham Court Road end)

£4.99 each

Available from HMV is a list of over eighty British films, from the advent of 'talkies' through to the forties. Many of the old favourites are included such as 'Ask a Policeman' with the classic LT around Brooklands sequence and 'Friday the Thirteenth' which tells the story of how the fates conspire to bring a group of people together on to a bus involved in a serious accident. One video of a film which I have yet to see on British television is 'Love on Wheels'. Dating from 1932, it's a gentle comedy starring Jack Hulbert and featuring Gordon Harker. Much of the early action takes place on Green Line T134, but

the title sequence is particularly clever, opening with a line up of Ts at Watford, Leavesden Road garage and continuing with the actions of people preparing for a day's work, mimicked by scenes of the bus being prepared for duty. There are also glimpses of a Feltham tram in Metropolitan livery and the inside of what I believe is the original Poland Street Green Line terminus. I rate the film ten out of ten for bus interest and although the story line and acting are corny by today's standards, it all adds to the period charm.

Desirée Parker-Knoll

GREEN ROVERS

Roland Graves

From the age of 11 every school holiday included at least one day on a 'Rover'. To get away from Sevenoaks one had to go westwards to Westerham and then make the first decision of the day. Whether to change to a 410, always RLH operated, for Reigate or stay on the RT 403 to Croydon. Either way we almost always returned the other way. If going to Croydon it meant passing Chelsham garage, quite a small building by LT standards but the bus park! What a sight! Rows and rows of RTs lined up between the peaks, many with the blue blinds of the 403 Express. I always found the idea of high speed RTs very difficult to accept.

In those days GSs could also be found on the yard at Chelsham. The Oxted local routes operated from Chelsham to such exotic places as 'Holland' and 'Barrow Green'. In a day's outing we could get as far as Guildford, Staines, Horsham, Dorking, Crawley as well as East Grinstead. Over the years I was able to cover most of the main routes south of London. In the early days I visited Chessington Zoo as it was then with its entrance guarded by an ex LT tramcar and I think a trolleybus, or was it a 'B' type there first. After all the trolleys did not go until 1962.

North of London was an alien area that one only looked at on the route maps issued by LT. Stevenage, Hertford, Dunstable, High Wycombe and Watford were all the other end of the world. Many years later in the 1970s I did venture north on a 'Golden Rover' visiting Hertford and Baldock, you can't get much further north than that on a Green LT bus! It wasn't the same though, real green buses had route numbers beginning with 4 not 3. While talking about real buses I could not accept that RTs were red. When visiting relatives in London red RTs were just not right. They had black wheelarches too, how strange. Once inside the interiors were still the same warm cosy greens and creams as proper RTs. Why did they spoil them by painting them red? Trolleybuses and underground trains were red, not RTs! As for red RFs what were they thinking of? On the few occasions that I went to stay with my Aunt in Ilford I was spellbound by the Trolleys. I would pester my older cousin to take me for rides, anywhere, as long as it was by trolleybus. We travelled swiftly and silently to such places as Seven Kings, Barking, Fairlop, Stratford, Wanstead Flats and North Woolwich. Once we walked under the Thames foot tunnel and there on the south side were more trolleybuses going to Dartford Bexleyheath and Erith. Just a minute! These places were in Kent. Didn't the 401 from Sevenoaks go through to Belvedere? Why hadn't I realised this before? Unfortunately it was the last few weeks before the trolley routes were withdrawn and I never did get my ride on trolleybuses in North Kent. Come to think of it I never even went on a rover ticket to Dartford or Gravesend. It just didn't seem worth it from Sevenoaks. After all I wanted to go as far as possible for my 2/6d!

East London wasn't that bad though, they did have real RTs on the Green Line 721/722 routes. How much nicer they looked especially without adverts and the Green Line roundel mounted between decks. Aah, halcyon days! □

PROGRESS ON STL2377

R R Stagg

Members will be aware, following the decision of the Committee to proceed with the reconstruction of STL2377, that I had the honour of being appointed project manager to see that work through. It is my pleasure therefore to be able to provide a brief report on progress.

The vehicle was moved to the paint shop immediately after Open Day and thereafter a complete catalogue of available parts was made and the vehicle cleaned out. Dimensions were re-checked and final agreements made with Cox Bros, the Maidstone based contractor who was to carry out the coach work framing. The body work was then propped and the distorted framework to the lower nearside deck removed. The upper deck was then adjusted to good line and level. In the meantime manufacture of the new frameworks was in hand at Maidstone and the galvanised steel flitch structures and brackets manufactured by Premier Structures had been delivered and were being incorporated in the works. Shortly after, the rolled reinforced wheel arch angles were delivered from the galvanisers to Cox Bros for fitting-in the timber work to the wheel arch linings.

The structures were test assembled at Cox Bros and, after checking were delivered to Cobham on 8 May. Erection commenced on the 11th; by the end of that week the nearside framework was in place and on Thursday 14 May the front canopy bracing was added and the propping removed. That evening the vehicle was turned round and replaced in the paint bay, the propping installed to the off-side and redundant structure cut through, enabling the off-side upper deck to be levelled. On 18 May, installation of the off-side structure began and apart from minor pieces of timber to provide fixing for trims etc, the coach work reframing of the vehicle was completed on 21st May.

I am pleased therefore to be able to report that progress so far has exceeded our expectations and that no major unforeseen problems have been encountered. The vehicle will have been transferred for its further rebuilding at Dorking several weeks ahead of schedule. □

REJOICE IN STL2377

Michael Baker

As one who grew up in the era when STLs were the most modern buses to be found in London – the pre-war RTs not being part of the Croydon scene – I was delighted to read the news about the grant to complete the restoration of STL2377. Indeed when I did encounter the RT2s all those years ago, at Brixton and Regents Park I wasn't quite sure I approved, for they looked to me rather too like trolley buses; no doubt this infant impression had something to do with their livery, which consisted of a good deal more red than the beautifully proportioned red and white, with black edging and grey roofs of the STLs. Many of them were acquiring brown roofs for I'm talking about World War II days, but many grey ones were still around as the war was ending. Croydon Garage, being a former Tilling establishment, possessed mainly ex Tilling and LGOC STs, as well as ex Tilling and LGOC STLs. My prejudiced views was that these weren't proper STLs at all. The series from STL203 to STL608, I reluctantly admitted into the fold but really as far as I was concerned the STL class proper began with STL609, with its elegant curves and oil engine.

My impression is that until well into the late 1940s none were actually resident at Croydon, but I could be wrong and no doubt someone will correct me if I am. Certainly there were plenty of standard STLs to be seen there. The 59a, which was worked exclusively by them, passed the top of our road by Thornton Heath Pond. The Clock Tower just beyond Thornton Heath station, was the Monday to Friday terminus of the 159, another STL route, which on Saturdays ran into the heart of Croydon, terminating at the garage, whilst on Sundays it reached the country at Chipstead Valley. Then there were the 68 and the 133, other routes which served central London and were worked at least partly by standard STLs. Finally there were a large number of Country Area routes, served by both front entrance STLs, and by standard ones which had originally been delivered to the Central Area but repainted green during the War. Godstone

Garage was home to a number of wartime unfrozen STLs with Chiswick built austerity bodies. They were good climbers, and more than once I sampled their efforts on the 409 on the steep hill from Caterham Valley which wound past the Swiss chalet type house set in the trees up to Caterham on the Hill and the lunatic asylum where my Uncle Harry had once played cricket against the staff, about which we encouraged him to regale us with some politically incorrect stories of the antics of the poor souls who were allowed to spectate.

I took my first bus photograph – of a Southern Vectis L5G – in May, 1953. I used to make models from scratch, mostly out of used tickets, for our school production of *Badgers Green*, a drawing room comedy by R.C. Sherriff, very different from *Journey's End*, the heart-wrenching drama set in the trenches of the Western Front which had made him famous. You will be fascinated to know I played the part of a village boy whose one line consisted of 'Good night, Sir.' Anyhow the point is that my photography began so that I would have a record of buses I hadn't come across a picture of in *Buses Illustrated* or an ABC. However I soon got hooked and began to take pictures of any bus or coach which appealed to me. Funds were limited so I had to choose carefully but I decided I must try and capture an STL.

