

COBHAM  
BUS  
MUSEUM

MAGAZINE



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### Front Cover:

STL2093 blinks in the daylight for the first time since its arrival at Cobham, joining pre-war AEC brothers T31 and ST922 in the yard on the occasion of the members' day on 7th March.

## EDITORIAL

Bill Cottrell

The production of this issue has regrettably slipped a month as I suddenly and unexpectedly had to go to China train spotting for two weeks around the time of the deadline. On holiday, we were discussing the status of train enthusiasts, and by association bus enthusiasts, in society today. We do have an image problem, not helped by the jibes of comedians such as Jasper Carrott who managed a ruthless and admittedly hilarious send up of some of the more obsessive characteristics of some that frequent our interest. In America, the hobby has the respectable sobriquet of 'railfan'. (Or 'busfan'). Over here we are all 'anoraks'. We decided that in future we would not tell colleagues at work that trips abroad were to 'chase steam' but that we were sex-tourists as this would attract less scorn and derision.

It is not surprising, therefore, that going to the museum for the week-end is viewed by me as an escape from the harshness and pressure of modern society, a place of almost monastic retreat and contemplation, surrounded by reminders of a more gentle era. But I now have to be aware that modern society can intrude. Some of us recently while working in the museum, were victims of a sneak thief who rifled our possessions left in the canteen and office. So, volunteers beware and be aware. Don't be victims of complacency! Lock your valuables away while working.

Open day has been and gone and will be fully reported in the next issue. Congratulations all round to Simon Douglas-Lane and the organising committee for the most successful and hassle free day to date. This could not have been achieved except by the efforts of all the volunteer helpers and it was almost painless, at the end of the day, to be part of the team that cleared up the site at Brooklands. This was achieved with great good humour made all the more remarkable because everyone involved had already done his or her fair stint during the day. We were back at Cobham at just after 6.30 p.m. and everything there was also tidied up. Up to a few years ago, we were lucky to have locked up by 8.00 p.m.

In total contrast to the organisation of open day was the equal and opposite lack of organisation of the previous Easter Monday advertised museum display day. I trust the committee will see to it that such a fiasco does not happen again. We have fought long and hard to restore the image of the Trust and we must not allow it to slip back after so much hard work!

Finally, this is issue number four from me and when I took over the magazine from Mike Nash I indicated that I would do four issues to keep some sort of continuity. That task is now completed. However, I have enjoyed doing it so much, I think I'll do another four!

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Peter Plummer

The Christmas lunch at Silvermere was attended by one hundred and nine persons and seemed to be enjoyed by old and new friends alike. In line with previous years, I as chairman awarded a small gift donated by myself to a member for outstanding contribution during the year. It was a particularly difficult decision this year with so many major projects under way. John Broadhurst narrowly won the award for his magnificent effort on the museum grounds

Early in the New Year, two instances of offensive and slightly abusive behaviour by members toward committee members came to my knowledge. Despite Graham Ruddock's well assembled article in the winter magazine outlining the awkward decisions that have to be made in respect of vehicle acquisitions and assistance we can give, it would seem further clarification is required on this subject

The Trust operates within tight limitations on finance, physical museum space and labour resource - there is never enough of either. We make every effort to accommodate a member's request and at the time of the above instances, two non resident member's vehicles were on site and several large mechanical components for a third member's vehicle stored temporarily. Physical museum limitations dictate that we cannot accommodate yet another vehicle over the entire winter period. The other incident, which is more serious, has implications for the future in respect of vehicles offered as donations to the Trust.

For many years, the eyes of the outside world saw Cobham largely as a building full of derelict, dusty vehicles many of which never moved, and from their point of view, that was true. Our volunteers did all they could but the sheer volume of labour intensive tasks seemed insurmountable.

For the most part, this situation has now been addressed, subject to our limitations. There is currently work in progress on nine Trust vehicles, RTL139, RT2775, P3, T448, 702b tractor unit, D142, G351, the RT chassis unit and STL2377 the latter of which requires vast sums of money to complete by November this year.

The former vehicles have been improved by the volunteers at the lowest cost possible but work still continues. Future Trust restorations of a major nature include the complete body rebuild of G351, complete body rebuild of STL2093, a heavy overhaul of canteen trailer 702b and a medium overhaul of STL441's body, the collective cost of which is probably four times that of our current financial commitment on vehicle restoration alone. The museum building roof is life expired and will require replacement within the next few years at an estimated cost of £70,000 at today's prices.

Recently, we were offered derelict RF512 as a donation. The committee after long discussion declined the offer for the following reasons: -

- We could not take on yet another derelict vehicle with all the cost and labour- implications.
- There are two vehicles of the type already on display in the museum.
- Although the Trust does not own an RF, the Covent Garden Museum does and the Trust is not in a position at the moment to duplicate vehicles that are not rare.

We also have to consider very closely modern vehicles that may be offered. Much longer and wider than vehicle of the pre-war and early post-war periods, with the physical size in the museum building as it stands today, would render the walk ways and passages too narrow for the public to be accommodated, increase the congestion risk and substantially increase our insurance premium, currently our singular largest annual outgoing. Lastly to clarify, we have always marketed ourselves as the Cobham Bus Museum and we do not discriminate against non-London vehicles or their owners in our support of bus preservation. So, to avoid any offence or misunderstanding in the future, please be assured all offers are given the greatest consideration.

David Jones tendered his resignation from the Trust committee in February. The membership owe their appreciation to Dave for his valuable contribution in obtaining registration for the Trust in 1997 and assistance to the secretary on a variety of other matters.

Member Dick Garbutt has formally donated the RT demonstration unit to the Trust. Our thanks are given to Dick for his most generous gesture and the small crew who restored the unit to such a high standard, which determined Dick's decision.

Our member's day on Sunday 7th March was attended by approximately 130 members and after a welcoming speech by myself, was addressed by the treasurer on the programme of events throughout the year. Those present then witnessed a re-arrangement of dormant vehicles, which included STL2093 moving under its own power for the first time in the Trust's ownership since August 1984. This and the body lift and chassis roll-out of G351 together with the rapid preparation of RTL139 to active service have demonstrated an incredible, productive working partnership between Andy Baxter and Bill Cottrell which has been inspirational to other volunteers and I thank them for their leadership.

Finally, your chairman worked over the Christmas holidays on revamping our museum guide book, which will include the Trust's recent acquisitions and should be available from the museum shop on our April 11th open day.

Thanks are given to all volunteers who have worked through the winter on various projects positioning us well for a productive 1999.

## **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

J. L. Bedford

### **Annual General Meeting.**

The date set for the Annual General Meeting of the Trust is Saturday 19 June; it will be held at St James Parish Centre, Church Street, Weybridge, (entrance in car park behind Weybridge Library) commencing at 1.30pm.

A formal notice will be circulated to members at a later date, to comply with the procedure set down in the constitution. At the time of writing, 'notices' relating to a settlement of the dispute with the

Directors of the former LBPG Ltd have been published (with one exception), thus, at the meeting it should be possible for plans for restructuring the existing organisation to be debated, in the knowledge that these can be implemented at a relatively early date.

If an unforeseen problem arises, it may be prudent to defer the meeting. I am hopeful that this will not happen - however, there would seem little point in calling the AGM if it appeared likely it was to be followed almost immediately by one or more EGMs to endorse points of procedure. If for any reason the date of the AGM is put back, the Charity Commissioners will be notified accordingly.

### **Museum Registration.**

One of the benefits of Museum Registration is the opportunity it presents to museum trustees to apply for partnership funding to assist with the cost of projects in their development programme. During 1998, we received a major grant towards the cost of rebuilding STL 2377 - a project it is unlikely we would have been able to start, without a major input of cash from the Science Museum. In recent weeks we have received help from another source - this time the Surrey Museums Consultative Committee, who are contributing towards the cost of laying new paving inside the grounds to improve public accessibility and assist those visitors with disabilities.

This is welcome news at a time when the Trust's small group of regular volunteers is stretched to capacity on other essential tasks. My thanks to Roger Stagg who assisted me in obtaining competitive quotations or submission to SMCC and to the Trust's Curatorial Adviser, Mrs Morag Barton (also Director of the nearby Brooklands Museum Trust, who wrote a supporting statement on behalf of the Trust.

### **RT 2213 - Demonstration Chassis.**

Those members who are able to visit Cobham regularly will have seen the work being carried out to restore the chassis to ex: works condition, by John Rawlins and his team. Dick Garbutt, who presented it to the museum on a permanent loan' basis, visited Cobham recently and was suitably impressed by the transformation achieved in recent weeks - so much so that he has decided to

donate the chassis to the museum as a gift so that it can remain as a permanent exhibit.

On behalf of the Trust, I would like to thank Dick for his generosity. Visitors to the museum have shown a noticeable interest - it is hoped to get the engine started and the chassis mobile in the foreseeable future.

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Mike Nash

We edge ever nearer the 600 mark thanks to the last quarter, which has seen membership jump significantly to 575 as at 1st March. Hopefully our sales team on Open Day will do their usual sterling job and encourage plenty of new recruits.

A quick analysis recently revealed that a renewal rate of 94% is currently being achieved which really is very impressive and would be the envy of any enthusiast based organisation. I think that this gives a good indication that our members are generally very happy with progress at Cobham, as well they should be! Additionally, I am astounded at how many members who pay by Standing Order have, on their new form pledged a figure over and above the new rate of £15 and in many cases by some margin.

A very big thank-you.

I've been handling the membership chores for Cobham now for a number of years and consider that the way I have it organised is very much a contributing factor to the Trust's sustained growth. That said, no matter how well organised it is there is no escaping the number of hours involved that this duty demands. With six times as many members on our books as when I first took on the role you can imagine that I spend many hours burning the midnight oil for Cobham, a fact that I do begin to feel is somewhat overlooked, simply because it does all run like clockwork. To that end, there can be no doubt that I would not be able to cope with this task were it not for the efforts of Paul Morris, who himself devotes many hours to the membership aspect in having first set up, and now maintaining our database. The printouts from which greatly benefit both myself and our Treasurer in particular.

In Magazine 22 mention was made on three occasions that the new subscription rate was £15, following painfully drawn out discussion at the AGM. But when the replacement Standing Orders were sent

out to the relevant members with Magazine 23 it was incredible how many couldn't even remember the new rate! May I therefore draw your attention to a few further points as follows? -

### STANDING ORDERS

All members who pay by this method should by now have completed and returned to me the replacement form they received reflecting the new rate of £15 (or more!) or £25 (joint membership). If you haven't yet done so please do it NOW! Do not send it to your bank - send it to me. That way I can keep my records up to date. The aforementioned database has been revised to reflect the figure members are paying so if you don't update your Standing Order form I can easily tell!

It seems that some members who have been paying by Standing Order haven't actually paid a penny. Confused? Me too. But if you know you've been enjoying free membership because your Standing Order has never been processed by your bank please send me a cheque in lieu for the relevant years and I'll send you another Standing Order form to complete. Our Treasurer, Alan Charman, is gradually working through our bank statements to ascertain which members this affects so if you know you're one of them please let me know. Remember that membership income pays for this very Magazine.

### MEMBERSHIP CARDS

Those members who still pay by cheque will receive their cards with the following issue of the Magazine. We can't afford to send them out separately so please don't write to me asking where your card is unless it doesn't come with the next issue. Better still, why not make my life and yours easier by paying on Standing Order. Drop me a line for more details.

### MEMBERS DETAILS

Only about half the forms sent out with the last issue have been returned to me. Which means that around half of you can't be bothered. Such information is crucial to our maintaining an accurate database. For example, many members have changed their work telephone numbers since last they completed a form. And some members have even changed their date of birth. I kid you not! To help compile the members' fleetlist of vehicles in each Open Day programme I am always especially keen to learn of your acquisitions and disposals as regards preserved buses and

coaches. So please keep me informed of any detail changes and please, if you haven't yet returned to me your Members Details form please do so now.

