

COBHAM BUS MUSEUM MAGAZINE



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Front Cover: A most welcome attendee at the RTW running day was RTW178 in full Stevenson's livery with owner Tim Stubbs in the driving seat

OBITUARY ALAN LOWE

With regret, we wish to inform members of the sudden death of Mr. Alan Lowe on 16th September after a lengthy illness and record our appreciation of his support for the Trust.

EDITORIAL

Bill Cottrell

Being a point of contact between members and the committee, as my phone number is published in the magazine, I can get a sense of when something is not running smoothly by the nature of the phone calls received from members. Usually a problem occurs when members expect something to happen and it doesn't. One example is a member not receiving a membership card. Membership cards are sent out with the magazine to save postage, so only be concerned if you have not received your due membership card with your magazine. Sometimes, we do make mistakes, especially as we have a few members that share the same surname and given name.

A new concern from some members is that they are not being reimbursed quickly enough when agreed expenses are incurred on behalf of the Trust. I am sure that this is an administrative/communication problem, but there should be a quicker way of reimbursing expenses incurred in good faith.

In the past I have been the unofficial spares co-ordinator. We have now come to the point where we are very low on some stocks of parts, and I feel that this task can be better performed by a committee member with a better overview of the spares situation so that spares required by Trust vehicles are not inadvertently sold. Until it is decided who will take over this task, if you need any parts write in to the museum address and mark your envelope 'Spares'.

Soon will be the first time we have had committee elections for a third of the committee, with one officer and two 'other ranks' standing. Inevitably, during the battles and skirmishes of committee meetings there have been casualties where people felt they had to stand down. Although these vacancies need to be filled it should not preclude people due for re-election from standing just because there are existing vacancies. We may end up in a situation where a committee member could be co-opted and then never having to stand for election. This cannot be right.

I have heard a rumour that the Trust has been approached about putting a mobile phone transmitter mast in the grounds of the museum. Before the committee takes the thirty pieces of silver on

offer, I hope they take on board the health implications of such a structure. If there is some doubt over whether continued use of a mobile phone can cause brain damage, what damage can prolonged proximity to the transmitter cause?

It may be convenient to microwave your kippers by holding them out of the window, but the side effects of these radio transmissions must be considered.

Finally, thank-you to everyone who has contributed to the magazine this year. As this will be the last issue for 1999, may I be among the first to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Peter Plummer

The Trust was given a conservation award by the Surrey Industrial History Group on 14th September. It was with enormous pride that I accepted a commemorative plaque from Dr Alan Crocker on behalf of the Trust after which I gave a short talk and slide presentation at Weybridge Library. The members of the Group were then transported to the museum and guided tours were given to an enthusiastic audience. My thanks to John Bedford, Bill Cottrell and Richard Hussey for their support on the day. The plaque is on permanent display in the museum shop and I congratulate all volunteers whose contribution has made the Trust worthy of the award.

This, and other visits such as the Omnibus Society on 20th June, illustrated to me the pressing need to address our educational displays for visiting members of the public. The secretary, in response to this priority, has issued a separate report outlining his proposals elsewhere in this issue.

As our presentation steadily improves, our sights are now turning to major grants primarily for a museum infrastructure programme and applications will hopefully be available for submission by the end of the year. In the short term, a further planned improvement at relatively low cost, is the floor area immediately outside the shop in the main hall. At even lower cost, a rack has been erected on the paint bay wall to accommodate the storage of side route boards for T504, T448 and Green Line RFs making these items easily visible

and less susceptible to damage. My thanks to Tony Lewis and Dave Bray for fully implementing this feature.

Currently, our attention is beginning to focus on the eagerly awaited completion of STL2377, now only weeks away. My regular visits over recent months bear testimony to our most ambitious project to date and I can assure members that a magnificent sight will await them.

The shop has performed brilliantly and covered all our events under the direction of Gordon Edridge, Tom Meluish and Ian Robertson. My thanks to Ian for taking over the role of cleaner.

Finally, my long awaited holiday in Malta in September revealed that around a dozen ex London Swifts still perform bus work, some very heavily modified. However, seven in original condition but bearing blue and white livery remain active for the Educational Department from a depot in the north of the island where the automatic fare control machines are stored intact.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

John Bedford

This month, I would like to update members on recent progress at Cobham in the field of 'Museum Development'.

An important function of the Charity as written into the Constitution is to 'advance public education' by making the collection accessible and providing informative displays. Progress in developing the educational aspects of the museum has received only minimal attention in recent years because other work rated as a higher priority – principally the need to improve the interior of the building, the grounds and provide a more inviting internal environment and better facilities for visitors.

Work on this has progressed well and for the future, more time and resources will be devoted to improving presentation and the setting up of displays.

The reconstruction of the entrance hall and its fitting out as the museum shop and reception area in time for the 1998 Open Day was the first major improvement to the internal structure to be carried out. It has provided the museum with a much needed reception area and point of sale for merchandise. As an extension

of this, consideration is now being given to the space immediately adjoining the shop - the area through which visitors gain access to the main display hall.

Space on the adjoining walls under the balcony and on the Redhill Road side of the building has been allocated for display panels with text and photographs. These will be complemented by display cabinets at floor level. The RT demonstration chassis has been refurbished and is on permanent-display in front of the shop.

During the course of a meeting held earlier this year with the Trust's Curatorial Advisor, Mrs Morag Barton (also, Director of the nearby Brooklands Museum Trust) there was discussion on the new Brooklands Motoring Village, which is currently under construction. At the suggestion of Mrs Barton an approach was made to the design consultants who had been commissioned to prepare comprehensive design layouts for the new motoring village, with a view to their carrying out a feasibility study for the Trust.

I am pleased to report that as result of meetings held at the museum during the summer, a first stage consultation document containing display and interpretation proposals for Cobham Bus Museum has been completed. This is a tremendous help to us inasmuch as we have benefited from the experience of a professional designer with skills that we do not have 'in house'. In addition, we have a well produced policy document with which we are able to open discussions with the South Eastern Museums Service and other official bodies with a view to obtaining partnership grants towards the cost of setting up properly planned educational displays.

However, there is much ground to be covered and carrying through the various stages from design to completion will take several years. If any members are interested in the report or feel they might make a positive contribution, David Mulvey, the Trust's Museum Development Officer and myself be happy to hear from you.

I hope to be able to report further progress in due course. Meanwhile, an application for grant aid to enable the first phase of the work to be started, will be lodged with Surrey Museums Consultative Committee early in the New Year.

FROM THE COMMITTEE ROOM

Graham Ruddock

In the last issue I ran through the reasons for the Trust obtaining an Operator's Licence and how we intended to use it. That issue also contained an invitation to members to join a proposed trip to Duxford for Showbus in September. To complete the story so far I shall report on the use made of RTL139 this year and on the trip to Duxford.

First, a different slant on the story of RTL139 so far this year. Its main use has been on our bus route which runs on days when the Museum is open. It has operated regularly on this, and there has only been one problem, as reported by Andy Baxter in the last issue. Andy is a modest chap, and did not mention that he was the driver who coaxed it back to Cobham when fuel trouble struck. He also did not report that we shared the driving on the trip concerned, and that when I handed over to him at Weybridge library the RTL was in fine form. My story, as I told Andy, is that its failure was nothing to do with me and that he broke it and then fixed it. (What I did not add was that I am relieved that I did not break it because he would still have had to fix it!)