By 1953 they were no longer to be seen on passenger duties in the Croydon area and, indeed had less than a year to go anywhere in the London area. On account of the aforementioned lack of funds I was unable to buy *Buses Illustrated* regularly so had no idea of the whereabouts of the last survivors. I somehow got it into my head that they were to be found in the Gerrards Cross area and consequently took a ride there on a 709 in October, 1954. What I didn't know was that the last Country Area STLs, other than the post-war 18STL20s, had been withdrawn at the end of August, from Dunton Green, Garston, Grays, Hertford and Hitchin garages, so I don't know what I was doing at Gerrards Cross – I would have done better taking a 403 to Sevenoaks where at least I would have experienced a near miss.

However there was still hope, for a sizeable fleet of STL trainers remained for a little while longer and practically every garage was

home to at least one. Thornton Heath garage was only one street away from home and I thus managed to get a picture of STL1881 tucked up inside along RTs employed on the 109. Even though I had now left school funds were still limited but I did capture a handful of other STLs, mostly side number box CXXs or roof number box DLUs, like 1881, and even a pretty indifferent view of sit-up-and-beg STL570, before the last trainer was withdrawn in June, 1955.

The last time I sat in an STL, before the preservation era, was in the summer of 1954 when, as a trainee reporter on the *Croydon Advertiser*, I was sent to report on motor cycle races at the long vanished Crystal Palace circuit. This was a chore willingly undertaken for John Surtees, who would become both a motor cycle and a Formula I Grand Prix car world champion, was a local lad who was beginning to make his mark, winning just about every race he entered. The STL connection is that the grandstand provided for veterans of the press such as myself was a roof box STL painted a dull green. I didn't record its number, nor bother to take its picture, goodness know why. The most exciting events of all were the sidecar races which always included a number of Morgan three-wheelers with their twin cylinders prominently displayed out front. All this made a change from reporting amateur dramatic shows where I regularly fell in love with the leading lady.

In January 1956 Her Majesty summoned me into her Air Force and by the following year I was stationed at West Malling. The demands on National Servicemen were not by this date exactly onerous and we had bags of spare time. One of my fellow clerks, a corporal called Jim, was as interested in buses as I was. I had a BSA Bantam, Jim had a Lambretta and several times in the long summer evenings on 1957 we went on bus spotting expeditions. One was to Canterbury where we found a nice line up of East Kent TD4s and 5s, and another was to a contractor's yard at Sidcup. Returning from weekend leave Jim had thought he had seen the familiar shape of an STL so off we went one June evening and sure enough we found not one, but two STLs. They belonged to Rush and Tomkins. We

photographed them both. I got home, developed the film and found it completely blank. Disaster! However four days later, on 18th June, one day before my 20th birthday I had another go. I was using a strange, quarter plate, distinctly unreliable camera. The results were better, although the lower regions of one of the exposures drifted out of focus somewhat. These STLs were a particularly interesting pair for they appeared to have swapped bodies. One, STL1351, CLX593, which had spent its entire career with London Transport with a side number box STL11 body, now had a roof number box one, whilst STL2515, ELP175, which had always had a roof box STL14/1 body now had a side number box STL11 body. These were the very last STLs I photographed until the preservation era.

It was certainly a strange decision of London Transport to preserve STL469, rather than one of the later ones – which is not to say one is delighted that it is still with us along, of course, with Cobham's STL441 – but you can imagine what a sight for sore eyes STL2093 was when I first met it, restored to its glorious red, white and silver livery speeding down the A23 on the HCVC run to Brighton in May, 1969. Perhaps it wasn't in totally authentic pre-war condition but it was a wonderful attempt nevertheless. Sometime later I discovered that STL2377 had also survived. I tracked it down in the late 1970s to a former goods shed beside the main line to Birmingham just north of Bristol and its then owner, Alan Hallpike, was kind enough to let me have a look at it. The photograph I took may be of interest.

So five STLs, including the front entrance Country Area, one time tree lopper, STL1470, have survived in bus form. Several years ago an STL11 was listed as an entrant at the Southsea Rally, its home given as the Canvey Island museum. There was no sign of it on the day and, intrigued, I wrote to the museum but received no answer. I gather there are individuals who enter non-existent vehicles for rallies, which seems a very curious pastime. So presumably five is the final total. Or is there the remains of another one out there somewhere? After all whoever thought that a second 10T10, the single deck compatriot of the standard STL, would materialise? □

AFTER SCHOOL

Roland Graves

After leaving school the interest in buses took less of my time with work and other entertainments taking over. I did go out, by car unfortunately, to record the last day of RT services in Sevenoaks on Saturday 29th January 1972. The last journey from the car park was to Heaverham on the 421 then back to Dunton Green garage arriving at 23.55. I watched the familiar vehicle pull in then the crew just walked off and left it without a second glance. A fitter then took it to the small yard at the back to join the others, some of which already had the blinds removed ready for their last journey. Inside the garage the new SM Swifts were being prepared for their first day at work. I often wondered what happened to the conductors after that. I believe some were transferred to Swanley for a while. I do wish I could find those slides that I took that night.

In that same period I also travelled to Reading and Maidstone to travel on the trolleybuses before they became history. When I went off to college in Northampton a whole new world opened up. Northampton had a very smart fleet of Daimlers. Most were tin fronted CVD6s but there was a handful of exposed radiator buses that came out in the peaks. All were immaculately turned out on every occasion. The uniforms of the crews were unusual to me as the headgear seemed to consist entirely of turbans! Out of town to the village where our college was located was United Counties territory. In 1968 most of the routes were Bristol LD or FSF but local routes still had KSWs with ECW bodies with full blind displays front and rear. Single deckers were SUL or LSs. I don't remember seeing any Bristol Ls or REs. The conductors used Green Line ticket machines, Setrights, that I had not seen anywhere else. The Northampton Corporation crews were using an enormous machine that spewed out pre-printed tickets, possibly 'Ultimates'.

Looking back I wish I had spent more time riding the buses but a young student needed his own wheels for credibility with the opposite sex. I had mine, a 1958 Standard 8!

When I came home from college and started work in earnest buses took a complete back seat. I had found motor sport, spending all my spare time competing in trials, auto-tests and rallies, with my Standard 8 to begin with. At the same time I was also active in the Young Farmers' Club at Wrotham. It was this surprisingly that brought me back to buses.

Young Farmers' Clubs spend a good part of their summer evening meetings out on visits to farms and other places of interest. It was on one of these outings, in the summer of 1975, that took us to Richard Pierce's farm at Comp. We were to be shown the extensive pig unit and fruit growing operations that the Pierce brothers carried out there. I was aware that Richard Pierce was involved with steam traction engines and was not surprised to see the vintage Scammel and trailer used for moving the steam beasts about. I hadn't expected to find the collection of buses at the back of the buildings ready for the next day's work, collecting the fruit pickers from Gravesend and Medway Towns.

The farm was now irrelevant as I inspected the various vehicles. I recall a half cab Bristol with unusual bodywork still with Atomic Power Construction markings, reg. no. KLJ749 I think! There was a Bristol FLF and one or two Leyland PD3s with Alexander bodies and 'Western' fleetnames. I also recall a green RT that I think was Richard Pierce's favourite. I later found another Young Farmer was also very interested in these old buses. A young man by the name of Robert Durrant, a well known egg farmer from Fairseat, Kent, also turned out to be a keen Rover ticket man, especially Red Rovers. Despite having been members of YFC for quite a while this was the first time both of us realised we had the bus bug.

I then learnt Rob was seriously considering buying his own RT. I had not even considered this as a possibility. Surely only museums or very rich people could do this? Anyway didn't you need a special

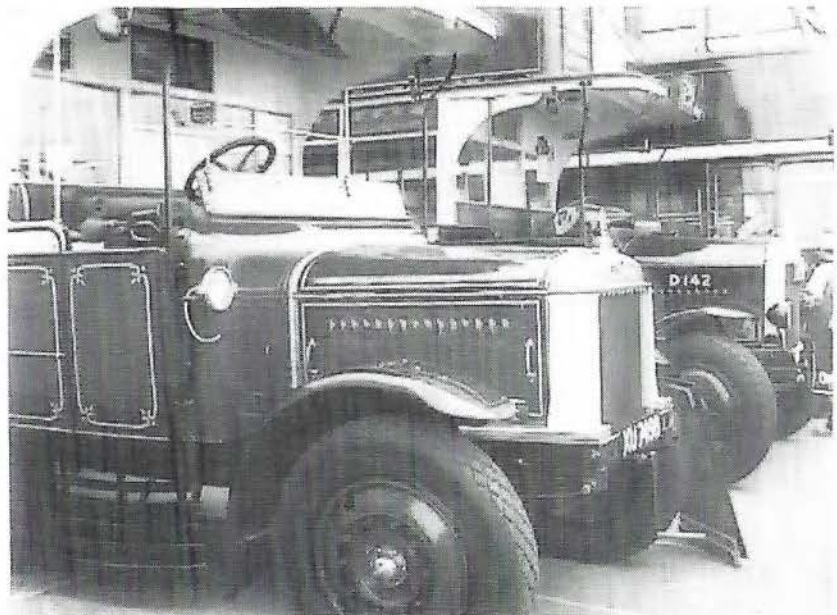


(Top) LNC27, featured in Magazine no. 20, working for East Kent at Margate on 23 June 1984. (Photograph: A Swain)

(Bottom) 1096F on delivery to Cobham. (Photograph: Bill Cottrell)



West Croydon, 6th May 1939. For right, a Country Area front entrance 5TL on the 408 Chelsham – Guildford Road. Former LCC E1 tram no 1484 of 1911 and Feltham 2104 of 1939 are delayed by a Civil Defence procession. (Photograph: Michael H C Baker collection)



(Top) Chocolate Express 1923 Leyland and our Dennis with identical style of Dodson bodies at Brighton this year.