The following members are warmly welcomed to the Trust: -

748	Terry Weatherburn	Irstead, Norfolk		MN
749	Robin Luff	Bury St. Edmunds		
750	R. Barton	Eastbourne		
751	Frank Waters	Storrington		
752	David Neale	East Grinstead		JF
753	J. Flowers	Carshalton		
754	Roger Bailes	Bexley		
755	Steven Wood	Hertford	RM1699	PM
756	Paul Harvey	Rochester		RB
757	Jim Batt	London SW16		AC
758	John Stanley	Gravesend	RF421	MN
759	Victoria Maybury	Brook, Surrey	T792	DA
760	Rob Sly	Camberley	VR JOU161P	MN
761	Robin Jones	Golders Green		SHOP
762	Robert Zarywacz	Windsor	RM577	RZ

Recruited by:- AC Alan Charman, DA Don Allmey, MN Mike Nash  
 JF Jack Flowers, PM Paul Morris, RB Roger Bailes  
 RZ Richard Zarywacz

### FROM THE COMMITTEE ROOM

Dr. Graham Ruddock

Vehicle acquisition was a feature of the last issue. I reported on why we had chosen to accept RTLI39, John Bedford announced that the committee had decided to accept Kevin McGowan's kind offer of SMS369, while Eddie Knorn's letter about the representativeness of the Trust collection and acquisition policy in general also appeared. A few more words on the subject might be of interest.

We have reviewed what our policy on vehicle acquisition, and had already taken the view that the time was right to display more recent vehicles at Cobham, whether these are owned by the Trust

or by members. The arrival of SMS369 in one of the members' spaces was the first fruit of our deliberations, and our acceptance of it as a donation has furthered this policy. It extends our collection and adds to it an important type in the story of the London bus, not an altogether happy period to represent, perhaps, but an important one. I hope that this meets some of the points raised by Eddie Knorn, who would not have been aware of our accepting the SMS when he wrote his letter.

We have looked at the gaps at Cobham, which mainly cover the period up to 1925 and after the Routemaster. In our assessment we took into account members' buses on display at the museum. These include the Q, RF and GS types, for example. The chance of filling the early gaps in the collection is remote. We are not in a position to take on what would amount to the virtual construction of a replica B, K S or NS type starting with a chassis with no running units, and fully restored vehicles of this era in private hands are very rare and likely to be very expensive if any do come on to the market. The post-Routemaster period is a different matter but caution is required. We cannot seek to duplicate the LT museum collection and have one of each type, with a reserve collection area to house the overflow. We must be selective as to what we either acquire for the Trust or offer a member's space to, when one is available.

We would not be able to offer large resources to restore an acquisition, so a fully restored vehicle of a type, which would enhance the collection, like SMS369, is ideal. Even here, we could not guarantee to accept every vehicle which meets these criteria - space and resources remain at a premium.

Unfortunately for us, for example, the more modern vehicles are wider and longer than most buses currently at Cobham and housing them requires careful planning and parking. We do not think the story of the London bus ends with the RM, but will make progress in following the more recent history of the London bus as resources and space permit. The committee does not enjoy turning down a donation or not taking up the offer of a vehicle at a good price. We have, however, to be prudent and to make the tough decisions which are just as much a part of the preservation movement as they are of the rest of life today.

## CONFESSIONS OF A PUBLICITY OFFICER

Graham Smith

11<sup>th</sup> April 1999 is now but a memory. Another Annual Open Day, our 26th, has come and gone.

How was it for you? Enjoyable, I hope, but please spare me the intimate details. However, perhaps I can share my experiences with you. Incidentally, our esteemed Chairman of the Open Day sub-committee will, I am sure, file his official report of the day's proceedings.

For me, it started a long time ago, in 1974, when I attended Cobhams first Annual Open Day with my then, and still current, wife. A modest affair, if I recall correctly (a comment about the Open Day you realise, not my marital situation!) During the late 70s and early 80s we attended with first one, then two, then three, offspring. Now you know why I've neither had the time nor money to own a bus. Our son and daughters still remember riding around the Museum grounds in the model buses operated, I think, by a Carshalton Hospital charity. Also, I have a slide photograph of two young and happy-looking Smiths sitting on RL92 (find that in your Ian Allan ABC if you can!) in the Museum forecourt, must have been in 1980...and no-one shouted at them to get off.

I think I can lay claim to having attended all twenty-six Annual Open Days. However, attendance by other members of the household fell away in the mid-80s although most (but not all!) have retained an interest in transport matters to this day.

"Where is this all leading?" I hear you ask. Well, from 1974 to 1995, I came to every Open Day as a non-member, paid my entrance fee and just took for granted all that was on offer. As a non-bus owner, I did not even contemplate joining, as membership was, surely, confined to bus owners. This changed in October 1995, following the splendid Kingston RF Running Day ("splendid" refers to the Running Day and the RFs, rather than Kingston itself which, apart from Clarence Street Bus Station, is far from splendid), when I joined the Trust. (If you're interested, please refer to my article starting on page 22 of CBM Magazine no. 12). Now as a member, I attended the 1996/7/8 Annual Open Days... and still took for

granted all that was on offer, including free rides on Trust vehicles, a membership "perk".

And so to Cobham 99's Annual Open Day. As recorded in CBM Magazine no. 22, I volunteered - a highly dangerous activity this volunteering - to help with the Trust's publicity. The rest, as they say, is history. Attendance at Open Day sub-committee meetings, whilst not compulsory, was expected and, indeed, was a most enjoyable experience. Strange that the weather on all but one of our four evening meetings at Hounslow was atrocious whereas, fortunately, 11th April saw no rain and much brilliant sunshine, yet days either side experienced horrible weather. Also, the "head-to-head" comparison of T504 & RP90, so expertly written up by Gavin Booth and Stephen Morris in our "Ticket to Ride", took place in bright sunshine as you will have seen in the photographs, and this was on 27th January. Can only be due to our s-c Chairman having influence in the highest of places....

So, after twenty-five years of being a customer at Open Days, I was now on the "supply side", having been allocated a shift on programme sales at Brooklands. This was a good opportunity to talk with a fair number of our customers, many of whom had travelled considerable distances, and to meet up with old friends. As a non-bus-owning member, I do not feel this was a particularly arduous task and neither was the time that I spent lending a hand at the Museum the previous day. Indeed, only when I saw a bus-owning member, who lives over 100 miles from Cobham, spending the Saturday washing Trust vehicles, then to travel up the following day to Brooklands in his own immaculately presented bus, did I realise the meaning of total dedication.

This leads me to the apparently perennial question (problem?) of volunteering, especially by newer members and those who, like me, believe in what the Trust stands for and don't have their own vehicles to restore and maintain. Surely you can find a few hours, if not each week, then each month and certainly once a year, to volunteer to help in one way or another and so help spread the workload of the active members referred to by Mike Nash in the Open Day programme? Believe me, it's painless! If you're afraid that not being a bus owner in your own right consigns you to the status of a "second class" citizen, then don't be. All members have something to offer. On a personal note, if I should ever feel that I

was somehow being discriminated against by bus-owning members, then I would have to seriously reconsider my role.

Open Day 2000 may seem a long way off but please consider now what you can offer in terms of time and help. Oh and also there are many other interesting events this year where your help will surely be welcomed and appreciated.

My time on the 'supply side' at Open Day 99 had its perks; platform duties on RTL139 and T31, involvement with the 'official' handover of the RTL, a superb end of the day round trip on RM1, and having a hand in lining up RM1 and RML2760 (the first and last) for a photocall together, as well as meeting friends, old and new, and sharing in this enthusiastic pursuit which is, perhaps, not so peculiar after all. Anyone for Morris dancing? Count me out, I don't have the legs for it.

## VEHICLE NEWS

### D142

The exhaust system has been remade and the exhaust manifold milled to remove corroded surfaces. The tyres were removed from the wheels and the wheels have been sent for shotblasting. The transmission shaft has also been removed for overhaul. The rear hubs were also stripped for inspection, cleaning and re-packing. Investigation is taking place to fit a basic charging system. Work carried out by Nick Grenside, Richard Hussey and Tony Lewis.

### T31

The bus has been accepted for the HCVS London to Brighton run. Ten members applied for places on the run and have been notified that they have seats for the day. I should make clear that the bus will run from Cobham to Battersea, then along the rally route to Brighton, returning via Worthing and the A24. Members wishing to join the bus at Battersea or along the route may find it more convenient to return from Brighton by train. Members accepted for the run will be notified of the start time as soon as I receive notification.

### ST922

The ST has been moved into the paint bay to allow further investigation into the miss firing. We now suspect a head gasket or valve problem.

### G351

The engine was sent to Paul Gardner Engineering for a full overhaul. It went via the Gardner facility at Sutton garage thanks to Tony Lewis and his car trailer. After a week or so I had a phone call asking what colour did I want the engine painted. Fortunately, this call was prompted not because the engine was ready for collection, but because our engine dates from 1943 and the standard colour changed then from black to battleship grey.

In the meantime, after struggling for a few weeks in trying to remove the brake servo and associated plumbing we bounced the idea around of fully separating the chassis from the body.

Various ideas were discussed and we decide to go for it. The argument that the body would disintegrate was dismissed on the grounds that it would make no difference if the body was supported in the same area as the chassis.

We found that of the front bulkhead body bolts three out of four were broken. There were also a large number of bolts secured to brackets along the body. Some undid easily and some broke in the attempt. The chassis was jacked up and the body blocked. Calculations were made to work out how much clearance was needed to allow the rear wheel-arch section to clear the front bulkhead. The other problem was working out how to support the body outside the width of the chassis. Andy Baxter lowered the rear end by supporting the rear springs on skates (made from angle iron and supported by alternator bearings).

Some fine adjustments were made to get the body square and to check that there was adequate clearance to get the rear of the chassis under the front bulkhead. The front of the body was supported by cutting holes in the panels adjacent to the bulkhead and a combination of angle iron and a 6"x4" length of wood inserted through. This in turn was supported on stands outside the width of the body. The back end was supported by various stands under the rear riser and platform areas. The chassis was lowered gradually away from the body. There were a few problems as the odd bent body bolt held the weight of the chassis. Andy crawled under the



bus and cut off the offending fixings to overcome this.

Eventually a gap appeared between body and chassis and the chassis touched the floor. The front wheels were removed and a couple of wheel centres were fitted to allow the chassis to roll. The rear wheels were removed and Andy's patent skates were put under the rear spring 'U' bolts. The next stage was to remove all the assembled work benches and the 9T9 blocking the front of the Guy. The forklift was attached to the front of the chassis and gradually it was pulled out from under the body. This required a certain amount of sideways manoeuvring due to the lack of steering, made easy by the skates.

The chassis was taken outside and the opportunity taken to attack the dirt with a power wash. Additional support was put under the centre of the body now the chassis was out of the way. Work can now continue apace on the chassis. Just before open day the engine returned from Gardners and was temporarily reunited with the chassis. The engine has received a full overhaul and looks absolutely beautiful with the aluminium and brass parts proudly polished. Not a bad period of work on a vehicle that is only a fallback project.

Project leader Bill Cottrell, ably assisted by Andy Baxter, 'Ginger' John Messer and several others.

### RT2775

Work is continuing at a steady rate on the body with the offside now virtually complete under the auspices of Peter Plummer and his body-work team.

### P3

The Reliance has been tidied up to allow it to journey to the contractor for the body to be finished and painted. We await its return with bated breath.

*Stop Press 17<sup>th</sup> April*

I can now unbate my breath.

I have just been informed that it has returned from repaint and is looking good. In fact, I am told it has won over a few converts who were not previously fans of this vehicle. Lets hope it can now prove its worth on the driver training scheme.