On a more serious note, the RTL has proved to be very popular with members, visitors to the museum and drivers alike. I have done a fair amount of driving on it and the fine-tuning of the fuel pump has led to the throttle being much more responsive. When first put into service the throttle had two basic positions, open or closed. As a result it was very difficult to coast with foot off the accelerator when approaching red traffic lights or traffic in front. The bus would then start to slow down rapidly, instead of slowly as desired. Now it almost behaves like an AEC and I love it dearly! Similarly the attention given to the steering has resulted in fewer jokes of the "How do you tell an RTL driver? Answer: He is the one with arms like a gorilla." variety.

Further mechanical attention has been given to the differential. Once back in service it became apparent that this was worn, exhibiting the symptoms of excessive noise and vibration. For this reason the RTL was confined to local trips until the differential had

been sorted out. Once this had been done all that was required was the fitting and calibration of the tachograph needed if the bus was to undertake work other than stage carriage (i.e. on a scheduled bus route).

After running in, the scene was now set for a longer run, hence the trip to Duxford. Bookings were received from 20 members and 19 of these were able to attend. It surprised me that most joined at Cobham, rather than at one of the two London pick ups, but maybe people did not want to miss any of the journey. All pick ups took place without problems, the mobile phone link allowing one member to notify us of a late enforced change to his pick up point. The RTL ran superbly, settling in happily at about 39 mph on the A3 and the A10. Even the weather was kind, and Showerbus did not live up to its reputation. I think the only problem at Duxford was weary feet: as it is an airfield there is lots of walking to do.

Feedback from passengers was very positive, they enjoyed the trip, thanked me for organising it and even complimented the drivers on their driving, saying that this was just like they remember in the old days. Anyway, I think it was a compliment, and they must have missed the classic pre-selector change from third to third, instead of fourth, executed by one of us. (No it wasn't me.) It was gratifying to receive such positive feedback, and people were asking for more. My thoughts for next year are that Southsea would be a good destination, but let me know of other ideas and we will consider them. If there is demand from members I am sure we can find the drivers and organisers. Please write to me at the address listed under committee members and give some thought to joining us on a trip next year.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Mike Nash

Welcome to something of an extended report due to our esteemed Headhitter forgetting to include my report for the last issue. You just can't get the staff these days can you?

Since my last report we have attracted plenty of new members, many of which joined either on, or as a result of the Open Day or one of our many Display/Running days. In addition, the shop

continues to be a key source of new recruits and is clearly a vital element in consolidating the size of our membership as we approach what I consider is likely to prove our maximum achievable size.

At the time of writing (4th October) we stand at an all time record of 605 members which is a great result. That said, I am just about to mail out some 50 reminders to those whose renewals are still outstanding from the last period. It is hoped that most will eventually respond. Meanwhile, the task of Membership Secretary becomes ever more time consuming, the effects of the revised subscription rates and continuing Standing Order problems only exacerbating the situation. Furthermore, members will be surprised to learn that, following the May 1998 committee meeting I was suddenly, and without notice, precluded from any further official Trust correspondence circulated by either the Chairman or Secretary. No explanation has ever been given, despite my requesting such in writing from the Secretary more than a year ago. Now you tell me if that's the way to treat a Membership Secretary whom has put his all into the task over the past six years?

Following my comments in Magazine 24, many members have double-checked their Standing Order situation and found that their banks appear to be somewhat lacking in efficiency! These problems are gradually being ironed out so hopefully by this time next year the new Standing Orders should all be kicking in smoothly. A big thank-you to the many members who have sent in an additional donation, either by way of their Standing Order or by cheque. It really will make a difference to our activities next season. That said, there are still plenty of members who seem incapable of amending their Standing Orders to the revised rate (£15), despite having been sent the appropriate form to make things easy. I will be chasing you! More and more members are switching to this method of payment but those who do still renew by cheque are reminded that their membership cards will arrive with the magazine which follows their payment. If the card is required sooner please pop an s.a.e. in with your renewal and I will forward your card by return of post.

Finally, if you think you can help the Trust by signing up a few members do drop me a line and I'll send you some Membership Leaflets to hand out. I had a count up the other day and discovered that during the past five years I've managed to personally sign up more than fifty new members. I've heard it said lately that we now have too many members and too few volunteers. Sadly the latter is

certainly true, but the £750 generated each year as a result of the members I've signed up is surely useful income for the Trust and should not be dismissed so lightly. And if only one in every fifty new members becomes actively involved at Cobham then it's one more than we had before, which is surely a good thing? So come on folks, sign someone up today, and better still, twist their arm to come down and lend a helping hand occasionally.

The following members are warmly welcomed to the Trust: -

763	W. Avery	Leatherhead	PP
764	M. Hall	Grimsby	PP
765	Timothy Brown	Surbiton	
766	Ron Gill	New Malden	
767	Chris Wills	Stevenage	RF512
768	Peter Child	Borehamwood	
769	Martin Eyre	Leatherhead	PM
770	Robert Jennings	Windsor Forest	MN
771	Chris Scott	Croydon	
772	T. Storey	Woodford Green	
773	P. Wall	Ashted	
774	Richard Constance	Oxted	
775	Ian Riseley	Paddock Wood	
776	A. Dougall	Hounslow	AW
777	A. Wright	Slough	
778	David Wilkinson	Billericay	RF406 MN
779	David Joseph	Ilford	RF503
780	Dr. Stephen Bidey	Altrincham	
781	Dennis Hales	Denham	
782	Kevin Bullions	Hornchurch	FS16 & 19
783	Michael Garside	Slough	
784	John Hickey	Woking	
785	David Hunter	Loughton	DB
786	Malcolm King	Leeds	RM2208
787	Colin Ryan	Westerham	
788	Alan Ward	Penn	
789	Sam Butler	Fleet	
790	Christopher Crump	Gravesend	
791	F. Ivey	Wembley	
792	B. Moore	Bowes Park	PP
793	Christopher Waters	Sonning Common	

794	David Lindsell	Brentwood	DW
795	Norman Evans	Farnham	
796	Alvin Hale	Farnham	
797	Jerry Markwell	Bournemouth	GS36
798	Alan Purssey	Huntingdon	
799	Trevor Mills	Farnham	
800	Malcolm Johnson	Horsham	
801	James Hawkins	Worthing	WA
802	N. Mitchell	Redhill	
803	Keith Rose	Staines	TL
804	Roger Thomas	Kings Lynn	
805	K. Bayley	Hertford	
806	Brian Rose	Nottingham	Reliance AAB 50A
807	Peter Bonney	North Harrow	
808	Aidan Walsh	Greenford	RM577 RZ
809	Alan Beard	Tottenham	GS
810	Peter Blandford	Mitcham	AB
811	Barry Ranger	Ashford	
812	Ernest Pearce	East Grinstead	
813	Terry Anderson	Kentish Town	
814	Ian Gaffney	Blackheath	
815	Richard Law	Wanstead	
816	an Lockey	Sutton	
817	Mark Beckham	Eltham	RM8 Club
818	George Clowes	Hoddesdon	
819	LT Museum	Covent Garden	Lots!
820	Raymond Dunkley	Croydon R	F530, RT2591 PM
821	Alan Willett	Groombridge	
822	Mrs. A. Hartley	Lancing	MN

Recruited by: - AB-Andy Baxter AW-A.Wright DB-Dave Bray
 DW-David Wilkinson GS-Graham Smith MN-Mike Nash
 PM-Paul Morris PP-Peter Plummer RZ-Richard Zarywacz
 TL-Tony Lewis WA-Bill Ackroyd

OPEN DAY 2000

Simon Douglas-Lane

Following discussion with Morag Barton and Nigel Metzser it looks as if the Brooklands runway will be available for our Open Day on 9th April. The new owners of the runway have withdrawn their application to develop the southern runway and it may be a couple of years before further proposals are considered. Under the new ownership the Wendy Fare Franchise may not continue, and so it could be that we have the northern and southern runways for our use next year.