(Bottom) MB194, new at Southall in November 1968. (Both photographs: Bill Cottrell)

license to drive a bus? Surely there must be rules about running buses? We spent many an evening discussing this over pints in the Rose and Crown at Wrotham. Later that summer Rob invited me on an outing with a chap he had met from Meopham who owned a bus. All we had to do was wait at the Vigo at 10 am. on the following Sunday for a trip to the Bluebell Railway. That day will long remain in my mind as we rode on the top deck of JK9115, Colin Durham's ex-Eastbourne PD1. By the way, it rained all the way home, but Rob and I still remained on the top under a large umbrella. This was the start of a long and enjoyable friendship with Colin, one of the very pioneers of bus preservation.

I remember traveling with Rob Durrent to Richmond station yard in the Autumn of 1975 to look at RTs for sale by Ted Brakell of Cheam. I remember a damp and dismal day walking between rows of old buses, starting different ones up and looking at bodywork and interiors, moving them round to see how they sounded. There was a haze of fumes over the entire yard, but it was all very interesting. What were we looking for as we inspected all these buses? I don't know, we hadn't much of a clue but Rob just seemed to know there was one for him. So RT542/HLX359 was secured although it required a couple of jobs doing that Ted agreed he would do before delivery. At the same time Ted offered some driving lessons and tips on basics before we were let loose on the open road.

The learning curve was steep and going to get steeper but the challenge was one we had wanted for so long. Rob and I went to Crystal Palace station yard for our driving lessons one Sunday in late October. We were given just a few minutes' explanation of the pre-select gearbox, then Rob was put into an RT and I an RTL. This is the only time I have driven an RTL. We both drove carefully round the yard, which was hardly large enough, but at least the principles were learnt. After a couple of hours we were presented with a hefty bill for the privilege of going round in circles! Ted had a way of coming up with surprises, as we found out later.

Just in time for Rob's birthday at the beginning of December 1975, RT542 arrived at Oakwood Farm Fairseat. At last we were into bus preservation at the deep end. As he left Ted Brakell presented Rob with a bill for delivery, including costs for his van and the man that came down to collect him!

I have to say Rob was extremely helpful to me in those early months, giving me hours of driving tuition that enabled me to go on and tackle all sorts of vehicles. I am sure that Rob's coaching enabled me to pass my HGV test first time the following spring.

I am sure that we all know that once you have one bus the idea of more soon occurs to you. Having done a fair bit of work on the old girl during 1976, including rebuilding the N/S front wing, repairing several minor problems and repainting, we applied the final transfers and fleet numbers and visited several rallies. While on one of these Rob had heard of an RF that needed a new home. It was housed in a shed near High Wycombe and after having a look it also came home to Fairseat. RF337 was one of only two RFs left in original doorless condition in preservation. The bus was in very good mechanical order but needed a thorough repaint. Once completed she did us proud for several seasons. The pinnacle was to be asked to take part in the Shillibeer Rally in Hyde Park in 1977 and we pulled out all the stops to make 337 look at its best. The RF became a firm favourite with us all, especially the Hartley Morris Men to whom we had become official suppliers of transport. I took them to Minehead for a Ring Meeting one weekend and the RF performed faultlessly despite not having a fan driveshaft. We only overheated once on the way home on the A303.

During this period Rob also became the owner of something rather different. Via Colin Durham he heard that a coach operator in Northfleet was selling up and he had a Bedford SB for sale. We went to look and discovered a delightful coach with a Thurgood body in reasonable condition, except the rear windows leaked a bit. The drawback was the petrol engine. Anyway, a deal was done and the coach arrived back at Fairseat. Anyone who has driven an SB will

know they are quite fun despite the lack of brakes and the gearlever somewhere behind you. The SB had continuing electrical problems though, with the control box always sticking shut and no battery charge. We didn't keep her long as the RF took pride of place. Eventually it was sold to a buyer in Holland and I hope is still preserved over there.

With the Bedford gone there was a space at the farm which needed filling! Rob and I had often spoken of the happy days traveling to school in Sevenoaks on the M&D service 9 with its lowbridge Bristol K6As. Rob decided to look for a lowbridge bus to complete the collection. Both of us liked the idea of an RLH but we soon found these were like hen's teeth. The net was cast wider and again Colin Durham came up with a possibility. Down in Devon was a large aircraft hangar full of buses. We arranged with the owner, Colin Shears, to go down and look at a bus. We traveled by HST to Exeter then the local train to Eggesford. All the way the snow got heavier and by the time we reached Eggesford there were several inches. Colin Shears met us in his 2CV (reg. no. BUS66K) to take us from the station to Winkleigh. Normally a journey of about 15 minutes, it took us about 2 hours as the snow became worse. The road was partially blocked at one point by a milk tanker that had slid into a ditch. We eventually reached the Winkleigh Hotel and enjoyed a hot meal and a pint or two. It was Saturday evening, and we had intended to leave the following afternoon having looked the bus over on the Sunday morning.

We eventually left Winkleigh on the Tuesday, but only by walking 6 miles through snowdrifts to Morchard Road station. The snow by Sunday morning was two feet deep and drifted into the most beautiful patterns. I suppose it was everybody's dream to be snowed into a pub for three days. We did walk to the airfield and look at the bus but it wasn't what we wanted. That first visit started a long association with Winkleigh and Colin Shears that continues to this day. For anyone who has been on our trips to the annual Open Day might well

have seen the pictures of the village in that snow in the Kings Arms pub. Yes we were there.

Well we were still looking for our lowbridge bus. Rob then heard of one for sale straight out of service in Warrington. It was a Leyland PD1 that had been on school contract work, the owner wanted it to go for preservation rather than scrap. All we knew was that it originated with an operator called Barton. It was decided that a trip to look was worth it and off we went by National Express to Cheshire. After a drive round town we decided it seemed a reasonable buy. After all, it sounded OK and all the right bits seemed to work.

This time we were going to drive it straight home despite the fact that neither of us had driven anything with a crash box. We decided to go back via the A5 rather than the motorway as it would be a more interesting drive. The first night we had got as far as Whitchurch, Shropshire and found a pub for the night that didn't mind a double deck bus parked in the car park. My abiding memory of that pub was drinking in the bar well after closing time with several of the locals. It was almost midnight when I walked the local member of the Constabulary. Rob and I felt rather uncomfortable despite the fact we were residents. No one else turned a hair and the landlady just passed a large plate of meat and two veg over the bar to the Constable, together with a pint of mild, and he sat down to his supper!

The remainder of the journey was rather uneventful except that it was difficult to stop the bus in a hurry. As we went through the east end of London toward the Blackwall Tunnel I became aware that motorists were flashing lights at us. Very friendly, I thought, but why? We stopped and found that the headlights were on. Strange really, as the switch was off, as were the sidelights. We decided that to solve the problem temporarily we would take the bulbs out until it got dark. The light had faded by the time we got to Swanley where we put the bulbs back in and continued without mishap. We eventually found that water in a junction box was the cause and it took no time to sort out. The lack of braking was found to be more serious. The nearside front brake cylinder had fractured its casting and was not

connected to the axle! When the brake was applied the cylinder moved instead of the operating arm. Now we had our lowbridge bus but we knew nothing about its history. We decided that it would be painted in our own fictitious livery until we could research its real identity. So WAL782 appeared in a dark blue colour with a cream band between decks. It also sported Fairseat Omnibus fleetnames that caused many a gricer to rush for the notebook when it appeared at rallies.