### RTL139

Report by project Leader Andy Baxter

Mechanical work completed as follows: -

The front and rear hubs have been stripped and inspected. Old grease has been cleaned off and bearings re-packed. One bearing was found to be severely pitted and replaced. New seals from stock were fitted.

All brake cylinder seals have been replaced.

All engine-mounting rubbers have been replaced.

It was decided to repair the gearbox crossmember in situ by welding rather than indulge in a major stripping down exercise. This was successfully achieved.

On Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> January the bus was taken on trade plates under its own power to have the chassis cleaned. The bus was driven by myself with Bill Cottrell and Ginger John in support. This involved a round trip of 34 miles to Wimbledon and the RTL performed without any problems. The chassis clean took over three hours, reflecting the amount of accumulated dirt. The operative was very conscientious and thorough and the underside was very clean when he finished. Our thanks go to Big Bus for the use of their facilities free of charge.

On return to Cobham the bus was placed on the ramp and a proper inspection could now take place.

One fault found was an oil leak on the offside of the now clean engine. A bolt had dislodged from the sideplate and the leak cured when it was replaced. Whether it fell out on the journey or the dirt on the engine was acting as a plug, we shall never know. Only minor mechanical faults are left to attend to.

New tyres of the correct type and size are being sourced for the rear axle.

The battery crate was found to be corroded and this was removed, cleaned, repaired, repainted and refitted. The opportunity was taken to clean and paint the surrounding area at the same time. The noisy cab heater motor has been removed and repaired (Standard RTL, warm cab – cold saloon).

In the saloon, worn floor slatting has been replaced and the remainder has been sanded clean. Damaged wheel arch plastic edges have been replaced recycling the units removed from RT2775.

Work on cleaning the interior and exterior has started in earnest with many volunteers helping with this crucial aspect. A team was assembled to do cleaning mid-week in early February and this was successful apart from one setback. An enthusiastic individual's haste to remove the bus from the paint bay caused a problem. On connecting the battery he forgot to tighten the clamp bolt, (the battery spanner was left adjacent for this purpose). Result: - 400amps x 24volts + loose lug = major melt down. The most annoying part of this episode is that as project leader, I was not informed of this mishap. (My telephone number is left on the front cover of the logbook left on the bus).

The chairman contributed his usual high standard of workmanship in shaping and fitting the cork floor tiles on both decks. These were varnished and seat cushions fitted, garnered from several donor vehicles.

#### *Postscript*

We did it!

After much effort over the Easter break the bus was duly presented for test on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> April and it passed in the best way possible i.e. with no adverse comment from the examiner. The RTL was thrown in the deep end on the open day, going into service on the vintage 471 route. Your editor as privileged to allow to drive it for two rounders in the afternoon, and I found it hard work. Fifty-six people do make the steering very heavy, plus the bus seemed very sluggish. This may be because in recent years I have got used to driving RTs with the larger 11.3 litre engine. It will be interesting to get the opinion of other drivers on whether the engine needs tweaking a bit (time for a power-plus or 680 engine perhaps).

Thanks to all the volunteers who have helped to get the bus ready in such a tight deadline, another example of triumphant teamwork!

### **STL2093**

The STL has been turned sideways to the gangway to allow it to be better displayed. This was done on the 'member's day'. We took the opportunity to replace some missing parts and get the engine running to see if it would move under its own power which it did. much to the surprise of everyone present.

### **STL2377**

Report by Roger Staggs

Some time ago I dictated a very extensive article on the current progress of STL 2377 well in advance of the Newsletter but now it is round to the time of producing the Newsletter, it seems to have disappeared in to the ether to the extent where I am hardly certain that I ever did it in the first place! However, here is shorter article to keep the hounds at bay.

Progress continues on STL 2377 although unfortunately over the last two months a multitude of circumstances has some together to effectively slow down progress. The good news however, is that it is expected the lost time will be made up over the forthcoming two months.

Delays in supply of the aluminium cladding regrettably lost a window of opportunity that was unable to be side shifted due to other previously programmed time related works. In the meantime, the extruded aluminium side slides to the droplight windows were found to be little more than paint on aluminium oxide and these had to be re-made. Regrettably the cost of re-making these exactly as the original would have been the same for one STL as for 50 and therefore an alternative visually externally identical item was produced in stainless steel by an aeronautical contractor and these will of course outlive aluminium ones by a few hundred years.

The slides having been sorted, the droplights themselves were dismantled as the original plain glass has to be replaced with the toughened variety and at this point the real problems began. The pinch lock operates on four steel torsion springs inside an aluminium tube and these had firmly bonded themselves to the aluminium, as soon as any attempt was made to close the pinch then the springs snapped. Nevertheless they have all now been dismantled; the remains driven out and new springs manufactured.

The side members are light brass pressings holding a cast section top and bottom, the top fixing in the aluminium tube of the pinch mechanism and the bottom securing the bottom rail and containing a spring loaded wiper that keeps the window pushed against the outside slide faces. The springs that push the wipers out were

found corroded inside their brass tubes and again, new springs have to be made to avoid the rattling windows (so much a feature of the STLs towards the end of their lives!).

Finally the aluminium pressings that forms the bottom rail of the window and suffers from the worst of rain running down the window, in general fell apart on removal and again replacements have been made by the same aeronautical contractor and again at less than cost price.

Fortunately a supply of 'Z' section rubber for the bottom of the windows to the original profile has been obtained and the windows for the lower deck have now been (thankfully according to Dawn Stagg) removed from the kitchen work surfaces and returned to Dorking for installation.

Internally the lower deck now nears completion with rexine and lino in place below the windows, with the rexined window cappings etc to be fitted once all the windows are secured. Seat frames have been repaired and where appropriate modified to the correct profile and layout of support feet and brackets, and they have now have been sent away for polishing. On the upper deck preparation is now virtually complete and re-finishing will commence shortly.

Aluminium cladding now having arrived, is currently being etch primed and will have started to find its way onto the body by the time you are reading this article.

We anticipate that when the next issue of the magazine drops through the letterbox the date for the return to Cobham, under its own power, will be announced.

## **GARDNER LW SERIES DIESEL ENGINES**

Eddie Rayner of Paul Gardner Engineering.

The LW Range was introduced in 1931 by L. Gardner & Sons Limited of Patricroft, Manchester, being their first engine designed primarily for road vehicle applications, as opposed to the earlier L2 Series of marine engines, some of which were adopted for road vehicle use, but being of all cast iron construction and limited to 1300 rpm. were not ideal for the purpose, but nevertheless proved very economical, reliable, durable and easy to start from cold.

The LW Engines with their aluminium crankcases and sumps were considerably lighter and governed to 1700 rpm, they were designed at the outset as a diesel engine' with direct injection and generous bearing areas, as opposed to contemporary engines which were developed from petrol engines, generally with indirect injection which was not as economical and often were poor cold starters and unreliable.

The LW Range was offered in 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and later 8 cylinder in line configurations and due to their robust construction, with triplex timing chain and variable injection timing arrangement were rather long, hence the 5 cylinder version as this example proved particularly popular as a direct replacement in chassis which had originally been designed with 6 cylinder petrol engines.

The engines of 4.1/4" bore and 6" Stroke developed 17 B.H.P/cyl. giving the 5LW 7.0 litres capacity and 85 bhp. at 1700 rpm. Pre war, LW engines were adopted in large numbers by Bristol and Daimler for bus applications and by Atkinson, ERF, Foden and Scammell in goods vehicles; other customers included Guy, Albion, Maudsley, Thorneycroft, Karrier, Dennis, Tilling Stevens Vulcan and even AEC to a very limited extent. They were also used extensively to re-engine petrol powered chassis of nearly all makes; in particular many Leyland Titans were converted by Tilling Group companies.

During the Second World War vehicle production was controlled by the government and only three manufacturers, Daimler, Guy and Bristol were allowed to build Bus Chassis in any quantity. The Guy Arab was fitted with a Gardner LW Engine; the vast majority being 5 cylinders and the vehicles were often allocated to fleets, which, like London, had not previously operated the chassis or the engine in volume. Since aluminium was essential for aircraft production, these engines were built with cast iron crankcases and sumps. Automotive engines reverted to aluminium post war.

In 1950 the 'K' type development of the engine was introduced offering a 10% increase in power with improved specific fuel consumption, giving the 5LW 94 bhp. at the same 1700 rpm. Many earlier engines at overhaul were converted to K type by incorporating the fuel injection and piston developments, as in this instance with 5LW/59101 (the Guy engine)

In 1951 horizontal versions of the 4, 5 & 6 cylinder engines designated HLW were introduced and fitted in volume by Bristol and to a lesser extent by Guy and Daimler to their underfloor chassis.

The final development of the LW engine introduced in 1968 was the LW20 Series (20 bhp. /cyl.). Available only in 5 and 6 Cylinder Vertical Form and incorporating further piston, fuel injection, valve and valve timing refinements, it was fitted in goods vehicles by ERF, Foden and Atkinson, but not adopted by bus manufacturers who had generally by this date moved onto the larger 6LX and 6LXB series of engines to power larger and heavier rear engine designs. The LW Engine was still available and in demand for marine and industrial applications and the 2 cylinder 2LW Engine is still available in 1999 some 68 years after introduction of the design.

The excellent specific fuel consumption and torque characteristics maintained over the full operating range of the Engine, ensured that a reputation for unsurpassed fuel economy in every day service, was established, no matter how hard the driver might use the Engine. This is achieved by ensuring that the sacrificial losses in the Engine are kept to a minimum, and that good combustion of fuel takes place at all loads and speeds.

Characteristic features of the engine are:

Fuel injection pump priming levers to enable full priming of the fuel system, provide an injector test and fault diagnosis facility and the ability to "latch out" the fuel supply to individual cylinders, providing "a get you home" feature without causing the engine unnecessary distress.

Cylinder head valve decompression levers, enabling the engine to be turned over by hand for maintenance purposes and assisting cold starts when batteries in a low state of charge.

Variable injection timing by means of a sliding gear on the helically splined fuel pump camshaft, controlled by mechanical linkage from the fuel pump accelerator control.

Construction of the engine with pairs of cylinder blocks and heads mounted on a separate crankcase (2 + 3 for 5 cylinder) enabled commonality of parts over the range and the facility to remove the blocks for new liners and pistons to be fitted with the engine in situ in the chassis and without heavy lifting equipment. Oil return scrolls at crankshaft front and rear and dynamo drive spindle eliminated problems with worn oil seals and associated wear of rubbing faces.

## FROM THE NEWSLETTER, 25 YEARS AGO

Bill Cottrell

RT4782, RT4325 and RLH18 have been acquired for resale. RT4782 has been sold to V. McAloon, joining RT4482.

D142 is roaming the countryside suitably daubed with 'Baxters the Butchers' ads. Work has started on newly acquired RM3.

Derek Parsons acquired the only front entrance RTL in November. Unfortunately it gave up engine-wise at Carlisle and was subsequently towed in to London by Ted Brakell's RT by John Warner and Bill Cottrell.

ST922 is scheduled to commence operations again, this time on the sightseeing service ex- Piccadilly on Saturday April 6th.

RT3132, which served at British Team transport at the Commonwealth Games in New Zealand, has been acquired by the Transport Historical Society of New Zealand.