The Open Day Sub Committee is therefore producing proposals (Plans A & B) to allow for both runways, or just the northern runway which we have used in the last two years. The Sub Committee is also considering other venues for the event from 2001/2 in case Brooklands finally becomes unavailable. We will, of course, keep you posted as matters progress and if I may finish with a correction from the last magazine, Alan Charman will continue to be the link with the main committee.

The vacancies for the sub-committee have been filled by Keith Rose taking the responsibility for volunteers and Ian Robertson will be looking after the stallholders.

YOUR HELP NEEDED!

Keith Rose, Volunteer Co-ordinator.

With the end of summer (whoops! fell asleep on the patio and missed it!), and the fast approaching winter (our local hedgehogs hibernated in August!!!), its time for you to turn your thoughts to our Open Day 2000 at Cobham/Brooklands planned to take place on Sunday 9th. April next year.

As in previous years, there will be a requirement for a number of volunteers to assist the Project Leaders in the smooth running of event. In order that members assisting in those duties may have ample time to view the many attractions (with wheels, not legs!), it is proposed that periods of duty will be kept relatively short, in the

order of 2-3 hours, so please help, and remember 'Many hands make light work', (if we only get one volunteer, he may still be there in May!). Anyway, joking aside, I have set out below a list of the Project Leaders, the estimated number of volunteers they require and a brief description of the various duties.

Debbie Morris: Revenue Control and Administration, Debbie requires 16 persons to assist with collection of revenue and membership enquiries.

Chris Plested: Museum Shop, Sales assistants are required at Brooklands retail outlet in the marquee, and at the Museum Shop. Volunteers should be adept at handling money and dealing with the public, (or is it dealing in money and handling the public?) Chris needs 2 volunteers for setting up on the Saturday, and 18 able persons for Sunday to cover 08:00hrs to 17:00hrs with the major requirement from 10:00hrs to 16:00hrs in 2 hour shifts. As this an opportunity for the Trust's Members to offer an efficient service to the public - with a smile!

Roger Stagg: Brooklands Site Control, Roger needs 6 able bodied people to help set up on the Saturday and approx. 24 persons to assist on Sunday with bus revenue, parking directions, bus control and bouncers. A quote from Roger, "No glory, sometimes boring, could be cold and wet" Start at 8:00 with 4-5 hours shift, 17:30 to 18:00hrs clearing away, as Saturday.

These are key jobs! - book early to avoid disappointment!

Andy Baxter: Cobham Site Control, Andy needs 8 persons on Sunday to assist with traffic management and crowd control. (Riot shields not required).

Remember - this is our main event of the year, an opportunity to increase the Museum funds and help keep this unique collection of buses safe for future generations to enjoy, as we do now. This is YOUR Museum, so please help to make it even better, just a few hours of your time to keep the old girls rolling - No, not the wife! So what next?

Now thumb through this edition of Bill's Bible (CBM Magazine) and see if you can find the volunteer application card.

Found it? OK. now fill in the details, together with the type of duties you wish to do (so we don't try to fit round pegs in square holes!) It's already addressed on the other side so all you have to do is stick on a stamp, and then take the dog for a walk! (Via the post box).

Hope to see you there, (I'm going by bus!)

VEHICLE NEWS

STL 2377

Roger Stagg

It is at this stage of the reconstruction the time taken to complete all the little bits becomes evident and at the time of writing I do not believe that it is going to be possible to achieve my ambition of completing the vehicle including re-painting for Christmas 1999.

What I am pleased to be able to say is that 2377 does now look like a bus. All of the external cladding is complete awaiting only a few pieces of beading and the completion of roof and mid deck gutters. Internally, the lower deck is over 90% complete with the windows in place leaving a number of minor trimmings to be fitted, the floor varnished and the seat frames bolted down. The upper deck ceiling is complete, as is much of the Rexine and work to complete the fixing of windows and trimmings is currently in hand. The staircase has been rebuilt and the back of the platform is completed.

The dynamo that has been rebuilt through well known member David Kriesler is now back with us and will be fitted shortly. Mechanical wizards Andy Baxter and Bill Cottrell will, by the time you have read this have gone over the running units again. We are looking to the vehicle seeing it's first MOT in more than 30 years before Christmas. Currently, I am realistically looking forward to the vehicle moving into the bodywork re-finishing phase (painting) in January 2000 with a roll out at the end of February.

It has been disappointing not to have achieved the ambition of completing the project before 2000 but a number of factors have worked against us as they always do in preservation. On the plus side by very careful and detailed research coupled with a substantial element of good fortune we have been able to uncover many more details about the fitments and colours etc, particularly of the inside of a pre-war STL than could have realistically been expected. As such we have been able to restore the vehicle to an extremely authentic condition especially in regard to colours which will no doubt conic as a surprise to many members. This attention to detail has caused us to pay a premium in time and on more than one occasion we have taken the decision to dismantle something already completed on finding that the detail has been wrong either for the vehicle or the period. More importantly, we have had to cut our cloth relative to the finances available to us month by month. Whilst we have received a generous grant from The Science Museum it only represents one third of the expenditure and it is only possible to even apply for the cash after the whole monies to each section have been expended.

Whilst a number of members have been generous in their donations towards the project the number who have made a donation represents only a small percentage of the membership. Donations from a penny upwards are still welcomed with enthusiasm and all donations of £5 and over will be included in the commemorative plaque. If therefore, you have continued to be "getting around" to making that donation or you are one of those members who promised one (including two substantial promises) then please help the project to completion by making out your cheque to the LBPT and sending it to me now at the following address: -

Teston Road, Offham, Kent ME 19 5NE

I can categorically assure you that your generosity will be used only for the project.

Finally due to the loss of some records, the file of donations sent to the Treasure direct is incomplete. If you made a donation of £5 or more to the Treasurer rather than to me please drop me a line so that I can keep the plaque record in order.

ST922

The engine has been re-assembled and the radiator flushed through before fitting. The engine was fired up and some minor adjustments made to ensure smooth running. The bus has now been turned round to enable work to begin on the off-rear hub seal. To proceed with this we have borrowed some specialist tools from the LT Museum. The tailpipe has corroded away and a replacement will need to be made.

The good news is that when the hub was removed, the shoes were found to be free of oil contamination. The only defect found that could be causing the leak was a compacted felt ring. This was cleaned and revived and the hub re-assembled. A temporary tailpipe then was adapted until a pattern replacement can be made. Speaking with Tim Nicholson, who initially completed the mechanical restoration of the ST, he is of the opinion that the '500' valve springs may be too strong and exerting too much pressure on the camshaft causing accelerated wear.
Project leader Andy Baxter

RTL139

Dave Kriesler and Andy Baxter successfully fitted a tachograph, replacing the existing speedo. The bus was taken to Volvo for calibration ahead of the Duxford trip. The bus can now be used on private hire work as well as on registered routes.

STL441

The bus has been checked over for MOT test, which was subsequently passed in early October.