Over the years we have carried out much work on WAL782, including at least two repaints and rebuilding much of the body. The engine has been partly rebuilt and the brakes overhauled. The bus stood out of use from 1987 to September 1994 while work was carried out on the last bus Rob purchased, AFN780B the Regent V with front entrance body by Park Royal. It was this period that prompted Rob to reduce his commitments and WAL782 passed to my ownership in July 1994.

In 1988 I had become involved with Brian Catchpole over the purchase of 900SAF the AEC Reliance Harrington Grenadier from Camden Coaches. This has turned out to be a real gem of a bus. It is a one off because it was built to 33 feet in length and has a most comfortable body with the capability to cruise at reasonable speeds. It has easily coped with two trips to the Isle of Man and numerous runs to Winkleigh Open Days. It has also completed the Trans-Pennine rally twice and Bournemouth to Bath once. □

1096F SERVICE VAN

A few details have been discovered on the history of the van. It was supplied by Dagenham Motors to Aldenham on the 12th June 1959, body no. 9819, chassis no. 100E/746450. It was licensed on the 1st July and transferred to CDS at Chiswick works. Information supplied by John Black, source Variation in Rolling Stock sheets.

RF OVERHEATING

Jim Andress

Back in 1989 when I acquired RF366, it was stored, with other buses, in a shed at Tilbury Docks. Before setting off home we gave it a run around the docks to check everything appeared OK. We then called at a nearby filling station for diesel, and set off around the M25/M4 for the long haul to Wiltshire. It was not long before we had a good head of steam up and had to stop on the hard shoulder to let her cool down. We soon learnt that it cooled down quicker if you let it idle, rather than stopping the engine, and you should not stop and remove the filler cap, for even though the system is not really pressurised you still risk a face full of very hot water.

After several stops in the space of about 20 miles, we arranged for the chase car to follow at a greater distance and watch for the first signs of steam appearing from the overflow pipe under the front, and to signal by flashing headlights. It soon became apparent that boiling only occurred when we sustained a speed over 30 mph, and thus we were able to continue gently all the way home without further dramatics.

That winter, the radiator was removed and most of the tubes were found to be totally blocked with lime deposits set like concrete, which we could only remove with the aid of a long masonry drill.

Clearing the radiator made a big difference, but we still suffered overheating on sustained motorway runs particularly in hot weather. The next step was to flush out the whole water system with de-scaling solution. This again gave further improvement, but not a total cure. The opportunity arose to use a pressure washer, and this was applied to the air paths through the radiator core. Despite the cleaning we had done when the radiator was previously removed, a staggering amount of grease and dirt was dislodged.

I have, incidentally, only recently realised that the type of radiator used on the RF, with staggered rows of vertical tubes surrounded by

wire spirals, is virtually identical that fitted to the B type back in 1910 or soon after!

Some time ago I considered the possibility of replacing the engine driven fan with an electric one, in order to not take the large amount of power driving the fan when it is not needed. I approached Kenlowe to see if they could help. Almost the first question they asked was what type of radiator was fitted. To say they fell about laughing would be only a slight exaggeration, and they explained that, to put it mildly, the type we have is considered almost useless!

I thought long and hard and read numerous books noting various references to Regal IVs and Reliances in different fleets, over a number of years, giving problems with overheating in various circumstances. I began to detect two strands in the various information sources.

The first implied that overheating was a general problem with bus bodied Regal IVs and Reliances when used on sustained long distance running, generally, but not always, when front air grilles are not fitted. When used on stop-start services there was no problem.

The second related to London RFs. The earliest references, plus anecdotal evidence, relates to Green Line RFs regularly overheating even when only a few years old, and ensuing references mention Central bus RFs becoming prone to overheating in their later years.

Green Line RFs made less stops than Central RFs, but not as few as really long distance coaches, such as Glasgow to London, a service run for many years by Regal IV coaches. However, I noted that Green Line RFs were fitted with heaters early in their lives whereas Central RFs only had the same type fitted much later. What has having heaters fitted got to do with overheating, you may ask? If anything it might be thought to help by dispersing some additional heat output from the engine. It should however be born in mind that heaters are no use if the core, or heat exchanger, gets cold, so a generous flow of hot water is necessary to enable them to stay hot and work properly. This flow of hot water therefore by-passes the main radiator, reducing the amount of water being cooled in the normal way. While this

on its own would not be expected to cause a big drop in the cooling ability of the radiator, it must also be born in mind that the cooling water system on the RF already has a main by-pass, which is designed to be closed off by the thermostat (if fitted) when the engine reaches normal temperature. There is also a second by-pass via the header tank which is linked to both the top and bottom tank of the radiator to enable water to continue to flow in the event of the radiator core freezing. Further to this there is yet a third by-pass route via the cab heater, which, as with the saloon heaters, needs a generous flow to be effective.

From the above it can be clearly seen that a large proportion of the cooling water does not go through the radiator but instead is used for other purposes which specifically do not want it to lose too much of its heat, before returning to the engine.

If we now put this restricted cooling ability of the RF, together with sustained fast running on motorways, which produces a larger than normal amount of waste heat, it is clear we have the makings of a problem. On RF366 we have restricted the circulation via the header tank and ensured the main by-pass thermostat cut off does seal off when hot, which it did not originally due to corrosion having eaten out some of the aluminum, allowing some continuous by-passing. This has not shown a significant change at high speed, but probably contributes to the general improvement under all other conditions.

We come back to the bus body shape and the lack of a cooling grille. Experiments with RF366 when it overheated in hot weather showed a significant improvement if the front panel was removed, except under high speed conditions, when overheating still occurred. From this it is tempting to conclude the radiator is not capable of dispersing enough heat so as to cool the engine at full power output. However, the evidence shows that long distance coach versions of the Regal IV were apparently free from overheating. So what was different?

It is my belief that the high speed overheating may well be a function of the aerodynamics of the RF, often described as those of a brick! Observations show that under the front of the RF there is a low pressure area which becomes stronger as the speed rises. This is due to the 'bow wave' effect of air rushing sideways away from the flat front, and creating a partial vacuum each side of the bus for a short distance back from the front corners. This is clearly apparent if the doors as well as some saloon windows are open, when a substantial air flow exists, increasing with speed. It is also apparent that the extent of the low pressure area increases rearwards along the side of the bus as speed rises. This is demonstrable by driving with the cab window open. At lower speed air comes in the window, whereas at high speeds air rushes out, dragging out your jacket if it is hung on the standard coat-hook between the seat and the window!

Now that 366 has an AEC coach differential, ratio 4.14 to 1, higher even than a Green Line, and with the engine limited to 1800rpm, we should be able to cruise at 50 to 55 mph. However it seems that at these speeds the low pressure works against the action of the fan which is trying to suck air from under the front, and thus the air flow through the radiator appears to be reduced as the speed rises. This reduction in air flow takes place right at the time the engine is being called upon for full output, especially with the higher ratio differential, and when it is therefore producing a much higher than normal amount of waste heat.

This is the pattern we have experienced in 1997. As long as we keep the speed to about 45 mph, we can cruise all day, on the level, up hill and down dale, without overheating, but when we increase to 50 or more we start to steam. Not literally, of course, because we slow down as soon as the temperature goes up, and oil pressure goes down. During 1997 we were able to confirm again that this is still the case with our without the front panel fitted.

In order to evaluate the aerodynamic theory, we have now fitted 366 with an additional radiator, mounted under the rear and equipped with twin electric fans, with both thermostatic and manual

control. To minimise changes from the original pipe work this extra radiator is connected by means of the heater circuit pipes, arranged such that the rear saloon heater is in parallel with it. The front heater circuit is now connected in series with the cab heater and linked via the tap originally controlling only the saloon heater flow. A switch and warning light for the twin fans have been installed in the cab, and a thermostatic switch, sensing the temperature of the water arriving at the rear radiator, is fitted under the rear floor, accessible from inside through the battery hatch. All the water circuit changes have been made using rubber hose, to leave all permanent metal piping unchanged, thus allowing us later return to standard if required.

We can now explore the effects of having additional cooling, which should not be affected by the aerodynamics, and of shutting the by-pass via the cab and saloon heaters, it is also possible to shut off the main by-pass, to evaluate the effect. It may be even possible to disconnect the drive to the engine driven fan, thus releasing several horse power to drive the bus along, with potential benefits in fuel consumption and performance.