### STL441 – A Dutch Treat

Alan Cross and myself went across to Holland on the 17<sup>th</sup> July to Leidschendam where the Dutch National Motor Museum is situated to inspect STL441. We travelled by British Rail 'Awayday' tickets, which at £11.90 each proved to be good value. Fortunately the North Sea was calm that night, but the ship was very crowded and we hardly slept. We travelled from Harwich to the Hook of Holland and then by train to The Hague where we boarded a local train. At The Hague we took the opportunity to photograph the trams and emerging from the station the first vehicle we saw was a Southdown coach in National livery parked outside a local hotel. However, we were keen to get on with our mission so we returned to the station to catch the train to Leidschendam, only three stations

down the line. At the station there was a convenient 'You are here' type map from which we gained our directions and so we set off on foot. After about a mile we thought we had better check our bearings and we asked a helpful Dutch citizen for directions. We asked if he could understand English, to which I think he replied 'No'. So we showed him the piece of paper with the Museum address on, and he asked us, in German, whether we could speak German, to which we replied 'Nein!' There followed a conversation in sign language, which ended with our hDc pointing with his right hand, saying 'Left, Left!' we thanked him and continued our hike. After about five minutes the hDc cycled past and pointed in the same direction. After another five minutes he cycled back shouting 'Toyota, Toyota!' as he went by. We were still discussing what he might have meant by this when we saw a large garage, which turned out to be the main Dutch Toyota dealers, and next to this, on the right, was the National Motor Museum.

The museum was closed for alterations and we made enquiries at the office we were directed to the Toyota premises. It turned out the directors of the museum and the garage were the same. We introduced ourselves and we were shown to the boardroom for coffee and to discuss the STL. Apparently they had owned it only two years and they acquired it from another museum that had since closed. The first move we decided was to inspect the bus. It was parked in the yard where it had been for two years. It was painted red all over apart from black wings. The panels were in good condition; the only rust present was on the steel beading. Inside it had twenty years accumulation of dust and dirt. The roof-dome had been dented. This had disturbed some screws, allowing water to enter through a small hole. The condition of the woodwork in the area of the third and fourth pillars is suspect. Downstairs an attractive feature was the original advertisements, especially a large Heinz advert on the bulkhead and another proclaiming a fares decrease! The main problem in restoring the interior will be refurbishing the seats, which are of the wooden framed 'integral' type, similar to those fitted to the 4Q4s. The moquette is in poor condition. However, generally the bodywork is very sound.

Mechanically there are quite a few parts missing and many of the parts that are present are badly worn. The parts missing include the front prop shaft, change speed lever and box, throttle pedal and

linkage, dynamo and control; box. The brakes and steering will need overhaul and a new set of tyres purchased.

The engine has been removed and was mounted on a stand inside the museum as separate exhibit. Also inside was an RTL. This looked as if it had come straight from service as it still had the batteries connected.

We returned to the boardroom for further discussions. The directors agreed to make arrangements to tow the bus to the docks and we agreed to take over responsibility from there. During lunch we talked generally about buses, and the conversation got very complicated, converting pounds to guilders, tons to kilograms, yards to metres and MPG to kilometres per litre. It transpired that the Dutch car tax system is based on engine size, and it would cost over £300 annually to tax an RT!

The directors gave us a lift to Amsterdam and we spent the rest of the day sightseeing. On return, I delivered a favourable report to Alan Allmey, and after some deliberation he decided to try to acquire it on behalf of the LBPG. By the beginning of August all the arrangements had been made, and on the 8<sup>th</sup> I returned to Holland, this time with John Warner, to make sure the bus was loaded onto the boat.

We arrived at the Hook at 6.60 Friday morning and caught the train to Rotterdam. There we found that Benelux-haven, from where the bus was being shipped, was about 25 miles out of Rotterdam, on the other side of the river and almost opposite the Hook. We tried to make our way by Metro and bus, but soon realised the nearest bus route finished over 5 miles from the dock, and we had to take a taxi. This was a bit nerve-racking as we sat and watched the meter ticking over as it was rapidly approaching the amount I had in guilders. We arrived at the dock gate as the meter clocked 26.00, which was exactly the amount I had left!

The STL was parked on the quay, almost dwarfed by the Scania, Volvo and DAF trucks. We checked in at the office and confirmed that our boat was sailing at noon. We reminded the clerk the bus was a non-runner, and he said that did not present any problems. So, we sat and waited and watched the boat being loaded. By 11.30 the activity had slackened. No one had been to inspect the

bus so we were once more beginning to feel a bit apprehensive. We checked once more with the clerk who assured us all was well. John went off to see the loading supervisor to tell him a tow-bar was necessary to reverse the bus onto the ship. At 11.45 a towing tug arrived and we were soon reversing onto the ship. We were the last large vehicle to load, and on the stroke of noon, we left Holland.

We reported to the purser and found to our delight that included in the cost of transporting the bus the driver and his mate got a cabin and free meals. The crossing once again was calm and we spent the time catching up on lost sleep and chatting to the truck drivers about their many and varied experiences.

The ship docked about 7.00pm. The STL being right at the front was the first vehicle unloaded. It was towed to the customs shed where we were expecting a few problems, but they were very helpful and interested in the bus. A younger customs officer was delegated to climb over the engine which had been loaded onto a cradle and secured to the platform. He went upstairs and we heard him lift the back seat. As it was not illegal to bring that variety of toadstool into the country he pronounced us clean. By 8.30 all the formalities had been completed and we settled down to wait for our towing vehicle to arrive, Ted Brakell's RT277 being used for the purpose. Alan Allmey and John Flint arrived around mid-night. We rigged a set of lights for the STL and set off about 1.00am with John Warner driving the RT and me steering the STL. It was raining heavily, and I could only manage the section from Felixstowe to Ipswich. After Ipswich my eyelids refused to stay in position and John Flint took over in the STL. After that, until we reached the outskirts of London, I had a blissful doze. All went well, apart from the heavy rain making progress slow. All continued well until we reached Wandsworth. There the RT petered to a halt, as if it had run out of fuel. A quick check of the tank showed that in spite of having several gallons in there, non was reaching the fuel pump. Luckily there was a derv selling garage opposite and rather than take time to find the fault it was decide to fill up the header tank and continue. So with the header tank filled and two gallons of fuel in a watering can we continued to Cobham. It transpired later that the fuel was contaminated with water and this was clogging the filter.

We arrived at Cobham at 8.00am with John Warner still at the wheel of the RT, I wish I knew his secret of how he keeps going.

## TWENTY YEARS WITHOUT RFs

John Hinson

After a late night on Saturday at a friend's birthday party, the thought of rising early for a March bus rally did not exactly fill me with excitement. The start of the rally season (usually Barking in April) always seems to be accompanied by blustery, cold weather.

But, amazingly, when we struggled out of bed (having remembered to put our clocks forward) we found a bright morning and clear sky awaiting us. So, with matchsticks propping up our eyelids we toddled off to find our buses.

The event in question was taking place at Kingston bus station, in front of the bus garage, to commemorate 20 years since RFs last ran in service with London Transport. When discussing the event with Jim Andress (the organiser) I said that we would probably come in via Staines via route 216 and suggested that he might like to encourage anybody bringing their bus to the event may wish to join us. A couple of owners rang beforehand and I slipped a set of hastily typed-up instructions in the post.

We planned to take our two red RFs, plus the green one if a driver could be found but at the last minute we learnt the one we had in mind couldn't make it. Therefore, on arrival at the yard, our first job was to move the green one aside. Having moved it, guess who turned up? Our third driver! He was so miffed to miss the day, it seemed, that he had moved heaven and earth to rearrange his commitments so he could come.

And so, in the end, three RFs left our yard on a bright and already sunny morning in a cloud of blue exhaust fumes, bound for Kingston via Staines. We were heading for the old Staines West station, the original terminus of the 216, but word had reached us that parking was severely limited in the area these days. Never mind, we thought, there will only be five RFs.

We picked up one of the other vehicles on the outskirts of Staines, who was trying to find his way but was receiving no help from a service bus driver who was stuck in "dunno mate" mode. Still, on seeing us pass, the RF driver leapt into his steed and chased us along to the West station.

As predicted, turning on the station forecourt was out of the question, but a nice lay-by existed just up the road with capacity for at least a dozen buses. As time progressed, this filled as more and more vehicles arrived. I began to wonder what I had let myself in for - our modest convoy of five had become eleven. And I had only printed what I thought was an ample number of ten sets of route directions

Our eleven consisted of RFs 168, 271, 280, 433, 442, 453, 457, 486, 489, 534 and 633 and it was interesting to find so many of these belonged to new owners, or ones I hadn't met before. So many strange faces, new friends to make.

We set off about a quarter of an hour late, as one vehicle had arrived a bit tight for time with the radiator bubbling. Hardly had we set off than I realised it was going to be a difficult task keeping such a large group of vehicles together on such a narrow and complex route as the 216. At an early stage we got broken up into many sections by particularly unkind traffic lights and there were few places where there was room to safely pull over and regroup.

The inevitable happened at Sunbury Cross, where over half of the convoy took a short cut towards Kempton Park and actually got ahead of the rest of us. In retrospect this was no bad thing because a diversion for road works was in force in Sunbury Village which entailed an appalling tight turn in narrow streets where I had to hastily park my bus in order to act as temporary traffic policeman to get the remaining vehicles round.

On arrival at Kingston we found a bus station brimming with RFs with the "Tall Controller" packing them in like there was no tomorrow. There was an unexpected capacity problem as the owning bus company wanted space left for garage access and the promised use of a lay-by across the road proved impossible as it had been taken over by a Railway Replacement Service. In the end, all were squeezed in except the tail-end vehicle, RF433, which had to sit in the road until another vehicle had gone out on the free service.

The free service was operating to Redhill Road, serving the museum. I didn't get the opportunity to savour the delights of this



Photo: David Churn  
RT1024 now residing in Western Australia looking absolutely resplendent.



Photo: Jim Cowdery  
Can anyone shed any light on the identity of this RT?  
Bought by Jim Cowdery, it lacks all means of positive ID.



Photo: CBM  
GS2 was a rally debutante at the open day. It is seen here  
at the premises of Southern Motorways in 1967.



Photo: Graham Baker  
RTL1163 passing through Frome on the 1998 Bournemouth to Bath run.



Photo: CBM  
RM163, the first extra-long RM conversion, being tilt-tested  
at Chobham as a pre-requisite to certification.





Photo: CBM  
Alex Baxter pressure washing G351s chassis.



Photo: CBM  
At last! Meet camera-shy committee member Bill Ackroyd posing by P3, his steed for the driver training programme.



Photo: Peter Burrows  
RM1708 another ex-pat 'down-under' undergoing restoration at Tempe Bus and Truck Museum, Sydney, Australia.



Photo: LT Museum

London Transport and its predecessors have a long history of bus overhaul involving the separation of chassis and body units. Showing the 20's method of achieving this is NS1458 in original guise, without roof, enclosed cab and with solid tyres.



Photo: Roger Stagg

As referred to in the text of his article, here lies the remains of the aforementioned AEC (or possibly Leyland).



Photo: CBM

Our P3 has been painted white with a green band while here P2 demonstrates the later all-white livery.