G351

The stubborn 'u' bolt surrendered to John Black's mega-breaker bar and this allowed the stripped out axle casing to be removed. It was taken outside and thoroughly washed. The springs have been removed and the revealed shackle pins have yielded another example for our 'black museum'. The new off-side spring bushes and hangers have been adapted to take AEC shackle pins as we did not have sufficient Guy pins, and the spring refitted.

The nearside spring was also refitted after the axle casing was put in place. The diff was then refitted. After cleaning, a crack was noted in the casing, which will need attention. Various body mounting bracket have also been affixed. It is very satisfying now that we are beginning the assembly phase, especially using new nuts and bolts. Special mention must be made of Peter Hamilton whose regular assistance has enabled progress on this project to accelerate with occasional assistance from Peter Burrows.

RT2775

Work has continued as and when labour has been available. . My small team has resumed the lower deck refurbishment. Mouldings and beadings are currently being affixed to the offside and shortly the vehicle will be turned to enable completion of the nearside lower deck and a new engine fitted.

Project leader Peter Plummer.

RF332

The gearbox was getting very noisy, so a day was spent retrieving another box from the back of the outside store and this was fitted. The gearbox had been in stock for 25 years from a scrap RF. We swapped over the piston and bucket from the original and the transplant proved successful, with the towbus back in commission.

An Appeal from Peter Plummer, Chairman of the Trust.

Once again I must refer to the need to encourage members to play a more active role in the physical restoration side of our museum. Previous appeals have produced little and the Members Day last March was a disappointment for the committee and me.

This time I would like to explore the possibility of tapping into the retired or UB40 members who might be prepared to attend one day during the week to work on projects. This has been successful on a small scale with the RTL, but could it work on a larger scale?

If the site was open, the workplace prepared and a proper programme put together are there members who would like to attend?

If there are members, and I am not looking for skilled mechanics or coachbuilders (although that would be a bonus), but for people who are quite capable of DIY type activities.

To enable an assessment to be made please write to me if you are willing to help and let me know which day of the week you would prefer. I would not envisage anything too onerous, say 09.30 -16.30 and in a friendly and constructive atmosphere.

Remember, if we are to progress with our vehicles we must get more people working on them. It is apparent that weekends are not proving attractive, perhaps weekdays might.

REDHILL ROAD TO STAY CLOSED!

Mike Nash

It's official! Following several years of tireless campaigning and the lengthy Public Enquiry held in October 1998, news was finally received on May 12th of the Inspector's decision, namely that Redhill Road will remain permanently closed at its southern end to traffic from the A3 slip road.

This is without doubt of major benefit to the Trust's continued development, as it ensures that the tranquil surroundings of our museum and the increased safety of our members, particularly during our special events, remains unthreatened.

The Public enquiry document ran to 84 pages and it is quite clear that the Inspector considered every angle and view in great detail. As you may remember, I represented the Trust at the Enquiry and it is pleasing that in the Inspector's conclusions Cobham Bus Museum is mentioned on two occasions with reference to the positive effects the temporary closure has had for the Trust. A copy of the report is available at the museum should members wish to peruse it, pages 39 and 61-75 being of most relevance.

The residents of Redhill Road who worked so very hard to achieve this aim are to be congratulated for conducting a wonderfully skilled and well delivered campaign and I would ask member Robert Vince, who as a Redhill Road resident, was one of the key figures in this issue, to extend thanks from all of us at Cobham Bus Museum to the residents for their magnificent efforts, and for their patience when we bung up the road with our Open Days!

FROM BIKES TO BUSES

Andy Baxter

Well how do you go from one extreme to another you may ask? Let me explain. My interest in things all red and green reared its ugly head in my junior school days in the mid-sixties. Regularly travelling the 155 or the 57 between Tooting and South Wimbledon to visit my grandparents, (we didn't have a car in those days), always sitting on the offside to make sure of a good view as we passed Merton garage on the way. On one occasion we actually drove into the garage in order that the driver could top up the radiator with water. Oh how large it seems inside but alas the stay was short lived. All I can remember is looking around at numerous RTs and a couple of RFs in the vast expanse of space, a memory that stayed in my mind for a long time. One that I wish I could remember would be riding on a trolleybus between Wimbledon and New Malden to visit my aunt but between 0 and 4 my memory was probably learning other things. My parents keep reminding me even if I cannot recollect a thing.

Once I was of the age that I was allowed to roam free on my own, Red Rovers were my ticket to freedom. The day would always start with a visit to Merton just to see what was happening, standing outside the entrance with its three bus sized openings separated by two brick pillars, (one of these was removed around 69/70 when the MBs arrived for the 152, the front never looked right after that). Anyway as always there was an RT parked at the entrance, always in the far right-hand entrance and always with its nose hanging out. In later years this position was always occupied by a roofbox RT. And it came to pass that this was Saunders bodied RT1903. It's funny what you learn twenty years on.

Red Roving days continued through to the seventies and at 14 I started my first Saturday job in the local motorcycle shop earning the grand total of £1.25p a day. This was the start of what is commonly known as grubby hand syndrome. Working with anything mechanical always results in this, no matter how well you wash you can never get rid of it. Still at least I was working on things with engines in, and that's how it all started. The next three years were spent between school on Monday to Fridays, working on motorbikes on a Saturday and roving on a Sunday. I could pay for my own ticket now. At school I managed to get into the motor

engineering course. This gave me the basics but there's nothing like working hands on and the motorbikes gave me that. By 15 I was stripping engines and gearboxes for repairs on a vast assortment of makes from Triumphs, BSAs and Nortons right down to Vespas and NSU Quicklys. This gave me an excellent grounding for the future. One half term whilst I was working there I was instructed by my boss to clean 6 two stroke engines that were being collected to be used for educational purposes. This I duly did and the engines were collected by a ginger-haired gentleman at the end of that week. Little did I know at the time that I, the engines and the ginger-haired man would meet again, but more on that later. Whilst working on the motorbikes I became acquainted with a middle aged gentleman who ran a shop in the next block to us and over the years built up a very good friendship with him, a friendship that still carries on to this day. It was this friendship that started my involvement in auto-electrics, his business being reconditioning and repairs to dynamos, starters and alternators. Gradually over the years following I learnt much about the business eventually running the shop for him when he went for his holidays and this again put me in good stead for the future.

At 16 I left school and my original intention had been to join London Transport as an apprentice mechanic so I duly wrote off to 55 Broadway asking if there were any apprenticeships available. A reply was forthcoming but stating that there were no vacancies at the moment but that they would keep my name on record and would contact me if anything turned up. Hopes dashed. What to do now? My parents were nagging me to get a job, so one day I made the journey to the careers office to see what they had in the way of mechanical apprenticeships. My original plan now defunct my only option I thought was to go into the car repair side of the business. As luck would have it there was a local firm of commercial vehicle engineers wanting apprentices so off I toddled for an interview, getting the job at the grand sum of £15.50 per week before stoppages. Well it was a start, the start of four years of hard graft as I was to find out.

After a couple of weeks holiday I was due to start work full time the next Monday morning but on the Tuesday before a letter arrived from London Transport offering me an interview for an that I had already found employment and thanked them offering.