Further information should become available as the 1998 season unfolds, watch this space. □

Dr. Spanner writes – after the large 11.3 litre engine was fitted to the Towbus it was decided to improve the cooling system by fitting an overhauled radiator. A spare was selected from our second hand stock and attempts were made to dismantle it. This proved to be very time consuming due to the reaction that had taken place between the steel studs and aluminium tanks. When they were finally parted the top and bottom tanks were eaten away on their edges such that in places it was non existent. Like Jim, it was found that out of the 72 or thereabouts tubes, over 40 were solidly blocked. In practice, the Towbus only tends to overheat, for example, when towing an RF up the Reigate hill part of the M25, so the project was abandoned.



(Top) Chairman Peter Plummer has decided the only way to cure the chronic storage problem is to construct a Tardis, which, as Dr Who fans will know, has the advantage of being bigger on the inside than on the outside.

(Bottom) Are you being served? Gordon Edridge and Gerald Mead discussing strategy for Open Day prior to the official opening of the shop.

WHY ONE OF THOSE?

Christopher J. Sullivan

The other question I am constantly asked is 'When are you going to paint it?' The answers are, I hope, contained within this article. I have been involved in the PSV industry since late 1969 with both LT and LCBS, its successors, and as an own account operator. When I ran my own coaches I ran AECs so it was natural that when it came to preservation I would chose a product of Southall. I had never felt responsible enough to preserve a bus but as the movement gathered momentum my wife encouraged me to find a suitable vehicle. As I had worked mainly with single deckers and I had a good deal of knowledge of AECs, I decided rather than go for a Reliance or Regal, I would acquire a Swift as this is basically a rear engine Reliance with Atlantean steering and front suspension. In addition I wanted a vehicle with the AEC type instrument binnacle which LT-wise meant one of the low driving position Merlins.

Through my good friend Don Allmey I learned that MB90 was parked out of use at the premises of Location Facilities at Feltham. Just by chance, I had photographed this vehicle about a year before (1989), in Borehamwood when it was on a film job and thought to myself at the time that there can't be many of these left anyway, I made contact with Ron Hellard at Location Facilities and arranged to go and see MB90. Upon arrival Mr. Hellard made it clear that within the next few weeks both MB90 and the vehicle parked behind it, SMS68 would be sold for scrap, and if I wanted the MB, I also had to buy the SMS. I was far from keen on this suggestion as it had been introduction of SMSs at Edgware, 68 included, which had caused me to be transferred to Hendon in June 1970 when I was a conductor. I did however strike a deal which resulted in me buying both buses and reselling the SMS for the price I paid for both vehicles. In other words I got MB90 for nothing, but, as any preservationist worth his salt will tell you, buying the bus is the cheapest part. It's what comes next which costs you your hard earned cash.



Opening ceremony of Cobham Museum Shop... Present in this photograph are Gordon Edridge, Ms Morag Barton (Museum Curatorial Advisor), Mr and Mrs Gordon Chubb (Mayor of Elmbridge), John Bedford and Mr Philip Hammond (MP for Elmbridge). Morag is displaying our Museum Registration Certificate which now hangs proudly in the shop. (Photograph: Gordon Edridge)

When I had first inspected the bus the most obvious thing was that the centre doors had at some time been removed. I assumed that the opening had been paneled over but other than the fact that some of the panels were damaged, and not one original seat or handrail was left, the bus looked mostly intact. I was in for a very nasty shock when the bus arrived on the back of the BTS tow wagon, the crew having managed to break both windscreens on the short journey from Feltham to Borehamwood. As the bus stood in the yard I could see from the office window that the nearside skirt panels were moving in the wind, so with half the staff watching I decided to knock out a couple of rivets and inspect the framing. With literally the second blow of the hammer and chisel, the entire side below the windows and between the wheelarches crashed to the ground, and when I turned round the onlookers were doubled up with laughter. It was then I realised that this was going to be a long job. Further inspection revealed that not one piece of timber was sound and when the paneled area at the centre exit was removed all that was left was a gaping hole. The framing, motor shelf, operating arms and wiring had all been removed.

I was lucky inasmuch as the bus lived at the yard rent free, but the company was growing at such a rate that the room was going to be needed. I moved to a farm near Potters Bar but there were planning problems and I moved first to a yard in Park Street and then to undercover accommodation in Essex. Meanwhile the job of bringing MB90 back from oblivion carried on and I was lucky that as the country bus garages in the north east area closed down, my contacts ensured that I obtained nearly all the timber I required together with some new panels. In addition Don Allmey has been very kind with spare parts and advice, and together with my dear wife, has always spurred me on and shown interest. Most members will know that we have attended a number of rallies and at the very first, North Weald, somebody said to me 'Why did you preserve one of these?' to which I replied, motioning to the ranks of RMs. 'Because everybody else has got one of those'. The poor fellow went away shaking his head in

disbelief muttering things like 'Not proper buses', and 'Man is a heretic'. The fact remains of course that MB90 is the only known country bus Merlin to survive, is possibly the only Merlin left with the low driving position and is possibly the oldest AH691 powered Swift/Merlin chassis in existence. And yes, it will be painted one day. Indeed, I have recently started rubbing it down and I have the paint and also the transfers ready.

The problem I have is that I get distracted by rescuing things like signs from Aldenham and the like, and of course I have to work for a living. Owning a bus and making sure it survives is a big responsibility, so if don't have your own don't be an armchair enthusiast, get down to Cobham and get stuck in. You'll be doing your bit to preserve our heritage, your efforts will be truly appreciated and as most grandparents say, you can hand them back at the end of the day. I can well recall at the 1996 AGM when I said that Aldenham was in the process of being demolished and there was a chance that some items could become available for display at Cobham. The member sitting in front of me said, not to anybody in particular 'Somebody ought to do something about that'. He never offered to do anything himself. Last year the same member, when questions were being fielded regarding merchandise, shouted out 'Why is there no regalia officer?' He did not offer to take on this task himself. Get involved, its a great experience and there is always the satisfaction at the end of a project of saying, 'I was there!' □

LETTERS

BROOKLANDS DISPLAY – 5TH APRIL 1998

From Peter Starks

To everyone who worked as part of my team at Brooklands, Thank you all – for the hard work put in on both days, despite the strong wind. You all did a very good job. Once again help by the NKVG proved invaluable and am very grateful for their assistance.

Speedwell Way, Horsham, West Sussex. RH12 5WA

PARTS IDENTIFICATION – AN APPEAL

From Jeff Warr

Being a relative newcomer to the 'hands on' preservation scene I am looking for some sort of detailed drawings of all pieces of timber used in the bodywork of an RT.

Those of you who know of me and my buses (RT3175 and RF512) will know that I am very keen and earnest in my efforts to see my RT on the road for the 2000 rally season (the RF is planned for 2003) – both years being their respective 50th birthdays.

When I purchased RT3175 from Christopher Sullivan last June, there came with the vehicle a very generous plethora of parts and pieces of timber, which I have made my own inventory of, but have no idea where the majority of the pieces fit within the body. Most pieces of timber are stamped with the LT part code, but they mean nothing unless I can obtain a drawing or set of drawings showing where the respective parts fit. To this end, I appeal to anyone who has – or knows where to obtain – the relative drawings for the position of all body components for RTs.

Please write in the first instance to the address below, bearing in mind that all expenses will be reimbursed.

St. Hilda's Way, Gravesend, Kent. DA12 4AZ

RT/RF BROWN REXINE

From David Boshier

Supplies of the original material supplied to London Transport have now dried up apart from private stocks that some of us may have. Roger Stagg has managed to source the green and cream (russet yellow) as used on the window cappings. Frankly, he has done extremely well as I will have no hesitation in utilising this alternative on RT1312. Philip Buckland's restoration of RT2293 saw the use of brown rexine produced by Forbo Lancaster called 'antique'. Despite the fact that the grain was slightly on the coarse side, the end product was very acceptable and achieved the correct effect. John Herting's RT2177 saw Ian Barratt use the same material. Unfortunately, no further supplies of this product are available as Forbo have disposed of the equipment which produced this material. Whilst other materials are available, they are not sufficiently close to the original specification.

With these points in mind, I feel that the only way forward is to evaluate the possibility of having the brown rexine reproduced to the original specification. If this cannot be achieved, an alternative material with the same pattern might be manufactured to suit our requirements.