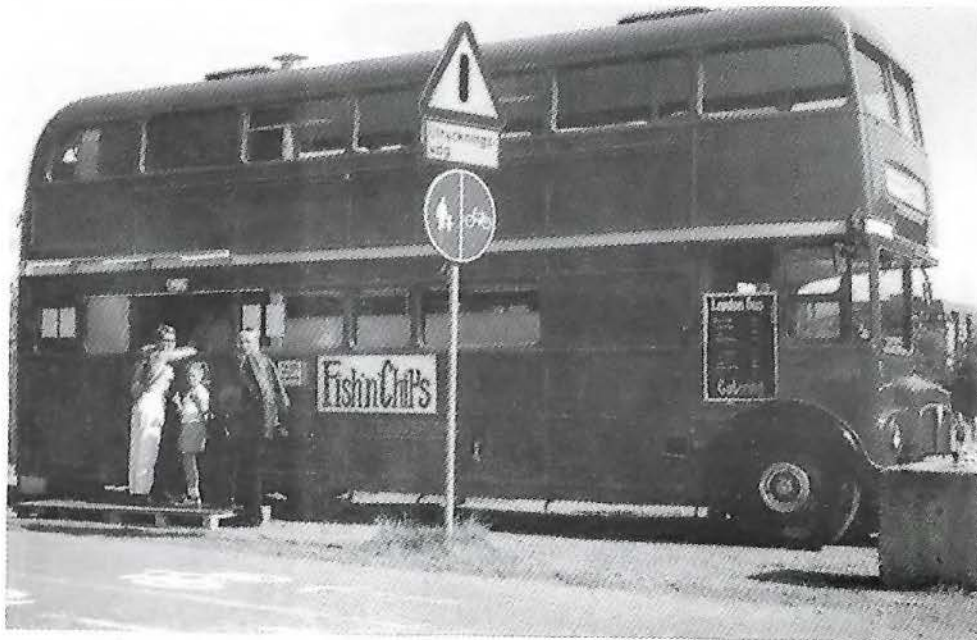


Photo: Ross Taylor

Resident in central Gothenburg, Sweden is Ross's mobile fish and chip shop in the guise of ex-Northern General Routemaster RCN689



Photo CBM

RPI, when brand new, on road test from AEC



Photo: Unknown  
RF354 in 'as before' condition...



Photo CBM  
The side of STL2093 that is now hidden from public gaze.



Photo Roy Warren  
... while RF457 is now fully restored 25 years after its withdrawal from LT service. Owned by Roy Warren and Phil Chapman.



Photo: Unknown  
The sad end to St. Albans garage. How long before Leatherhead garage shares the same fate?



Photo CBM  
RTL139 getting all steamed up at the premises of 'Big Bus' in Wimbledon.

through lack of time but from what I saw the vehicles were pretty well loaded.

In no time the clock was approaching 2 o'clock, time for our second road-run of the day. Having anticipated only a few joining us at Staines earlier, it seemed appropriate to have organised a small local run in the afternoon. In the event, support was rather reduced here, and just five vehicles participated - and three of these were ours! It was a short and simple circuit, following the 216 back to Hampton Court, 206 round the back lanes to Esher, and the 215 back to Kingston. With just five vehicles, we had no trouble keeping together, and it was a real delight tracing RF routes of old together.

At one point I noticed we were passing through select suburbia with the sun perfectly positioned for photography. We were able to stop a few moments for this purpose, and while I stood contemplating the timelessness of the scene (not a yellow line or hatch marking in the road to be seen) one owner passed a comment that I thought was very pertinent. He said "This is what it's all about, having fun with your vehicles. Free bus services are all very well, but you do get a bit fed up with all those people trooping on and off that never say thank-you. We need more of this sort of thing, something for the owners themselves to enjoy". A point well worth pondering.

On our way back to Kingston we passed the Tall Controller, now acting as Tall Bus Driver at the helm of an RF in service down to Cobham. This meant that on our return to Kingston I had to self-appoint myself as his deputy to try and pack the vehicles in again. This was easier said than done, for whilst parking up one of our buses, and having decided that all other vehicles would have to reverse in to their position, I turned around to see that somebody had helpfully driven our green RF in, nose-in! Never mind, all was sorted eventually.

We had decided that being March, we wouldn't stay late, but chatting to so many people we found we were last away as usual. As with a previous event, RF453 - a former Kingston vehicle - was the last out. The weather was still bright and sunny and the return journey was delightful despite an unusually large amount of congestion on the South and North Circulars.

All in all a most enjoyable event. Kingston garage and bus station seems to survive all attempts to close and demolish it - I wonder when the next occasion will be that we find ourselves there again.

## **BUS BANGER RACING**

Reg Allfore

As Cobham's 'sporting correspondent' you can imagine that it's not too often that I have much to write about! However, having been tipped off about a rather unusual event taking place on the first Thursday in April, I set off hotfoot to the wilds of Northamptonshire to witness a most bizarre spectacle.

Some of you may remember that in the early Eighties, when there was much more motor sport on the magic goldfish tank, ITV televised a DMS race, which featured eight of the redundant Fleetlines hurtling around an oval track. It wasn't the most exciting of races owing to the fact that they all had the same top speed thus hampering overtaking possibilities! However, there were plenty of scraped panels and bits of beading left lying on the track afterwards and the crowds seemed to enjoy it.

Fifteen years on and the same promoter is once again trying a similar format to help draw the crowds to his regular stock car and banger meetings, and apparently the last two races of the day were to be oval bus racing (the track is oval - not the buses!) and then a demolition derby where the buses would race in figure of eight format to total destruction. News of this had attracted along both the local press and Anglia TV no less.

I was looking forward to seeing what type of vehicles were featuring, expecting it to be a matched set of West Midlands Fleetlines perhaps, or some time expired VRs. Or even perhaps some DMSs again given how many seem to survive still. Imagine my surprise then to discover that the field comprised not only a smattering of rear-engined devices but also a handful of half-cab PD3s including former Maidstone 20UKK and rare full-fronted Ribble TCK817, complete with semi-auto transmission, all in various states of disrepair. But the biggest surprise of all was a barely complete decker, virtually unrecognisable as a bus, but with a distinctive twin rear axle format and a decidedly London Transport

look about it. Closer examination still gave little clue as to its origins such as the degree of dilapidation, but a friend had been busy scraping away some of the algae-covered paint at the rear and just visible was what appeared to be registration number GWS865, hinting at Scottish origin, though the S could have been a 5 perhaps? The interior was largely gutted but a couple of rotted seat cushions in one corner suggested that the vehicle might once have sported a blue-ish moquette. Perhaps members may like to write in via the Magazine Editor with any clues as to what this strange vehicle might have been.

The racing proceeded with several loud comings together, the Ribble PD3 just winning the first race by a dumb iron! By now light was hampering play so the demolition derby never took place and I believe the worst of the vehicles were subsequently cut up on site.

The capacity crowd were clearly enthused as what went on and I gather that subsequent feedback has now prompted the organisers to arrange an all Routemaster demolition derby and they are currently purchasing various RMs ready for the meeting to be held in August. If you know of a suitable vehicle you can ring John on 0336 707. Alternatively, Routemaster fans might like to try and dissuade John from staging such an event. I'll try to keep members posted on future developments.

## **BY BEDFORD TO STRATFORD AND ILFORD**

Colin Read

(Previously published in the Norbury and South London Transport Club magazine.)

I never look forward to Fridays. Friday mornings mean swimming lessons. West Kent Motors have conveyed us from school to Beckenham Baths but, despite the attractions of their ageing fleet of coaches, I don't enjoy these lessons - being a non-swimmer - and have a constant fear of going under the water. The whistle means leave the pool and, as we pull on our clothes over still-damp limbs, I am very happy: swimming is over, the half-term holidays beckon and next week my brother has promised to take me out in his van.

He drives an early post-war Bedford 30cwt, delivering pickles, gherkins and suchlike to various Fish & Chip shops and other customers in the London area. The year is 1959.

He is not supposed to carry passengers so a little subterfuge has to be used. He dropped me off by motorbike round the corner from the South London depot and picked me up a little later and off we set. The old Bedford is a superb machine - a little noisy and smelly, but has bags of power and makes all the right sounds. It's a cold day, so we make good use of the in-cab central heating system: a metal panel removed from one side of the engine cowling, which allows its warmth to waft up into the cab.

As we bowl along, the rich aroma of hot engine oil, mixed with the pungent smells of vinegar, pickled onions and other bottled delicacies from the back, together with an occasional whiff of exhaust produces quite an unforgettable cocktail of smells.

Naturally, being a keen bus-spotter I've come suitably armed with pens, pencils and notebook and I'm looking forward to exploring some parts of London I've not seen before. A 'chippie' in Wellington is the first port of call - nothing terribly exciting here - an occasional green RT on the 403/ 408 perhaps - but helping my brother must take priority so I try to memorise the stock numbers of any passing buses as we unload several large jars of onions and carboys of vinegar and carry them to the back of the shop. I'm quite amused to note that the proprietor keeps his peeled potatoes in an old bath, probably in brine.

Next we head towards town, crossing over the 630s in Mitcham Road, but no sign of a trolleybus on this occasion as the wires cross our path. Several RF Green Line coaches in the London Road as we head north and pick up the South Circular. RTs aplenty and the occasional RTL on the 68s. We make a couple more deliveries, and then we're in Greenwich and aiming for the Blackwall Tunnel, where I see more RTLs.

I'm fascinated by the tunnel - the curious archway building under which we pass, the white tiling of the southern approach ramp still showing its wartime scars and the peculiar whistling sound from the traffic as we pass through. I remember being told that my granddad worked on the construction of the tunnel back in the 1890s. The

spiral stairs at the bends catch my eye and I realise that they lead up to the surface so we are not yet under the river. I wonder who uses them - they look grimy and a little sinister. Out the other end and suddenly it's trolleybuses galore along the East India Dock Road with its impressive abutments to the bridge over the river. The Gazetteer says it's the River Lea to the left and Bow Creek to the right. There's an odd-looking RTL - just a minute, it's an R-T-W. That'll be something new to look up in my still pristine first London ABC when I get home.

This is a really horrid area of London - all factories and overhead power lines and smelly with it but, to a ten-year-old it's all fascinating, especially the seemingly endless procession of trolleybuses. What looks like a railway embankment appears on the left but as we cross it there's no sign of rails - not surprising as it contains the Northern Outfall Sewer! As the van bowls along, with the engine making that lovely Bedford singsong music, I spot a shabby-looking RT displaying L-plates. Its FXT registration and curved driver's cab windows tell me it's a 'pre-war' RT, or 'drooper' as my brother has dubbed them. Another 'cop' for the ABC.

Our next port of call is Beckton Gas Works, the largest in the world as I later discover from my Guinness Book of Records. This is another world - gasometers, overhead conveyors, railway lines everywhere and steam or diesel shunting engines busily at work. We make our deliveries to the staff canteen and since it is lunchtime, we are soon tucking in to delicious fried-egg sandwiches washed down with steaming hot mugs of tea, followed by apple pie and custard.

Suitably refreshed, we head off to Stratford, where another surprise awaits me: RLHs in RED livery on the 178. I'm familiar with green examples in Bromley and Staines but red ones do look strange. Some-thing else for the ABC. Next we hit Ilford. Here I am confronted with trolleybuses the like of which I've never seen before: the SA classes, originally destined for South Africa. They are simply weird and I jot down just as many numbers as I can before we head back into town, across the river and back to the depot, home and tea.

I'm bubbling over with excitement to relay the day's events but the sad thing is all this means very little to my family and friends at

school. If only I'd had a camera with which to record all that I'd seen. I shall just have to commit all to memory and perhaps at some time in' the future I'll find a suitable outlet for my ramblings.

Nearly forty years on, I can still taste those fried-egg sandwiches!

## **SUNSHINE BUSES**

Roger Stagg

"Irie on de Babylon Bus" stated my T-shirt purchased for the equivalent of £1.50 from a vendor on a seemingly deserted island in the Caribbean Grenadines. It did not take long for West Indian entrepreneurs to realise that Europeans snorkelling on the reef in the middle of nowhere are a market for ice cold Coke and gaily painted T-shirts, which have just crossed ten miles of open sea in a boat that would worry most of us on the local lake.

Irie in de Babylon bus (cool in the bus to Paradise) might be a fitting description from the West Indian buses that I knew from my younger days. Cool (they had no sides - not simply an absence of windows) and Paradise because the standard of driving, particularly in some of the outlying districts where gullies may plunge 100ft from the edge of a dirt road, was potentially a permanent trip to Paradise.