The firm I started working for turned out to be the London agent for Seddon and Atkinson lorries so the next four years were spent

working on specifically these makes but other makes did put in an appearance just to break the monotony occasionally. During this time day release at college once a week was the norm, again learning the basics and the theory with the occasional practical session thrown in for good measure. One such session was entitled two stroke engines and being on the part of the course that was geared towards the heavy vehicle mechanic I was expecting to be delving into the innards of a Commer TS3 or a Foden 2 stroke. Guess what, on entering the workshop there on the benches for us to strip and examine were 6 two stroke motorcycle engines and the tutor was this ginger-haired man looking a few years older than our previous meeting some years before. Nevertheless, the same man and the same engines.

Once I had made myself known to him and that I new these engines like the back of my hand seeing that I had been working in the shop that supplied them to the college some years earlier he agreed that it would a bit of a waste of time. I thought great! An easy lesson! But no such luck for the ginger-haired man directed me to the other end of the workshop and promptly showed me my task for the lesson, a recently delivered supercharged V6 two stroke Detroit diesel engine, with the order to "pull it apart and see what its like". No sooner said than done. What could more pleasurable for a mechanic than pulling an engine down and being the first in the college to do so, great fun.

The remaining years of my apprenticeship continued, my toolbox growing ever bigger and thus being allowed to do more things unsupervised as the months went on and with my knowledge increasing engine rebuilds being common place in the final two years. Cummins, Rolls Royce, Perkins and the famous Gardner, this being the Rolls Royce of them all. In my time there I've had them all apart from the 5LW right up to the Eight cylinder 8LXB which was so smooth you could put your cup of coffee on top of the rocker cover and it wouldn't move an inch. Oh to put one of these in a bus one day. The remaining time being spent on the mundane activities of servicing, clutch changes and pre delivery inspections, but all the time gaining valuable knowledge and experience. As the end of my final year approached final exams were taken and thoughts of the future. Would I be offered a post as a fully qualified fitter at the end of my apprenticeship or would I have to find alternative employment?

It was at this time that a new fitter started working there and whilst talking with him one day he said that he had previously been working for Express dairies and that they were on the look out for fitters. I wasted no time and made a phone call and arranged for an interview. I travelled to South Ruislip some days later and after the formalities the interviewer freely said that there was a post available at their Morden depot. I thought "that sounds better than travelling to Ruislip every day". He made a call to the garage manager at Morden and as quickly as I had arrived I left, bound for Morden and another interview. The interview was very informal which helped but the only minus point it seemed was my age I had only just turned 20 and they really wanted someone over 21 so that he could be put through his HGV test straight away or someone who already had a licence, my enthusiasm waned but he said to leave it with him and he would have a word with his boss. Thanking him for his time and with a handshake I left with him saying to give him a ring the following afternoon to learn the outcome. So the next day heart pounding the call was made, the news was good, I'd been offered the job at better money than I would have got if I'd have stayed where I was and they would also put me through my HGV as soon as I had turned 21. I accepted the post without hesitation and informed my new boss of my proposed starting date and with a heartfelt thanks I returned to work. It seems ironic that even though my interest in buses was still there work and other commitments i.e. women, prevented me from pursuing it other than the occasional rally or Cobham open day. In the four years of my apprenticeship my first ever contact with a bus in a mechanical sense was to assist in the changing of a worn big end in a Bristol LS6G, being Gardner agents and the engine being of the same make hence why we had the job. The vehicle in question turned out to be OTT43 owned at that time by Barry Povey and who still owned it until fairly recently, again I was to meet up with this vehicle many times in later years. So at the end of four years my apprenticeship was about to finish and with a new job waiting I was counting down the days. My four year term officially finished on a Friday and it was on that day I submitted my notice leaving the following Friday to start my new job and the next nine years of my mechanical career. It later transpired that I had made the right decision for within three years the company had closed down, been demolished and had houses built on it.

Once settled in to my new job the reality of working on a company's own fleet became apparent, no pressure to get jobs done in a time scale, no warranty times to adhere to, all together a different ball game. The fleet consisted of a mixture of makes, some totally alien to me but in my eyes they all work the same way and all suffer from the same type of faults so it was just a matter of familiarisation. The mixed bag consisted of AECs, Fords, Bedfords, Leyland's and Seddon-Atkinsons, at least the latter I was familiar with. The fleet also consisted of various types of semi-trailers and light vans. The AECs were Ergo-cab Mercury's with AV505 engines and Ergo-Mandators with AV760s, the Leyland's were Lynxs with the infamous 500 fixed head engine, (the vertical version of the engine in the Leyland National), condemned by many but in the eight years we ran them we never had a major engine failure. The same went for the 505, again the vertical version of the engine in the SM/SMS class no major failures, it seems that most of these engines don't like laying down, the 760 was an extremely reliable unit and working on these put me in good stead as it turned out that in later years I would be a part owner in RP90 carrying the same engine albeit with a smaller bore size, again laying on it's side the AH691.

Working at the dairy was carried out at an extremely leisurely pace something I had not been used to, the four years previous was all hurry, hurry, hurry this was more like a holiday, perhaps that's why I stayed there for nine years. Over the years the fleet was gradually changed, the AECs went as did the Leylands to be replaced by Dafs these in turn by Seddon-Atkinson, and ERFs and eventually Volvo F10s. The trailers also got bigger and came with refrigeration units and air suspension; an assortment of single, tandem and tri-axle configurations created more problems. It was at this time that my job changed slightly when I became responsible for the refrigeration units on the trailers. This later included the Dodge box vans introduced to deliver carton milk to the supermarkets. These units varied from Petter single cylinder diesels through Kubota 1,2 and 3 cylinder units up to Peugeot 4 cylinder engines on the 40ft boxes, with refrigeration systems from British, French and American manufacturers. Again another learning curve but I was sent away on manufacturers training courses so that helped somewhat. Back tracking slightly, true to their word once I had turned 21 they put me in for my HGV training. Being such a large firm they had their own training school so I was duly dispatched for a 10-day

course for my HGV 1 licence. This again was unique in as much as the company policy had always been to put a driver through his HGV 3 first and then after a year or so upgrade to an HGV 1, but it seems that in my case because I had been shunting trailers about since I was 18 and manoeuvring them into and out of the workshop competently since I began work there the powers to be decided to put me straight in for my HGV 1. Once acquired this gave me the scope to take vehicles for MOT tests and for moving vehicles from depot to depot, at least it got me out of the workshop for a while.

Once the Volvos arrived this signalled the start of what was to become the end of my time at the dairy, the vehicles were leased but at least we had the contract to service and maintain them, how long would that last? As it turned out, not for long. Doorstep milk delivery was on a swift decline, less milk meant less delivery lorries which in turn meant less mechanical staff, put together with the ever increasing leasing fleet I could see that the end was nigh so with this in mind I started making alternative plans for the future. By this time I had a wife, two children and a mortgage to support so being out of work was not something that I was looking forward to.

Enter the middle-aged gentleman with the auto-electrical shop. He had always hinted to me during conversation about retiring at some point, he wasn't middle aged anymore and I had always said to him that should he think about retiring then I would always be interested. A few months past and out of the blue a letter arrived from my friend informing me that he intended to retire and would I be interested in purchasing the business, I was quite bemused at this as I had always thought that he would leave the business to his son, as it turned out he felt that he couldn't trust his son to run the business on his own so hence the offer.

I decided to take the plunge and with long term friend Terry we purchased the business in the spring of 1988 and became self employed, continuing the existing business and expanding the range of services available, this being the status at the present time. I am grateful that since I had left school I had been able to go from one job to the next without any lapse in employment, something that would be hard to do in today's climate.