So that everyone has the opportunity to secure this material, whilst also achieving a minimum order quantity at as viable rate as possible, I need to hear from those interested in securing a supply of this material. We estimate that an RT would use approximately 30 metres based on the roll being 54 inches wide. So don't get 'left out in the cold' – drop me a line to confirm your interest right away. Naturally, you will be advised of cost prior to proceeding.

Hythe Park Road, Egham, Surrey. TW20 8DA

STATUTORY OFF-ROAD NOTIFICATION

From M.W. Lloyd

I have recently received the customary reminder about re-licensing my everyday car and was interested to see the modifications to the form to incorporate the new requirement for off-road notification about which few old vehicle enthusiasts can now be aware.

I was however extremely concerned to see that, in the event of a vehicle being declared "off road", it is required to give the exact address and postcode where the unused vehicle is kept. The relevant form is seen by a number of people, including for example staff at the local Post Office, and then goes to the DVLA where no doubt the information is added to the computer database. Computers can be accessed by many people, legitimately or otherwise, and it is of grave concern to me to be compelled to reveal the precise location of my vehicles. I do not have to tell anyone where I keep other valuable items and I see no reason why the location of a historic vehicle should be divulged.

There are numerous instances of theft of valuable vehicles or parts and accessories thereof and the most effective protection is simply not to reveal the whereabouts of their property. We should be trying to minimise vehicle crime, this requirement will surely do nothing but encourage it.

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

OPEN DAY MODEL

From Ian Robertson

After the 1997 Show I was driven (!) to write and pass comment on the choice and standard of the Souvenir model. Congratulations this year in returning to a selection of base model much more in keeping with the standards of the real life examples in Redhill Road. By choosing the LT Museum RM, the 'General' type livery provides a

realistic representation of CBM's aims: Mind you I half expected an RF this year.

The only moment of despair came when, having been on duty from the early hours at Brooklands attempting to purchase one at the club tent at lunchtime was greeted with "Sorry, sold out". Fortunately, a call to the Museum office secured one of the few remaining examples.

The limited numbers are sure to ensure a bonus for those that would want to sell on, or a sense of satisfaction from serious collectors. Incidentally, the 1996 'helpers' special' limited edition STD was on a trader's stand and is now going for a six fold premium, which is a great way of saying thanks to the volunteers without costing the Museum anything. How about a repeat in 1999?

Middle Mead, Hook, Hants RG27 9TE

UNIFORM COLLECTION

From Christopher J. Sullivan

As most members will realise a bus museum apart from the main bus collection also requires other ancillary items such as ticket equipment and uniforms. With this in mind I have recently taken on responsibility for the uniform collection which up to now has been stored in the trailer of the mobile canteen. The interior of this vehicle is damp and this has accelerated the deterioration of some of the items. I have removed one item as a trial, my wife has repaired it and it has been dry cleaned and I have labeled it ready for its return to the museum.

Obviously cleaning is expensive, and this is where members can be of assistance. Like me a number of us are employed in the industry and receive cleaning tokens. If members were prepared to donate their spare cleaning tokens it would relieve Cobham of the enormous cost of cleaning these items and make a positive contribution to the museum. Please send them direct to me at the address below. I will

relate the progress of the project through the pages of the magazine. In addition, if any member has items of uniform which they do not require and would like to donate them to Cobham please do not hesitate to contact me. All donations whether on loan or donated will be acknowledged on a proper accession form.

I intend to split the collection into two distinct parts. A primary collection which would be for display and archive purposes and a secondary collection for use as front of house items such as when vehicles are used on displays to promote the museum or are hired out for filming work, a useful source of income and one where we should excel in getting the period requested just right.

Grantham Green, Borehamwood, Herts. WD6 2JQ

1999, THE CENTENARY OF THE MOTOR BUS!

From Jim Andress.

In a book entitled 'The London Motor Bus' by Colin Curtis and J. Graeme Bruce, published by London Transport in 1972, it is stated that the first motor bus service in London operated in 1899 on a route from Kennington Gate to Victoria. They state that the bus used an engine built by Daimler at Canstatt in Germany.

In the 'London Bus & Tram Album', by V.H. Darling, published by Ian Allan in 1967, there is a picture of a normal control single decker with an extra exposed transverse seat for four people on top of the roof, immediately behind and above the driver. The caption to this photograph states 'Often regarded as London's first motorbus is this Daimler 12hp model. Seating 20, this bus was built at the German Daimler works at Canstatt, near Stuttgart'.

I have established from old LGOC bus maps that Kennington Gate was the name given to the road junction outside the Northern Line station at The Oval, that part of the Underground having opened in 1890, as the City and South London Railway.

In a booklet by Vernon Sommerfield, published by London Transport in 1936, entitled 'London Transport, a Record and Survey', there is the following statement, 'The first recorded *motor* omnibus to be licensed by Scotland Yard, an *electrical* vehicle, made its appearance in 1897; two years later a *petrol* bus was introduced between Kennington and Victoria.' (The italics are mine).

In the Chronology section of the same booklet, under 1899 there is the following entry, 'The newly-formed and short lived Motor Traction Company puts a petrol omnibus on the road, which first operates between Kennington and Victoria and is then transferred to the Kennington – Oxford Street route'.

From this evidence, it seems to me, that it is true that London's first Motor Bus (as I know the motor bus, ie with an internal combustion engine) *did* run in 1899, and we should be organising some kind of extra special commemorative event, or a series of events, perhaps in conjunction with the LT museum, London Tourist Board etc. It is even possible that Mercedes, as successors to German Daimler, might wish to be involved.

Perhaps other members have additional information on this topic. I would be happy to act as a collection point for any information and also for any ideas for a suitably special event, eg a rally in Hyde Park, or a trip to Canstatt perhaps.

I look forward to more news on this topic.

Bath Road, Chippenham, Wilts. SN14 0AD

MUSEUM BUILDING

MAINTENANCE WEEKENDS

25th/26th July and 10th/11th October have been earmarked for the next building cleaning and painting weekends. Please make an effort to attend and be prepared to work as directed to achieve the maximum progress.

DIARY DATES

Sunday 5th July

All buses of all ages are invited to the RMOOA 10th anniversary rally at Chatham Historic Dockyard. Free entry for the driver and three passengers, £2 charge for each additional passenger. Entry forms and further details from Graham Lunn, Pooley Avenue, Egham, Surrey. TW20 8AB, 01784 ... 849

Sunday 12th July

Situated on the picturesque banks of Southampton Water, a good rally to take the non-bus loving relations to, assuming the usual glorious weather. For details contact Denis Forest whom you can contact on 01703 1213.

Sunday 19th July

Mid-Hants Railway Bus Rally and Running Day, based at Anstey Park, Alton this is always a fine, well organised event which is very well attended by the Cobham fraternity. As usual, there will be a large selection of free bus services and the railway will be in full steam. Contact Alan Fairbrother on 0181 5649 (evenings / weekends).

On the same day, the Chappel Bus Rally is being held at the East Anglian Railway Museum, near Colchester. Details on 01206 524

25th/26th July

Clear up and building maintenance weekend at Cobham Bus Museum.

Sunday 23rd August

Members Simon Austin and Toby Prescott are organising a Transport Show at Mangapps Farm Railway Museum, Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex. There will be steam and diesel trains running all day. The museum and station yard houses carriages and wagons dating from the 1870s to the 1960s. Info and entries to Simon Austin, 82, Harcourt Avenue, Sidcup, Kent DA15 9LN

Monday 31st August

RT running and display day, see separate advertisement.

Route

462 to COBHAM BUS MUSEUM

OPERATES ON THE FOLLOWING SUNDAYS & PUBLIC HOLIDAYS
28 JUNE, 26 JULY, 30 & 31 AUGUST, 27 SEPTEMBER & 25 OCTOBER 1998

COBHAM BUS MUSEUM dep	1000	1100	1200	1300	1400	1500	1600
Brooklands Road for Museum	1003	1103	1203	1303	1403	1503	R
Weybridge Station	1008	1108	1208	1308	1408	1508	R
Weybridge opp. Library	1010	1110	1210	1310	1410	1510	R
Weybridge Ship	1011	1111	1211	1311	1411	1511	R
Seven Hills Road Byfleet Road	1017	1117	1217	1317	1417	1517	R
Cobham Village	1021	1121	1221	1321	1421	1521	R
Cobham & Stoke D'Abernon Station arr	1025	1125	1225	1325	1425	1525	R
Cobham & Stoke D'Abernon Station dep	1033	1133	1233	1333	1433	1533	
Cobham Village	1040	1140	1240	1340	1440	1540	
COBHAM BUS MUSEUM arr	1045	1145	1245	1345	1445	1545	

R – Operates as far as required by passengers boarding at COBHAM BUS MUSEUM

ADDITIONAL JOURNEY 31 AUGUST ONLY

1700 from COBHAM BUS MUSEUM to any stop up to and including Cobham & Stoke D'Abernon Station if required by passengers boarding at the Museum.