January 1963 - the weather is appalling and the snow in London and the Southeast is so deep that much of the Capital and its surroundings are at a standstill. An old sit up and beg Ford Popular with its large diameter wheels got around whilst many of the small wheeled high revving modern cars of that era floundered to a standstill. Notoriety came one Sunday when, having assisted with the mandatory carried shovel to dig beneath the wheels of an RT outside Norwood Garage at the bottom of Knights Hill that afternoon, I saw myself undertaking this task on the evening television news. Ten years ago that footage actually appeared in an advertisement for soup and I am still wondering whether to ask for royalties.

Those cosseted in today's centrally heated homes and cars with heating and air conditioning have either never known or may have forgotten just how cold winters felt when you depended upon a coal

fire in one room, a hot water bottle in the bed and a vest. How many can recall driving around in the winter with a foot well filled with straw to keep the feet warm in the absence of heaters and the presence of generously sized openings around the pedals and gear lever? In these conditions therefore, being asked on return to work next day whether I would wish to work in Barbados for four months seemed like the answer to a prayer. As soon as the formalities of a visit to the Hospital for Tropical Diseases at Camden for smallpox and yellow fever protection was out of the way I was off to the culture shock of sunnier climes.

As most of we readers are of a mature age group, the majority will know from their national service days that the foreign ports of call were then not quite like the holiday destinations that they are now and Barbados was no exception. My appointment lasted some three months with eighteen-hour days. The work involved the partial reconstruction of a sugar mill and half of the time it was in operation. The works were considered to be of national importance as at that time sugar was the Island's only source of income.

I would be able to say nothing about the buses at that time as I walked the hundred yards between the "Hotel" and the factory and probably had little more than three or four days off throughout the whole period. Nevertheless, with the promise of a directorship, 2nd January 1965 saw me on my way back to Barbados, this time with the luxury of jet travel and a journey of only 14 hours with stops, compared to the two and half days of the previous venture. There was also the prospect of proper accommodation; relatively normal working hours and up to three years on the Island so there would be more opportunity to look around than on the last visit.

Our first task was to set in operation the design and building of the Barbados Hilton Hotel. Two cars were purchased, a brand new Triumph Herald soft top and the recently introduced Mark 1 Vauxhall Viva in dirty grey (did they come in any other colour?). In London, the main Board Directors were already planning the necessity for a visit at monthly intervals accompanied by wives and offspring and having to use an HA Viva was apparently not suitable and instructions were given to purchase a new PB Cresta in two tone grey and blue for their use. It was an unsuitable car for the narrow road system outside of Bridgetown and Highway One to the Airport but their status symbol was apparently essential. It was



otherwise little used. A new Bedford TK and a normal control Dodge Tipper were bought and both were somewhat crudely repainted and sign-written in the firm's colours of grey and red.

Most British manufacturers were well represented, indeed other than an agency dealing with the import of American cars for taxis there were only British motors on the Island.

Vauxhall was by far the best represented and its associated company, Bedford for commercial vehicles. AECs were generally used for the few articulated vehicles although these were to later expand as the new deep-water harbour was developed. The day of the massive steel container had not yet arrived. I have no recollection of any Leylands or for that matter any of the other major manufacturers in heavy goods although that is probably more to do with my being an AEC fan, as there are quite a number of Foden and ERF vehicles still operating of more recent vintage then it would seem likely that these manufacturers already existed on the Island before independence.

The Island to a large extent was (and remains) dependent upon its public transport system. Private car ownership in the mid-60s was negligible, this can be gauged by the fact that I lived in the Parish of St Michael, which included the Capital and had vehicle registration number M7221. In the other Parishes registrations were in the hundreds and in places like St Lucy to the north in only two figures. Although by Caribbean standards Barbados is not a mountainous island to the north, the centre and the north-west, it is far from flat and many of the hills could challenge the Herald and the Viva down to first gear. The provision of a railway therefore was perhaps not the wisest of moves but such was undertaken in the latter part of the 19th Century with a metre gauge line being laid from what is now the Fairchild Street bus station terminating at Belleplaine on the north-east Atlantic coast. Although as the crow flies this is probably not more than 12 miles, by rail it ran some 34 miles hugging the relatively level ground to the south through St Phillip and running along the Atlantic coast line to its eventual destination. The intention of the railway was to enable the sugar, which was produced on the East Coast to be taken to Bridgetown for its journey to the United Kingdom. A journey by road before the days of motor transport was tortuous in the extreme.

The railway did carry passengers but in positions where adverse gradients were involved it was necessary for the passengers to alight and generally assist in moving the under powered train over the summit. The railway eventually ceased operation in 1936 because of the advent of the motor vehicle and the locomotives were sold to Japan. The track bed was left in place and lifted only as and when necessary to produce telephone poles, most of which still exist throughout the Island.

The track bed remained visible in many places in the mid-60s as did the original stations at Fairchild Street and Belleplaine. The actual track bed can be walked in many places along the East Coast and the bridges which carried the track over sections along what is now the East Coast Road still remain in many places, as well as to the south of Bathsheba, where the track was cut into a shelf in the very edge of the Atlantic cliff and where when the sea was rough rail operations had to be suspended to prevent the trains being washed away.

Whilst the history of the Barbados railway is fairly well documented in contemporary books and the Barbados Museum, the same cannot be said of the Barbados Transport Board bus system and despite repeated efforts I have never been able to ascertain when it was instituted and whether it was nationalised from the start. From my time there and to the present day all but one bus service starts from Bridgetown, the exception is route 1 which runs from Speightstown in the north-west to Oistens in the south-east. In the last 20 years with the advent of deregulation involving the running of private buses alongside the Transport Board, route numbers have disappeared and buses now run to a destination e.g. Mile and a Quarter, Pie Corner, Rock Dundo etc, and one has to hope that they might be passing where you wish to go on the way, which is unlikely to be the shortest distance.

In the mid-60s when the Transport Board operated all the routes, standardisation was in even better order than London Transport. The Fleet consisted of some 250 Bedford OBs painted dark red. I am tempted to say dark red matt as I can say with all confidence that I never recall having seen one with even a hint of a shine. Whilst having covered tops and a rear, the sides were completely open with pillars for each seat row which were laid across in wooden slats charabanc style. The seating was intended to be six across in these and in the width of an OB this was about one foot

per behind, but by golly some of those jolly West Indian ladies would fill up a whole row with just three of them! The seat spacing was cramped and once in if you wanted to get out everyone else in the row would also have to move including those standing on the running boards. The bus was also shared with perhaps a pig, a goat and whatever else was being taken to or from town on that day.

The roof was surmounted with an enormous luggage rack accessed by a ladder at the back; this was to carry all forms of shopping, rolls of cloth, fruit, vegetables and occasionally passengers when the remainder of the bus was full. I fear to think how many people were on these vehicles at times but the conductor collected fares by swinging along the outside of the passengers who were already standing on the running boards. His job was made easier in that it was a fixed fare of I believe 10c so there was not much problem with change and no tickets were issued. On market days there could still be a lot of people left on the bus when it began to reach the hilly areas and it was usual for all male passengers to get off and follow it up. Nobody complained it was simply the way of life, indeed those who could not afford 10c would think nothing of walking 20 miles to Bridgetown and back again.

Independence in 1966 saw the introduction of new buses, 5 AECs and 5 Leyland but both externally identical and somewhat similar in design to an RF, particularly towards the rear. These were under floor engine buses and the first in the Island with forward control. They were externally distinguishable only by either the AEC triangle or the Leyland motif on the front and the front wheel dress rings and hub covers. The local talk at the time was that they had been provided free of charge by the British Government but whether that is true is debatable. It is a fact however that they were a wholesale failure, they overheated constantly and whilst the old red OBs plodded on, the new blue and cream buses to match the new National flag lay stranded at the roadside. In one way or another, probably with the aid of numerous modifications they were still around towards the end of the 1970s and one, albeit not much more than a hulk, still remains in a field in July 1997. It is absent of engine and the entire front and with no dress rings or hub covers. I am not expert enough to say whether it is an AEC or Leyland. I had felt confident that I could tell the difference from the wheel nuts (AEC nuts being shouldered) but the one front and one rear wheel

that can still be seen had shouldered nuts, plain nuts and three nuts not intended for wheels at all.

If there are any experts who will know how to tell the difference perhaps we can find out. It still shows advertising to the rear panel and the offside rear quarter, these being the only buses in Barbados to have ever carried UK style advertising.

The next experiment was of 6 rear engine Leyland buses in I believe 1972, these were an even bigger failure and one was the subject of a spectacular fire which started in the engine bay in the centre of Bridgetown only days after its arrival. Another burnt out around one month later and I do not believe the others were ever seen again after that. In 1974 tenders were sought for the replacement of all the buses, this was won by Leyland with an initial order for 100.

With electricity and telephones being supplied overhead there is a strict headroom requirement and the specification dictated a maximum height, as was enforced for all vehicles, and which has been the cause of a number of problems after the introduction of sea containers, requiring specially low container lorries. A construction was erected within the docks under which all outgoing vehicles had to pass, similar to that at Blackwall Tunnel. It goes without saying therefore that when the first shipment of vehicles was unloaded and went to exit the docks they were found to be 2" over specification and were not allowed to leave. All of the vehicles had to have their bodies modified locally; the windows being reduced by 2" and the roof spliced back on. A factory for this purpose was set up on the industrial area adjacent to the docks and as may be expected the UK has never supplied another bus to the Island. These vehicles which had a conventional upright front engine but were full fronted forward control with a large front radiator, were otherwise quite successful and in 1997 20 of them are still in service, covering some of the more rural areas. Vehicles for replacement of the remainder of the fleet were ordered from Mercedes Benz but with the advent of more private car ownership the numbers somewhat depleted.

At the same it was decided to de-regulate the nationalised system and introduce smaller privately owned buses. These took the form of what are popularly called 11 "mammy wagons", essentially normal control short wheel base lorries with open sides and

covered top, accessed by a set of steps at the rear and of distinctive gaudy colours. This was not a particularly successful venture leading to many problems and resulted in the Government introducing a regulated de-regulated service in the 1980s, wherein all the buses would have to conform to a standard and be the same colour. From this came the now common "Road Runner" bus somewhat akin to one of our large bread vans but locally built on a Hino chassis. After a short period when these vehicles had personal adornment plus the inbuilt ghetto blaster, local police have now dictated some control and all of the vehicles are unadorned and visually identical in their plain yellow with blue stripe as opposed to the transport board overall blue with yellow stripe. Standards of maintenance and cleanliness are high and it would be extremely unusual to find either kind of bus with an excess smoking exhaust and it is now so long since I have seen a broken down bus with even a puncture despite the horrendous state of some of the roads, that one wonders as to the magic formula within the maintenance departments. As at mid-1997 the Mercedes Benz and Hinos are still numerous although the overall combined fleet now stands at only 106 vehicles including the remaining Leylands.

The remains of the AEC/Leyland under floor engine vehicle that lays near Bathsheba may not be the only example, there is little means for disposing of scrap on an Island such as this and things tend to end their days where they fall. At least 20 of the infamous over height Leylands exist as play buses and I have discovered that Banks Brewery do have one of the OBs preserved but I have so far been unable to gain access to it.

The basic Barbados road system is of radiating main highways from the centre of Bridgetown starting from Highway 1 running up the west coast and through to Highway 7 along the South. As Bridgetown is situated in the south-west corner this is like a quadrant of a spider's web but the connecting lateral roads are often little more than cart tracks. Road signage in the early 60s was somewhat sparse but since independence other than signage on the new ABC Highway (connecting the Airport with the west coast and avoiding Bridgetown) there has been no new signage and what has fallen into disrepair and disappeared has not been replaced. Getting from A to B therefore can be very much a case of following the privately erected signs leading you to points of interest but they have a habit of being absent at junctions, leading to the necessity to

make assumptions that are inevitably wrong. There is a saving grace that virtually all roads that are passable by non four wheel drive vehicles are traversed by buses and although in outlying areas buses can be convinced to stop almost anywhere, a system of regular bus stops operates on all bus routes. A circular sign simply says "To City" and "From City" so you have a fairly good idea as to which way you are going in relation to Bridgetown and following the "To City" signs will always bring you back to the ABC Highway and thence back to the hotel. The confusion is in the outlying places where bus routes come to an end often making a circle and you can end up with stops next to each other. In some places on the east coast where buses may have found their way there from Bridgetown via different directions and have crossed over each other this adds interest for the uninitiated who would be trying to follow a give-away map from the car rental company now that the only reliable map, the old British Ordnance survey, is virtually unobtainable.