After three years or so building up the business I found that I had some time on my hands and it was at the Open day of 1994 that I became a member of the Trust rekindling my interest in all things red and green, my intention being to spend one Sunday a month at

Cobham but one Sunday became two then four and now it's every Sunday and Saturday afternoons as well. Since joining I have been involved in most of the major projects STL2377, G351, RTL139 and the maintenance and repair of the remainder of the Trust vehicles and giving help to other members with problems of a mechanical kind. The funny thing is that I now have gone full circle in the quiet times at work Terry and myself restore and rebuild old British motorbikes. Those practical skills learnt back in my teens now being reused in my forties and hopefully the knowledge and skills learnt during my apprenticeship and the years following will be put to good use for a few more years to come.

This is a profession where you are forever learning, since joining the Trust I have learnt the intricacies of an STL chassis to the innermost workings of the ST petrol engine, things that people of my age would never have had the opportunity to do. I feel privileged to be able to work on such vehicles, we all should. Let's all take good care of them.

NO ROUTEMASTERS TO HEMDEAN ROAD

Richard Zarywacz

Saturday 5th June saw the end of a short but important era. My childhood was spent in Heston, and the majority of buses during the early years were RTs, with new Routemasters on the 81B route to Heathrow. Like many families we had no car and our regular visits to relations in, or via Central London, were courtesy of London Transport. Like most small and not-so-small boys, I took a keen interest in our conveyances, both over and under ground and noticed significant details - most buses in Oxford Street had a plain radiator grille without a triangle and centre strip; inside, some buses had a wider gap between the lower deck front windows; later on, the Routemasters on route 37 to Putney had an extra small window half way along the side; inside you could tell the difference between Routemasters and other buses as the steering wheel centre had a round black top; some Bakerloo Line trains had a carriage with odd doors and "clerestory" roofs. An acquaintance of the family told me that in 'Sarth London', they've got silver buses like the underground trains". I did not believe her.

From 1969 the journey to school required two bus routes each way, and it coincided with the discovery of the ABC of London Buses which confirmed some of my conclusions. A colour picture of RM664 in a Blandford Book caused me to re-appraise my opinion of the family acquaintance. Then Merlins, Swifts and Fleetlines made their appearances, sweeping away conductors and trouble-free journeys, but the 117 remained steadfastly RM. When the world of work loomed so did the Underground and buses took a back seat, until romance brought me to the tube-less parts of Greenford and Southall, and Routemasters on route 105. Until, that is, I passed my driving test.

In 1986 we moved to Caversham, the ex-London MDs operated by Reading Transport kept me in touch with my roots (should that be routes?). Routemasters still passed the office in Kensington and it seemed as if they were invincible, the appearance of bread vans on route 28 convinced me otherwise. After a change of jobs I lost touch a little until 1994 when Reading Mainline appeared. The following year line H brought RMs past our front door. The bus stop is outside our neighbours' house and to be able to step out of the front door and hail a Routemaster was sublime. Naturally, we waited for the Routemaster even if the "Corporation bus" was first.

Hemdean Road was already well served by three routes, 24, 44 and 45, except for the last half-mile or so, which had been without buses for many years. The Routemasters covered this part of the road and reversed at the very end, not an easy manoeuvre. They were fast, the crews friendly and suddenly the need to travel into Reading Town Centre increased. In the mornings, an AEC or Leyland engine wafted up and back around 6:30, what a perfect alarm call, with snooze alarm reminders at 6:45 and 7:00. In summer, the conductor's starting signal could be heard through our open windows. And the variety of detail! RM and RML headlamp surrounds with or without cooling grilles, fixed or opening upper deck front windows, masked and unmasked heater intakes, tungsten or Transmatic fluorescent lighting, the list was endless.

1998 was a year of change. We discovered that Routemaster No.6 (RM577) carried the body originally on RM664, I joined Cobham (membership no. 664), and Reading Mainline was bought by Reading Buses and line H was replaced by line C along Hemdean Road. In the mornings we would jump up at the sound of an

approaching AEC engine to see if it was No.6. From the timetable the duty numbers were worked out so that we would know the time of a particular bus' return.

In May 1999 it was announced that line C would be curtailed at Reading Station and as a result Routemasters would no longer cross the Thames into Caversham, the last day would be 5th June. We could not let the occasion go unrecorded, but there was one difficulty.

On 5th June, RM577 was due to participate in the Vintage Bus Tour of London. Could we combine this with the end of Routemasters in Hemdean Road? Much planning was required. It was agreed that we should take our photos in the morning in case we were delayed in London, as the last service bus would be just before 7pm.

On the day we collected RM577 from the yard and returned to Reading to meet up with a service bus. When it arrived the large LT Trolleybus bullseye on my T-shirt caused a minor stir as the Reading Mainline driver originally drove Trolleybuses, mainly C class, from Stonebridge depot in the 1950s. We took our photos, bade farewell and followed the service bus down the road. Then onto Windsor and Richmond to pick up group members before meeting up with the tour at Holborn by 1.30pm.

An enjoyable afternoon was spent in the company of RT1784, RT1206, RF486, their owners and friends before returning towards Reading. Would we be in time? We parked RM577 and drove home, as we rounded the bend just below the house the last service Routemaster swept past us. We were satisfied.

The weeks have passed and Hemdean Road seems empty, the roar of Metrobuses, Titans and Olympians not providing the same frisson as the erstwhile competition. It was heaven while it lasted.

But all good things do not come to an end. Unlike the title, which is borrowed from the video film "No Trams to Savoy Street", a RM577 pays a passing visit now and again to remind Caversham of the superb buses that served it for four years. A pity that no E/1, or Feltham Tram could do the same on the Embankment.

THE YEAR OF THE LEYLAND

Phill Cruise

Back in the late fifties when the sounds of Ken Mackintosh and Joe Loss reverberated around the Hammersmith Palais, outside the sounds of the Leyland 0600 did likewise. The hub of the Broadway contained Riverside Bus Garage which was a Leyland shed housing some eighty vehicles of the RTL and RTW classes. Even the local trolleybus depot housed Leylands of classes D2 and D3 and PI. By 1960 the Ds had been replaced by Ks, this time all-Leyland products.

At the other end of Fulham Palace Road were the River Thames, Putney Bridge and High Street, off which ran Chelverton Road with another contingent of Leyland vehicles in its LT Garage. North of Hammersmith Broadway is Shepherd's Bush with its bus garage in Wells Road, again packed with RTLs and RTWs. The London Borough of Hammersmith as it was then was definitely within one of London Transport's Leyland engineering districts. I lived in Fulham, which hadn't had a bus garage for many years since one closed down in Farm Lane, off Walham Green. Apart from the Holloway (J) RTs on the 14s however it was firmly Leyland territory too! So, when I started my 'bus spotting' career I was surrounded by Leylands. We had RTWs on the 22 from Battersea and Hackney. RTWs on the 11s from Riverside and Dalston. RTWs on the 14 from AF with their RTLs on the 30s supported by Hackney and RTWs on the 74/74B from AF and R and I think some from Chalk Farm too. My local brewery (which I try to support as often as possible to help the community) is just down the road from Wandsworth Garage, which was another RTL shed. Their 28s being another route to border the area where I live.