FARES INCLUDING ADMISSION TO COBHAM BUS MUSEUM

ADULT: £2, CHILD (AGED 5 – 15): £1, FAMILY: £5

Accompanied children under the age of 5 are admitted free.

OTHER SPECIAL EVENTS

31 August 1998 Display Day & RT Running Day
25 October 1998. Pre-Hibernation & RF Running Day.

For further information – Cobham Bus Museum, telephone 01932 868665

Please note that this number is only manned Saturdays and Sundays during the daytime.

While every effort will be made to keep to this timetable, the operator (Greene Lane Vintage Transport) does not undertake that it will be operated in accordance with it, or at all. The operator will not be responsible for any loss, damage or inconvenience caused by reason of any operating failure or in consequence of any inaccuracy in this timetable.

BEYOND THE GATES

John Hinson

We are now well into the rally season, although after a wet Spring, we seem to be flying towards Summer at an uncontrollable rate. For myself, most of the rallies I have attended at the time of writing have been "active" ones (ie with free bus services or road runs) and I feel I have had hardly any time to stroll round displays of buses to soak up their delights.

Our first rallies of the season were the Museum Open Day and the Barking RT run. The latter was better supported this year, and quite a few RTs joined in the traditional run over the old 62 route.

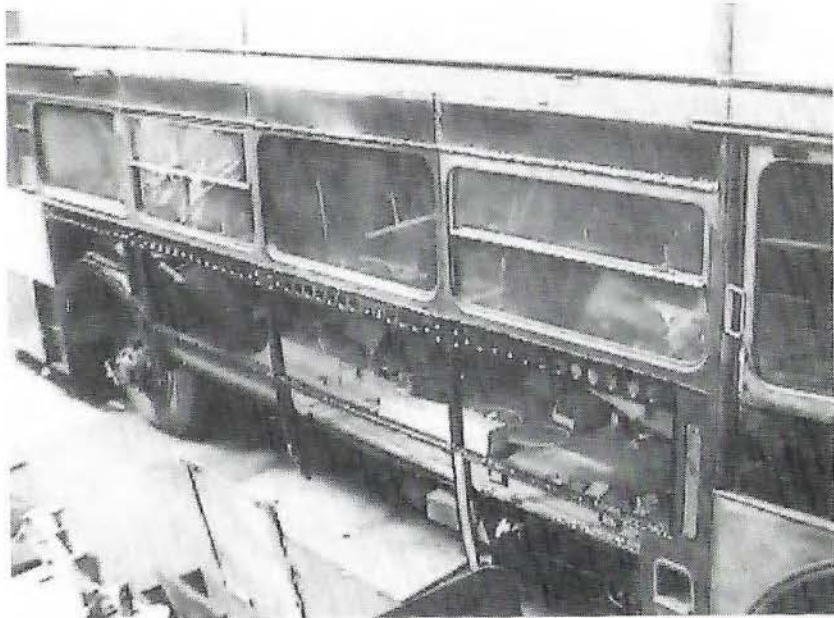
Lack of time prevented me from looking at all of the buses at Cobham's own event, but I did notice a pair of Routemasters there, and at other rallies, which are clearly having a lot of panelling work and are well on their way to becoming very nicely restored examples. One of them, unfortunately, has lost its original registration during its earlier career. At the moment they stand out in the crowd, but when restoration is complete I will probably not be able to distinguish them from all the others. One is an ex-United Counties/Stagecoach vehicle, registered UYJ654, but the fleet numbers elude me at the moment because I can't find the scrap of paper on which I wrote them! Sorry chaps.

Also in evidence (on the bus service) was an anonymous RF re-registered KSJ622, which turns out to be Mike Nash's new toy – RF504. It hurts to see more and more vehicles losing their original registration numbers, although Mike tells me he hopes to re-unite the vehicle with its correct registration soon. RF504 was the RF that was exported to Guernsey for use over there by a coach company. This didn't come to fruit, as the bus exceeded the legal width limit of 7' 4" (wider vehicles are only permitted for stage carriage operation) and after the vehicle had been stored for some years it was returned to the UK and subsequently was used on PSV work by Roger Brown in Shaftesbury. Also noted at the Open Day, for sale, was RM1699.



Ouch! The sorry sight of Nostalgiabus RM1183 after it had tried to go under the low bridge at South Ruislip station on 7 December 1997 whilst on Central Line replacement work. Despite its injury, the RM was repaired and back in service within two weeks. Sadly, RM1183 was destroyed in a mindless arson attack on 30 December.

(Photograph: Graham Smith)



(Top) RT2775 has been stripped out for replacing rotted covering panels. Cleaning and painting are in progress. (Bottom) P3 currently having attention to the nearside structure. (Both photographs: Bill Cottrell)

Some while ago, Chris Lewis (who I have got to know through his once owning our RF280) wrote with details of his present project, BN61, which he was hoping would be ready for the Open Day. I didn't see it there, but that's not to say it wasn't! He has undertaken some quite extensive restoration – renewal of panels, rubbers, and mechanical work. He bought a second BN which he has stripped for spares, too. Chris is looking for any photographs of BN61 (TPJ 61 S) when it was in service – if anyone can help I would be happy to forward them to him. If it didn't quite make it, Chris, we look forward to seeing it soon.

I did bump into (not literally) Mike Lloyd at Cobham who told me about his new acquisition, a Bedford SBG with 42-seat Duple Midland bodywork. It has spent all its working life in Cornwall, but Mike is to restore it to the livery of Bream, one of his favourite small operators in the Hemel Hempstead area.

In conversation with Mike, I also discovered that he (and possibly others) had difficulty contacting Michael Lane regarding the LT brass chassis plates he has for sale, which was mentioned in this column a few issues ago. This was because, unfortunately, the wrong house number was published, and although it seems much of the post was passed on by the neighbour, a few may have slipped through the net. So, if you wrote, but did not get a reply, I apologise. Michael's correct address is Hazeledene Drive, Pinner, Middx. HA5 3NJ.

I recently had a close look at Harry Hobson's RMC1477, which is really nicely restored without being over-done. Very tidy, very clean, very proper, but no polished wheel rims or silly frills.

Member Mike Baldry kindly wrote to say that GS50, which I mentioned in the last edition, was not on the Isle of Arran but Barra. That will teach me to depend on my little grey cells rather than look things up! With Mike's letter was a copy of an article in Buses magazine, October 1997, about the vehicle. I don't subscribe to Buses (there are so many magazines to choose from these days) so was unaware of this and thought I was breaking some news! Sorry.

Interestingly, the article states that GS50 (which is now registered Q76 KUA) has made a journey to Roumania, and was at that time about to embark on a sponsored trip from Belgium to the Sahara and back. Good for them, I hope the trip was a success.

Other reports include BL60 found in use as a store somewhere along the A281 Horsham to Guildford road. I am told it is still in LT red, and is easily visible from the road. RM1783 was seen in Bath over Easter, on open-top tours of the city.

I also hear there is the possibility of another RLH appearing in the UK soon – one has been found for sale in Germany that is thought worthy of repatriation although in need of mechanical and body repair.

Continuing the mini-series about non-London vehicles owned by members, we shall return this time to another vehicle from the collection of Gareth Crowther, who seems to have as many buses as we do!

ECG112K is a very nicely restored Bristol RELL6G that once ran for Provincial, as their No 12. It was sold by Provincial in the wrong shade of Emerald Green (that of Southern Vectis) and cream but co-owner Terry Lawson and his cousin recently repainted the vehicle to the correct shade. The NBC orange vinyl seat cushions and squabs are being (have been?) replaced by the correct burgundy colour.

The vehicle makes quite a few rally appearances, and for the last two years has performed well as standby vehicle at the Aldershot & District Society's running days at Aldershot and Guildford, usually being put to lot of hard work. It is also popular with the enthusiasts, proving there is plenty of interest in more "modern" vehicles in the preservation world. If, like me, you don't know too much about vehicles that weren't built for London, RELL6G signifies Rear Engine, Low floor-line, Long chassis, 6-cylinder Gardner engine. I think. If I am wrong, I'm sure Gareth will put me right!