Barbados was of course one of the principal recruiting places for London Transport from the 1950s until 1967. The London Transport recruitment office, located in a colonial building in Fontabelle, a suburb of Bridgetown immediately adjacent to the Kensington Oval Cricket Ground, was complete with proper London Transport signage and staffed by uniformed ex-patriots who interviewed staff and arranged medicals prior to arranging passage to the UK. We had an office next door so there was always friendly banter with the LT staff who were not that keen to return to the UK when recruitment ended virtually contemporaneously with independence. I can remember my grandfather as an old General man describing the level to which recruitment had dropped when LT were desperate as "you could pass the general intelligence test as long as when adding 2 and 2 you got the answer somewhere between 1 and 6 and so long as you could say "Ah" when the spatula was on your tongue you would pass the medical". I believe the standards required in Barbados were a little higher and this little Island close to the Equator now puts our own educational standards to shame to such a degree that many West Indians domiciled in the UK send their children back to be educated.

My time spent working in the Caribbean and the continued association for both work and pleasure since has taken me to a number of the other islands, the southern section and to much of

South America. Within the South Caribbean Islands none, with the exception of Trinidad, have a proper and organised bus company. The general form of transport was the "mammy wagon" but with the level of poverty that existed these could have been anything. Certainly there was plenty of evidence of old wartime military trucks much modified. In the late 1970s there appeared the small Japanese box wagons known throughout the West Indies as the "Z Van". These vans could be quickly adopted to have longitudinal or cross bench seats to carry as many people who could be fitted in. There appears to be no formal training of drivers and if you can manage to acquire something that can travel 100 yards without breaking down you are in business. This situation continues to the present day.

Trinidad was populated by the ubiquitous GMC American bus the sort that a British audience would associate with any American film that features a school bus. What they have now I have no idea because I have been fortunate enough not to return to Trinidad since 1965. I came across one of these GMC buses a couple of years ago in Dominica. A major tree had fallen across the front of it during a hurricane four years earlier but the tree had continued to live and had grown through it. I took a photograph thinking that it seemed to be the ideal restoration project for Ian Barrett.

South America is not my favourite place by any means but one at least with roads and distances big enough to justify some full size buses. Nowadays they are as faceless as buses throughout Europe, a rectangular box with a number of wheels some articulated in the centre but 30 years ago they looked like real buses, some were even double deckers but most were single. AECs abounded everywhere and it was abundantly clear that this part of the world provided a substantial export market for the British bus building industry, although whether the bodies were built in the UK I would not know. Nearly all were half cabs but interestingly although most of the half cabs were the traditional British right hand drive, there were a noticeable number of left hand drive AECs, a somewhat peculiar sight. Other than the fact that they looked somewhat strange I never gave it any further thought at the time but now with a somewhat more intimate knowledge of the working parts, I am forced to wonder if they used the standard AEC running unit, how they actually got to the pumps and injectors without taking the body off or the engine out. Did they have AEC mirror image

engines for export? Perhaps ex-AEC Dr Spanner would be able to enlighten us. (*Dr. Spanner confirms these engines were handed to enable full access*)

Finally on a note of humour, on a return to Barbados in early summer 1997 we observed a "Road Runner" loaded way beyond capacity on a roundabout on the ABC Highway. It was probably travelling too fast and the super elevation around the roundabout is quite considerable, accordingly the vehicle was leaning over at a horrendous angle with the conductor, built akin to Mike Tyson, clamped firmly across the centre doorway preventing the numerous standing souls inside to discharging themselves into the roadway. The bus left the roundabout and continued at 45mph still leaning quite perilously to the nearside. Half a mile on a large black hand from the cab window signalled a right turn, executed into a side road with little slowing down and the vehicle heeled over with the offside rear wheels a good 9" above the road. It failed to topple over, righted itself and continued on its way. I place a £100 bet that everyone inside was laughing; that's life in the sun! Never mind, in ten minutes I will be at the Airport and tomorrow morning I will be back in the cold in London, the day before we have agreed to take the RT on the London to Shoreham Run. They say its raining in London but perhaps it will be fine for Sunday. (It was!)

## BEYOND THE GATES

John Hinson

Christmas seems along time ago now, but just before that was the traditional shindig of the Christmas Lights Tour. This year we were blessed, once again, with more vehicles than ever before (24) although RT1784 decided that she didn't want to play, by spraying quantities of fuel around the engine, and never quite made St Pancras. I therefore had to nurse the poor old girl back to our yard near High Wycombe. This meant, of course, that I missed most of the tour although I tagged on the end at Marble Arch having returned with RF453.

Meanwhile, the tour was running well without me (no comments required here) except for an unfortunate incident at the Bermondsey tunnel where Gill broke her ankle by turning it over on an awkward kerb. Fortunately, she wasn't driving at the time - a

friend of ours was at the helm of RF280 - although she did manage to drive an RF back to High Wycombe after the event.

Anybody making soothing or sympathetic noises as they read this may be reassured that Gill's ankle is long out of plaster and now 99% back to normal.

Since Christmas, the weather seems to have been persistently wet or cold and the buses received little attention over the next couple of months. A particularly cold spell had a real go at our batteries - I usually find that our batteries survive the winter well, but this time we found nearly all vehicles in the yard flat as a cowpat. The following wet spell left our normally fast-draining yard awash for weeks and the dampness brought some mould on the ceilings and posters - again something we don't normally suffer with outdoor storage.

Nevertheless, the 1999 rally season has arrived, with an earlier start than usual occurring with the celebration of 20 years since the withdrawal of RFs that took place at Kingston on 28th March. I have written a separate piece about this enjoyable day.

Looking through magazines and advertisements, there do seem to be a lot of RFs coming up for sale - whether this is due to some sort of sudden loss of interest I don't know - but many of them seem to have found new homes and we met many of the new owners at the Kingston event.

RF489 is now with Toby Prescott in Essex and was present at the Kingston event. Also at Kingston were RF457 and RF633 with (I believe) new owners - the latter was owned until recently by Arthur Broad who has replaced it with GS60 as his latest project. Also at Kingston was RF26, which I understand is now owned by Michael Selt (who also has RFW6), and RF442, which is still with Knebworth Park despite having been advertised for sale fast year. The new owner of RF421 was also hoping to come to Kingston, but unfortunately a mechanical problem prevented this.

Tony Quince has advertised RF627 recently (01462 230); he also mentioned that he has bought RF296, although he hadn't brought it back from Scotland when we spoke.

Some other vehicles recently advertised include RF512 and RT3175 in Kent (Jeff Warr-01474 003), and RF404 and 508 (01768 593) which I last heard were in the Lake District.

An RMC has been advertised 0961 893

Richard Zarywacz has written to tell of the purchase of former Reading Mainline No6 by the RM577 Group for preservation, and will be fully restored in due course. We look forward to seeing the vehicle at events as work progresses.

RT981 is now with Colin Elsdon in Yorkshire, who plans to return it to its proper green livery.

It is rumoured that RT2557, formerly The Foxhunter courtesy bus in Kent, was burnt out for a film stunt and may now have been converted to some kind of lorry.

I have heard whispers that a GS will appear in B S Williams 'Southern Motorways' livery this year. In case it is a "hush-hush" job I won't tell you which one, but it may be around by the time you read this.

London Country BN50 is now in preservation in Truro, Cornwall and is being restored to NBC colours.

TD89 has surfaced after many years' absence from the public eye, and has been snapped up by Tony Quince who will no doubt exercise his body-restoration skills and bring it up to a high standard. Perhaps one day we shall see all of the preserved examples - 89, 95, 118 and 130 together.

I shall miss the Open Day (in exile in the Isle of Man) so it would be great to hear any news of interesting vehicles seen there. Got any other gossip?

Drop me a line at:  
The Shambles, Graham Road, Wealdstone, Middx. HA3 5RE  
0181- 1062  
shambles@ .com

## LETTERS

From Martin McClure

Dear Bill,

The items by Michael Taylor of London buses featuring in films are a great idea. I'm sure we all watch some of the old films with added interest when there are genuine old London street scenes with buses, lorries and cars that we immediately recognise.

The articles have prompted me to write to you about one such film which features none other than an LTC type. This may be the only record of an LTC on film. The film is 'They Drive By Night'- made in 1938, starring Emlyn Williams and directed by Arthur Woods. It was produced at Teddington Film Studios by First National Productions Ltd./ Warner Bros. This should not be confused with the American film of the same name, made in 1940 and starring Humphrey Bogart and George Raft - even Microsoft Cinemania CD ROM has included the US. film on Emlyn Williams's Filmography by mistake and has not recognised the British film

The LTC features about 15 minutes into the film as recently released convict Emlyn Williams boards it in an attempt to escape being blamed for a murder he did not commit. It can be quite clearly identified by the Reg. No. EGO515 as LTC11. There are brief shots of the interior as well as the nearside, offside and rear. The bus conductor is played by none other than a young William Hartnell (the first Dr. Who). The other star of the film is an early 30's Scammell artic Reg. No. UW1466 - but that's another part of the story. I have a good copy of the film from when it was shown on Channel 4 about ten years ago.

*Priory Gardens, Luton LU2 7DP*

From Bernard Brown

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the proposal of Jim Andress (summer 1998) to commemorate the introduction of the first petrol driven omnibus in London (over present routes 3/ 159).

I would like to point out that Kennington Gate terminus was in fact further north than Oval tube station (by Kennington Park).

This tollhouse stood in the centre of the road and had a gate across the Brixton and Clapham Roads to take tolls from the Brighton and Epsom stagecoaches respectively. Although the gates were removed in 1865, the tollhouse became a waiting room for Balls Bros. 'Paragon' horse-buses, which ran to the City or West End from Streatham. This area became known as Kennington Gate (as indeed New Cross Gate remains today) mainly due to the LCC tramways who used this as a fare stage rather than the LGOC. It gradually fell into disuse after the Great War.

The Motor Traction Co. had their depot in Walnut Tree Walk off Kennington Road and were abandoned in December 1900.

The annual report of the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis in 1899 records five mechanical omnibuses licensed but does not elaborate'

I have in my collection a 1900 edition of 'London and its Environs' and it includes the following entry: -

'Motor buses (Fares 1/2d to 2d) are now running from The Polytechnic via Oxford Circus, Regent Street, Piccadilly Circus, Charing X, Westminster Bridge and Kennington Road to Kennington Gate

*Metropolitan Police Historical Society*

## BOOK REVIEW

Phill Cruise

### LONDON TRANSPORT BUSES AND COACHES 1957

Published by John A S Hambley.£13.95

John has returned to the fifties for his latest production. The familiar format is retained with around one hundred and fifty illustrated pages with very informative captions. The subjects are the LT bus and coach fleet current in 1957 with some shots of ex- LT vehicles with new owners or in scrap yards. Service vehicles are included too, if they are built on old bus or coach chassis.

The main fleet was pretty standardised by this time but the book is still interesting by virtue of the inclusion of such classes as the T and TD which were being run down and the many STLs and other vehicles of similar vintage working with other operators. The main RT family still contained many minor variations too and the first of the RMs in prototype form were in service.