All these nostalgic thoughts arose after an event at Cobham celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the RTW. This year with the entry into regular service of our RTL has certainly proved to be the year of the Leyland. Back in 1961 however with a few RTs around and new RMs on the 220 and 268 my Ian Allan ABC of London Transport Buses and Coaches 1960 edition was fast filling up with underlinings in the Leyland department and not a lot else. The sad preservationist of 1999, who has tried to ride on as many RTWs and RTLs as he could this year, had a very poor opinion of them



Photo Mike Nash.

Until recently part of the London and Country fleet, RT3775 is now with Ensign Bus and looks superb in their distinctive blue and silver Livery. Despite the blinds, it had been out in service at Bluewater when photographed on September 21st.



Photo Graham Smith

At the RTW50 display, the proud owners, with Colin Curtis and Peter Plummer, display their commemorative plates.



Photo Graham Smith

The 'magnificent seven' GSs made a fine sight and sound on their running day. Seen here at Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon station are, starting furthest away, numbers 1, 2, 17, 32, 34, 36 and 62.



Photo Mike Nash

Three surviving members of the much-maligned Merlin/Swift family gather for the rear-engine running day. MBAs582 and 641 join SMS369 at Redhill Road.

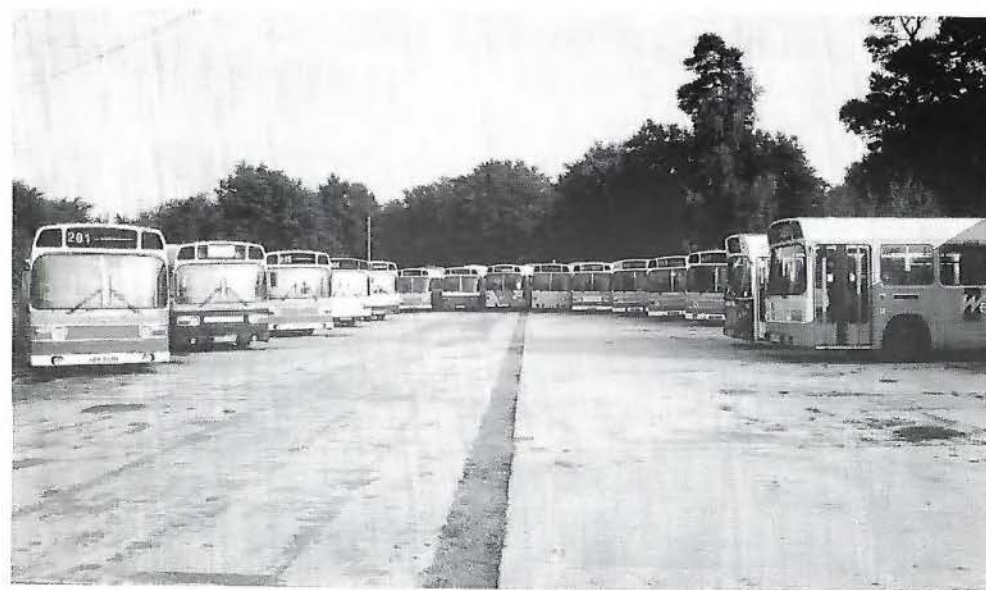


Photo Mike Nash

No fewer than 27 Nationals were in evidence at the rear-engine running day (Eds note- Frightening!)



Photo Mike Nash

Thanks to member Dave Jones, T1 made a rare visit to Surrey. Still based with Stagecoach East London, it operates from Romford (NS) garage, and was one of the sixty buses that attended the highly successful rear-engine running day.



Photo Mike Nash

DM1052 has been rescued by Paul Brophy, having operated latterly with 'D' Coaches Swansea. It is undergoing substantial re-panelling and a re-paint to original livery.



Photo CBM

MB336 recalling the days when this bus was new, in Greenford with RT1396, December 1968.



Our Chairman Peter Plummer accepting on behalf of all of us in the Trust, the annual conservation award plaque from Professor Alan Crocker, President of the Surrey Archaeological Society. It was awarded for the preservation and restoration of former London Transport vehicles carried out for many years at Cobham Bus Museum.



Photo Graham Smith
Bristol LH OWC723M, latterly with Blue Bus Services of Guildford sandwiched
Between two Nationals at Depot 46.



Photo Seb Marshall Collection
As told in the Summer 99 issue, here is D142 being loaded
for its trip to Japan in 1972.



Photos Rod Lucas
Leatherhead Garage, seen here in its last days, was demolished with
indecent haste after its closure on 30th April this year.



Photo CBM
A blurry shot of RM664 (taken on a Brownie 127)
whilst on demonstration at Highgate garage



Photo CBM
G351 in Burton Livery at the Greenford Rally in 1966



Photo Aidan Walsh
RM577, carrying the body originally unpainted on RM664, mourning
the demise of Routemasters passing along Hemdean Road, Reading.



Photo Richard Zarywacz
RT1784, RT1206 and RF486 enjoying a tour of London on 5th June

back in 1961. My idea of a decent bus was an RT. Even RMs with their aluminium parts with 'cheapo' glass fibre bits and horror of horrors some parts seemingly stuck on with glue were inferior to the enthusiast eye.

Over the next few years most of the local 'dubs' were replaced by cascaded RTLs and new and cascaded RMs, and the RTLs by cascaded RTs and a mixture of RMs some of which even had Leyland engines! By the time that the 28s and 22s (briefly) had RTs, much to my pleasure I have to admit, women and drink had replaced buses as my main preoccupation.

Somehow the Leylands that have survived into preservation seem to have discovered the art of ticking over without shaking the fillings out of the punter's teeth. Travelling on an immaculately turned out and 'tuned' RTW 29 this summer I remarked to a fellow member that they didn't turn them out like that back in the 'good old days'. More's the pity as I might have been more of a fan then. As it was I've got to admit that I was quite well pleased in 1968 when the last service RTLs were replaced by spare RTs.

For some reason the Leyland version of London's classic bus possibly because it was less well thought of, always seemed shabby during its last decade in service. It's good to see the survivors out and about this year. Most of them restored to a standard sadly lacking by the 1960s. RTL 139 can show a good turn of speed and that rich 'farty' Leyland exhaust has been heard resonating round Surrey's leafy suburbs on many occasions this year. I still rate RTs though, but these days their Leyland cousins don't seem quite the poor relations that they were. Oh! Yes, I heard somewhere that the 'Palais' is due to re-open again too!

ORGANISING A COBHAM EVENT - RTW50

Roy Adams

With RT 60 already planned for 1999 by Roger Stagg, it suddenly dawned on me that although a member of the RT family, the RTW class had its own unique place in the history of the London Bus. When the first batch set out from Tottenham Garage on route 41, on 11th May 1949, they were the very first 8ft wide motorbuses to

operate in the capital. I decided therefore that the 50th anniversary of this fact warranted a commemoration of its own.

So, having contacted the owners of the few remaining RTWs, all of whom said they would be interested in supporting such an event, I approached Peter Plummer, chairman of the London Bus Preservation Trust, with regard to holding the event at Cobham. After consulting his committee, he informed me that they were keen to see the commemoration take place at the museum, and the 4th July 1999 was agreed as a suitable date. With over 8 months to organise an event involving such a small number of vehicles, one would expect it to be a 'doddle'. Fortunately, having previously organised a number of events in various mediums, including car rallies, I knew different. It is never too soon to get started.