Please send any reports about your vehicles, vehicles seen for sale, interesting sightings, or anything that may be of interest to other members to

"The Shambles", Graham Road, Wealdstone, Middx HA3 5RE

WITHIN REACH OF SEA AND TROLLEYBUSES

Malcolm Budd

*The Fifties, a time for bikes
Any weather, no dislikes
From the rain a cycle cape
Plastic yellow special shape
Elswick, Raleigh and BSA
To the shore on a Sunday
Along highway roads we raced
Fed on Shiphams' bloater paste.*

*Hastings, Eastbourne, Brighton
Without maps wheels we let run
Up and down across the grain
Of high chalk South Downs bane
Flimwell, Polegate and Lewes
Defined our southward progress
Hop gardens, orchards, hedgerows
Bridges look at river flows.*

*Sand and pebbles marked our reach
Sandwiches, pop on the beach
Eastward shore black wood towers
Drying nets, seashore flowers
Fishing boats above the tide
Just beyond cliff railway ride
Trolley buses with their wires
Passing by with swishing tyres.*

*Rowing boats on Princes Lake
Summer days the, sea we take
Rolling pennies, grabbing toys
That damned crane defeats our ploys
Ice cream man with his barrow
Open top bus stairs narrow
De La Warr Pavillion
With Beachy Head further on.*

*Reaching out Chain and West Piers
Calling steamers rousing cheers
Above the sea green and deep
The Amusement Arcade's cheap
Candy floss and fish that's fried
The beach changes with each tide.
South coast shingle, long wait for sand,
Bowls and putting come to hand.*

*Leaving bikes against prom rails
Ducks and drakes and distant sails,
Packing saddle bags, off home
And planning next where to roam
Above the Sea those Sussex Hills
Take their toll of tired wills
By Lamberhurst and Uckfield
To Tonbridge, town in the Weald.*

SHORT TURNS

Model for sale – Gareth Crowther sells EFE Models by post, especially RF models but also RM and RT as available. They cost £11.50 inclusive of postage and packaging and are available from MacDonal Road, Lightwater, Surrey. GU18 5XZ. Make cheques payable to the “Bristol VR Enthusiasts Society.”

T504 to the Rescue – During the East Grinstead Running Day the 1938 Regal came to the rescue of another Cobham member following a tyre failure on RF453. Arrangements were made to use T504 and with the assistance from members Jim Andress (RF366) and Dave Jones (RF672), two sets of jacking gear and a spare wheel were conveyed to RF453. Returning to East Grinstead along the 494 route, a fortunate photographic stop revealed the road ahead blocked by two car collision. A handy O/S map provided an alternative route back. The day turned out to be most enjoyable to those involved, but some will no doubt remember it for the incidents. Many thanks to everyone who helped.

LH to GF for representative – Saturday 23rd May witnessed a rarity on stage-carriage work when RP90 spent the day working route 478 from Leatherhead High Street to Guildford Bus Station, complete with conductor! The 478 is currently operated by North Surrey Buses whose enthusiasm for older vehicles may well see other such workings from time to time. Indeed, it is likely that RF504 will also put in guest appearances from time to time. Meanwhile, North Surrey Buses, who are based just around the corner from the museum are always looking for full and part-time drivers to cover their private hire, stage-carriage and school workings so why not give Glenn a ring on 0370 136.

Testing Testing... Congratulations to both Alan Fairbrother and Andrew Hay who have successfully passed their PCV tests since the last issue. Several other members have since joined our training scheme and contrary to the previous statement it has been decided to extend the loan period of KPB881P (or ‘Smokey Joe’ as it was known in its Blue Saloon days) so the Bristol LH continues to be available for driver training for the foreseeable future. Therefore, if you wish to join the scheme do be sure to pester Alan Bond on 01753 642497. At just £10 per hour after the first ‘assessment’ lesson at £45, it really does make for excellent value.

Shoppers Catch the 5.10 (again) – Having chronicled in previous issues the departure from the Brooklands free shopping services of M & S liveried ‘celebrity’ LeyNat NPJ479R and the resultant Dart monopoly, events have taken a further twist with the Countryliner division of London & Country having been the subject of a management buy out. This has seen the transfer from I & C of TOF713S (3713), one of the infamous TGM batch of Nationals. Still resplendent in I & C livery and with its original 510 engine, TOF, which was new to Midland Red can now regularly be seen not only at

Brooklands but also at Addlestone Co-op. What a shame it can't pop in for a drink at Addlestone garage!

Leyland Nat = Old Hat – Move over you National fans, a Dennis Dart has been preserved! On display at the Dennis family day in May at Guildford was a Carlyle bodied Dart, the first complete chassis produced at the old factory on the by-pass. It will be on loan to the City of Portsmouth Preserved Transport Depot.

You can't take it with you – There was a report in the Times recently about a bus driver who lost his appeal after being convicted for not stopping at the scene of an accident and failing to give information or documents. A passenger was injured after falling due to heavy braking. The driver continued on his route after using his radio to arrange to meet an ambulance at another location. His lawyer submitted that, as the bus was the scene of the accident, and the injured party was still on board, he had not in fact left. The judge, however, stated the driver was obliged to stop as the point in the road where the bus had been when the accident happened was the actual scene. If he had stopped, however briefly, and then decided it was better to continue, he would have complied with the law.

RF OPERATING DAY 25TH OCTOBER 1998

25th October 1998 sees the fourth anniversary of the very successful RF Owners Club (RFOC) Operating Day, the same day as Cobham Display Day. Plans are well advanced and we hope to present a frequent service between 10am. and 5pm. working between Cobham (Redhill Road) and Esher/Sandown Park/Claygate (route 206) via the old A3. Bus stops will be provided close to Cobham Museum. An operating base will be created near to Redhill Road. Any RF owners who would like to be involved and have suitable insurance etc. can contact the RFOC at Speedwell Way, Horsham, West Sussex. RH12 5WA

RT RUNNING DAY AND DISPLAY DAY

August Bank Holiday Monday

Information for participating vehicle owners

Arrangements for the day – as last year, RT owners and owners of other similar period half cab vehicles of any make or origin will be congregating on 31 August. As you will read elsewhere in the magazine this is also one of this year's Cobham Display Days, although our event will take place in Woking town centre at the same time as the Woking Classic Vehicle Display. Those who are prepared to run their vehicle for public service, for photographic purposes or even just for fun, are welcome to take part.

Vehicles for display will be set in a pedestrianised section of Woking Town Centre in an area that will be easily accessible for the size of our vehicles. The Running Day will, as last year, shuttle between Woking Town Centre and Redhill Road, Cobham, where coincidentally it will stop and pick up close to the museum gates.

For those wishing to run in service this will be a strictly Class 5 event with no obligation for any passenger to enter Cobham. There are no entry charges at the Woking end.

To maximise public interest as many different vehicles as possible will be welcome and if there are sufficient entrants for display purposes then a separate area for display will be set up at the Cobham end. To ensure that adequate space is allocated we would ask those interested in attending this prestigious event to register their interest without further delay. If you do not already have an entry form please write with details and we will communicate with you, alternatively you can ask for an entry form which will be dispatched immediately.

From our experience last year, the Woking event has, like the Cobham Display Day, much to offer and certainly broadens the horizons beyond just public service vehicles. There is more to interest the wife/girl friend and children to make a full day out.

RUNNING DAY – VOLUNTEERS WANTED

To those members who are unable to bring a vehicle, your volunteering help is eagerly awaited, to assist at both Woking and Cobham. In particular Cobham members prepared to act as watchdog on and around member's vehicles on display would allow those bringing their vehicles and not wishing to run to make full use of the facilities at both ends. Volunteers prepared to give anything between one hour and all day would be most welcome

This event is very soon, and I ask those members who have not yet been in touch to offer their services now, in order to give the organisers sufficient opportunity to plan the event with known resources. Don't delay – contact today

Whilst we would emphasise that there is no direct connection between the vehicle display, the service and the coincidental events at Cobham on that day, Display Days are the lifeblood of Cobham; people who travel down from Woking and then decide to visit the museum are helping to secure the future of the Trust.

RTOC, Teston Road, Offham, West Malling, ME19 5NE

**DEADLINE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS
FOR NEXT MAGAZINE
31ST AUGUST
SOONER IF POSSIBLE**

“Nobody told me this organisation had a communications problem!”...Anon.

LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST

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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

LBPT website: <http://www.geocities.com/MotorCity/Downs/9026>

Rear cover The Towbus to the rescue, see page 14 for full story.