The standard of photographic reproduction was good in my copy and should satisfy most purchasers. I particularly enjoyed the illustrations included of a number of my local routes as they were when I was at primary school. Horrifyingly within what seemed like almost recent memory, not forty plus years ago since the pictures were taken. If you have the other books in this set then this one will not disappoint.

#### ALL CHANGE ON THE COUNTRY BUSES

Graham Donaldson, Graydon Transport Publishing. £13.95

This A4 sized publication contains 100 pages of photographs, some of which (34) are in colour. As the title might suggest the subject of the volume is London Country Bus Services from its inception through to the days of privatisation and take-over.

The first fifteen pages set the scene with a potted history of the events that took place over those years. Route and vehicle changes are touched upon.

The illustrations must feature every kind of vehicle operated, including the many on hire during the vehicle shortages in the seventies. The quality of the monochrome photographs in my copy varied greatly from sharp and contrasty to very 'muddy' which was disappointing. The colour illustrations are all excellent however. There is something for everyone with nostalgic views of RTs through to Atlanteans and Nationals.

Hopefully the printers will tighten up on the quality control as this inconsistency spoils an otherwise excellent book which will find a home on many enthusiasts bookshelves.

#### AEC

Alan Townsin, Published by Ian Allan Ltd. £16.99

Hardback 9 1/2 x 7 in with 128 pages, this book is written by one of the foremost experts on AEC and covers commercial vehicles as well as PSVs. It is divided into ten chapters and covers the years 1912 to 1979. Many of the illustrations have been seen before in various publications. Much of the information will be well known already and the book will be of most interest to those whose knowledge of AECs history is only sketchy.

The production is up to Ian Allan's usual high standards and the photographs are sharply presented. Apart from the jacket they are all monochrome and are arranged in an interesting mixture of lorry, bus, trolleybus and military vehicles chronologically presented to

complement the text. I did not find out many new bus facts but as an easy going read the book is worth browsing.

#### BUS KALEIDOSCOPE 1948

Philip Wells, Published by Ian Allan £16.99

This second Bus Kaleidoscope book covers the year 1948 and is illustrated with a fine selection of well reproduced monochrome photographs.

New post-war vehicles were starting to come on stream, but many old and probably more interesting pre-war vehicles were struggling on and this state of play is reflected in this interesting book. It is produced to the usual Ian Allan format. Included is information about municipalities, BET and Tilling companies, SMT, Red & White, Balfour Beatty, Northern Ireland, private companies and of course London Transport.

This was of course the first year of the British Transport Commission, which was to change the road and rail systems of the country for good.

The end of the book contains useful appendices giving the fleet totals for municipal, company, and LT vehicles as well as tables of new PSV registrations by chassis make. This is a useful reference for 1948 which makes a fascinating read and can be dipped in over again as an ongoing resource. For the record there are nineteen LT related photos in this book which is well worth a read.

#### LEATHERHEAD GARAGE

Bill Cottrell

I have been informed that Leatherhead garage is closing on the 30<sup>th</sup> April. The route 408 will transfer to Croydon, the 479 to Guildford, the 293 to Merstham, the 85 to Fulwell and the 465 will be run by Tellings-Golden Miller.

## COMING EVENTS

### **TD50 Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May (Cobham 99 event)**

Museum Display Day (open from 10.30 am). Museum vehicles and taxis provided by members of the London Vintage Taxi Association on display. Also, a 50th birthday celebration for the Trust's TD95 and, probably, RTL139 as well! 462 special bus service linking Cobham Village, Weybridge Station & the Bus Museum.

### **Not the Christmas Lights Tour Saturday 5th June 1999**

Organised by John Hinson

One or two hints have been dropped by long-distance travellers to London planning to attend the RT60 celebrations on Sunday 6th June that it would be 'very nice' to have another daylight equivalent of the Christmas Lights Tour to make their weekend complete.

When we did something similar a few years ago (for Peter Gomm's 50th Birthday) it was a most enjoyable day - a complete contrast to the usual cold and dark outing that we do each Christmas.

So I haven't needed much convincing - and this will therefore take place on Saturday 5th June 1999, commencing in High Holborn, near to Chancery Lane station, facing east, at 1.30 p.m.

This event will be low-key and informal - strictly for vehicle owners and friends. All types of bus are welcome.

The route will be similar, but not identical, to the traditional Christmas run. I am preparing a set of route instructions, which should be read in conjunction with a good London road atlas. Please contact me for a copy, which I will be happy to post or fax. Please take the trouble to plan your drive in advance - it makes life easier for all!

Find me at:

The Shambles,     Graham Road, Wealdstone, Middx. HA3 SRE  
0181-     1062  
shambles@     .com

### **RT60 Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June (Cobham 99 event)**

Organised by Roger Stagg, assisted by Ian Barrett and Alan Charman.

Railtrack are making the car park of Stoke d'Abernon Station available, this is an ideal size and hard surfaced and gives the opportunity for a good layout of the vehicles.

We feel that the road run of around 20 miles is about the right length to suit the majority who have written over the past three years noting their preferences.

A Class 6 service, using vehicles suitably ticketed between London and the rally site is proposed and Ian Barrett will be pleased to hear from anyone wishing to take part in this aspect who has not already notified us. It is intended to sell tickets in advance to avoid disappointment if there are a large number who just 'turn up'.

A Class 6 service utilising a variety of vehicles including RTs will operate between Stoke d'Abernon and Cobham Museum as well as off-site park and ride facilities. Route 462 will operate connecting to Weybridge Station and BR services. BR services will connect Aldwych with the rally site via Waterloo, Stoke d'Abernon and Weybridge Stations.

For logistical purposes, the number of RT vehicles that can be accommodated will be restricted, although it is hoped that enough space can be made available for all those who wish to take part. Nevertheless a first come, first served arrangement will have to apply if the response is as high as has been suggested. Accordingly you are invited to apply for a rally application form at the earliest possible time. Would those who have already confirmed their interest in the past, please re-confirm their continued interest, in the absence of which they will not be included in the list of participants. Applicants who have already responded since October 1998 need not re-apply.

Progress is currently being made regarding a rally plaque which will be a collector's item, and a high quality commemorative RT book. All participants will be asked to provide a good quality colour photograph of their vehicle for inclusion, together with as much history of the vehicle as possible. In addition a photograph of the vehicle during its service life would be of assistance.



RT60 will start from Aldwych between 9am and 11am. Tickets for class 6 service in advance from Aldwych to Stoke d'Abernon available from the Cobham shop at £3.00, one-way only.

#### **TRUST AGM Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June (Provisional date)**

Confirmation and agenda will be sent separately

#### **RTW50 Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> July (Cobham 99 event)**

Organised by Roy Adams, assisted by Ian Barrett.

With only 8 RTWs known to exist in Britain, all privately owned, two of which are completely unroadworthy, we are proud to announce that at least 5, and possibly all 6 of the others will be at Cobham for this event. It is probably over a quarter of a century since this many RTWs have been seen together. The Museum will be open to the paying public, but LBPT members will, of course, have free admission to the Museum grounds for the day. There will be stalls, the Museum shop, and other attractions. LBPT committee members will be on hand to explain all aspects of the workings of the Museum, and there will be a bus service operating, using Leyland vehicles such as RTL 139 and TD 95.

The climax for RTW fans, however, will be the chance to ride on these now rare eight footers again. All the RTWs in attendance will be making runs throughout the day, carrying limited numbers of people. These trips will be available to MEMBERS ONLY; who will be able to obtain FREE tickets to ride, at the Cobham shop, strictly on production of their membership card. Numbers will be limited, so tickets will be issued on a first come, first served basis, on the day. For photographers, we hope to run all the RTWs, in convoy, to Stoke d'Abernon station car park, for a photo session, at the end of the day.

I, and all the other RTW owners, look forward to meeting you at Cobham on the 4th of July

Roy Adams, RTW 29

Enhanced 462 special bus service linking Weybridge Station & the Bus Museum using as many Leyland vehicles as possible.

#### **Routemaster Day at Amberley Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> July**

Routemaster Owners and Operators Association

#### **Museum Display Day Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> August (Cobham 99 event)**

Museum vehicles and taxis provided by members of the London Vintage Taxi Association on display.

462 bus service details as for 2nd May.

#### **Detling Transport and Country Festival 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> August**

NKVP, 17, Ash Keys, Vigo Village, Meopham, Kent DA13 0SL

The centrepiece will be a display of as many ex Maidstone and District vehicles as possible.

#### **Museum Display Day. Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> August (Cobham 99 event)**

462 bus service details as for 2nd May.

#### **GS Running Day Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> August (Cobham 99 event)**

Organised by Alan Charman

Free bus service to Effingham Junction, organised by the GS Owners. Taxis by members of the London Vintage Taxi Association on display. 462 bus service details as for 2nd May.

#### **Cobham-Woking Classic Car Show Link Combining Rear Engine Running Day Monday 30<sup>th</sup> August (Cobham 99 event)**

Organised by Mike Nash

Following my comments in Magazine 22, many members have expressed great interest regarding the proposal for a Rear-Engine event and I am pleased to confirm that this will take place on the above date, and *not* 1st August as had originally been planned, so as not to clash with the popular Lingfield event.

A substantial number of vehicles have been offered for service and several well known members have pledged their organisational support so this promises to be a busy day and very much a first as regards Cobham. Expect to see a feast of Bristol REs and VRs, Leyland Nationals and Atlanteans, Daimler Fleetlines and much more. Please note that RTs and RMs driven backwards will not count! Because this day also ties in with the highly popular Woking Classic Car event, we will be providing an intensive service between the museum and Woking, there will also be some traditional LT machinery in action such as RTs, RFs and GSs, though operating on a different route, all of which should combine to make for an action packed day, not least because the Woking event promises both road and rail enthusiasts a treat and much additional interest for the family to enjoy.

462 bus service linking Weybridge Station & Cobham Bus Museum.

**Museum Display Day Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September (Cobham 99 event)**

Family Day with a theme based on private and commercial vehicles from the 1930's and 40's.

462 bus service details as for 2nd May.

**Museum Display Day Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October (Cobham 99 event)**

462 bus service details as for 2nd May.

**RF Running Day Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> October (Cobham 99 event)**

Organised by Peter Starks

Free bus service, organised by the RF Owners.

462 bus service details as for 2nd May.

**Christmas Theme Display Day Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December (Cobham 99 event)**

Father Christmas in attendance! Help us put the 'Grot' into 'Grotto'!

462 bus service details as for 2nd May.

Museum opening hours on the above events are  
10.30 to 16.30 hrs.

**Volunteers are needed to assist with all the Cobham 99 events.  
Please contact John Rawlins, Albany Close, Esher, surrey  
KT10 9JR**

**Back Cover:**

Photo and caption John Bedford

An event, not previously advertised, took place on the recent Member's Day, 7<sup>th</sup> March, when STL2093 was started and moved out of the building under its own power. The sound of its 7.7 engine running had not been heard at Cobham for at least 20 years (to the best of my knowledge) and for me the sight and sound of it moving into daylight was a great start to the day.

I remember seeing 2093 arriving at Battersea Park for the start of the London to Brighton run in the early 60's, at the first run I attended. It was a very early arrival on the rally scene and appeared at one of the first events following the formation of the HCVC at Southall in 1958 where this picture was taken.

**LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST**

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Treasurer Alan Charman, Hampton Way, East Grinstead RH19 4SG  
Secretary John Bedford, Albany Court, 38, Alexandra Grove, London N12 8NN

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Magazine Editor.  
Bill Cottrell, Shaftesbury Ave, S. Harrow, Middx HA2 0AW (0181 8240)

**TELEPHONE CALLS**

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

Your co-operation is appreciated.

REGISTERED AS A CHARITY NO 293319

LBPT website: <http://www.londonbus.co.uk>.

**COPY DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE – JULY 10<sup>TH</sup>**

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'In one essential way I treat my body as a temple, I always leave the shoes on the outside.'