My first job was to write to all known RTW owners, to inform them that the event was on, and of the date. I knew that there were only six RTWs that could possibly be in a position to attend the event. Three of these were, at this point in time (October 1998) undergoing, or in need of, much restoration work. During the winter months, many letters and phone calls kept me abreast of the progress of the out of action RTWs. Fraser Clayton, owner of RTW 185, offered to help with the organisation of RTW 50, as the event was to be called. I attended a couple of meetings of the Cobham events sub-committee, and this produced the help of Ian Barrett, as our Cobham co-ordinator for RTW 50 day. These meetings also led to Graham Smith, the museum's publicity officer, taking on the whole job of publicising and seeking some sponsorship for the event. As things progressed, I realised that this was one of the biggest breaks I had had. I would, at this point, like to express my heartfelt thanks to Graham, his efforts contributed, in no small way, to the eventual success of RTW 50. He negotiated the sponsorship of special commemorative plates for each attending RTW, from Classic Bus Magazine, and the LBPT. itself. He also liaised with Gavin Booth, editor of Classic Bus, which resulted in an article that I had written about the RTW class being given the star treatment in the June/July edition of the magazine with the added bonus of an RTW in service picture on the cover. My grateful thanks go to Gavin Booth for the superb presentation of my article, and for Classic Bus and the LBPT joint sponsorship of the commemorative plates.

Early during 1999, Tim Stubbs, owner of RTW178, suggested that a meeting of all the RTW owners, perhaps in London, might be a

useful and interesting prelude to RTW 50. To cut a long story short, he took on the organising of this meeting, and on the 5th March a superb evening was enjoyed by the owners of the five RTWs that were destined to attend RTW 50. The evening began with an informal discussion about the event; this took place in a room at 55 Broadway, thanks to Nick Agew, then a ride across London in RTW467, and thanks again to Nick and the 467 group. A delicious fish and chip supper in a restaurant near Kings Cross followed, pre arranged by Tim Stubbs, and the evening concluded with a further journey back to Victoria on board RTW 467. Many thanks to Tim for an evening thoroughly enjoyed by everyone who attended.

After this I kept in touch with owners, and the progress on the buses still being worked on. I designed and ordered the commemorative plates, and began to plan the format for the actual day. To make an event involving such a small number of identical buses interesting to visitors, especially Cobham members, as well as the vehicle owners was quite a challenge. I decided that an interesting and knowledgeable special guest would be a great asset. Well they don't come much more interesting or knowledgeable around the London Bus than Mr Colin Curtis. My grateful thanks to him for agreeing to be our Guest of Honour. How to present the buses with interest was my next problem. Well the particular RTWs that have survived, and the way their owners have preserved them helped. Five out of the six possible RTWs appeared at Cobham on the day. These were: -

(1) THE NEW RTW - RTW 185, restored in the livery, and to the exact specification as when delivered from Leylands in 1949. Owner - Fraser Clayton.

(2) THE STANDARD RTW - RTW 29, restored in the livery and with LT modifications as outshipped from Aldenham Works around 1959. Owner - Roy Adams.

(3) THE LAST SERVICE RTW - RTW 467 actually was the last RTW in service on route 95 at Brixton on 15th May 1966.

Owners - RTW 467 Group.

(4) THE DRIVER TRAINING RTW - RTW 497, many RTWs were used on driver training duties until at least 1970, their 8ft width being the same as the incoming Routemaster.

Owner - Tony Potter.

(5) THE SOLD FOR FURTHER SERVICE RTW - RTW 178 was one of very few RTWs purchased by other bus operators for further

service in England, and is restored in the yellow and black livery of its second owner, Stevensons of Uttoxeter.

Owner - Tim Stubbs.

The sixth RTW that I had hoped for was RTW75, now owned by Blue Triangle. Roger Wright, proprietor of B. T. did his utmost to have the bus ready for RTW 50, but a little too much work was needed, and it was unable to attend. However Roger hopes that in the near future, RTW75 will become the only RTW in present day public service.

The day before RTW 50, Fraser Clayton, his partner Linda, myself, and my wife Joan, spent the day at the museum. Tables for literature and display cases for models were sorted out, cleaned and prepared. Fraser put the finishing touches to display boards that he had made for each RTW. The yard was cleared of debris and swept completely in readiness for the display. STL441 was cleaned and prepared for use as a hospitality bus and base for the RTW owners and their guests. And finally, Fraser and Linda were kind enough to pitch in and wash off the dirt and grime picked up by RTW29, in which Joan and I had travelled to Cobham from Bristol that morning. By about 5.30pm all was as ready as could be, RTW29 was driven into the space that had been reserved for her within the museum building for the night, and Joan and I retired to our overnight stay at the Morland Lodge in Cobham Village.

On the day, Ian Barrett collected me from Cobham village at 7.00am, and we started to move and display Cobham's resident buses in and around the museum. One by one the RTWs began to arrive, and as an added attraction, Alan Hallpike, the previous owner and restorer of RTW29, arrived in his immaculate 1959 Beardmore London Cab, having collected Joan from Cobham village on his way. The five RTWs were then displayed in the museum yard as previously described, with the correct route blinds, garage plates and other accessories in keeping with the era that they represented. Each had its own display board, all made and presented to the owners by Fraser Clayton, giving a short history of the vehicle, and its representation at RTW 50. One of the things that I feel very strongly about, is that Cobham Members, i.e.; those who join the London Bus Preservation Trust, and pay a subscription, and in many cases work also to support and preserve

the London Bus, should have as many chances as possible to ride on the buses that they help to support. To this end, and with the kind permission of their the owners, all five RTWs ran short trips, throughout the day, offering free rides to any LBPT members who wanted them.

The weather was very kind to us, there seemed to be plenty of visitors, and the Cobham shop, and the stallholders who had chanced supporting RTW 50 did a reasonable trade. The superb buffet lunch that my wife Joan and Linda had prepared on board STL441 for the RTW owners and various helpers, guests and officials, went down very well. A small hiccup occurred when during a trip carrying members, RTW497 developed a leak in its fuel header tank, and came to a halt. However a Cobham member on board the bus, contacted the museum on his mobile phone, and by the time I was told about the incident, Andy Baxter, Paul Morris and Simon Kaye had evaluated the situation, and were loading a spare tank, borrowed from the museum's RT chassis, and toolbox, on board Cobham's flagship, TD 95 ready to set off to the rescue. Passengers were transferred to one of the other RTWs already out on a run, and within an hour, RTW 497 returned, back on the road again. My thanks to Andy, Paul and Simon for their initiative and quick response.

Towards the end of the afternoon, Colin Curtis presented the individual commemorative plate for each RTW to the respective owners, and the day concluded with Alan Hallpike in the Beardmore leading a convoy of all five RTWs out of the gates on a final photographic run to Stoke-de-Abernon, with a number of Cobham members taking advantage of the last chance of the day to ride on these rather rare members of the RT family. During the course of the day, I learned that First Bus Centre West, of London, had made the very generous offer of donating all the diesel used by the RTWs for the event. My very grateful thanks go to them on behalf of myself and all the other RTW owners, none of whom knew about this offer before they set out for Cobham.

I enjoyed organising RTW 50, and gained much satisfaction from the letters and comments that I have received since. I would like to express my thanks, once again, to all those who helped to make

RTW 50 a successful day. However my special thanks must go to all the RTW owners. Without their hard work, and dedication to preserving these vehicles, events like this would not be possible.

THE LAST RTW IN SERVICE

Bill Cottrell

Yes, I was there! To see in the last RTW in passenger service, Brixton garage, around mid-night, Friday 14th May 1966, alongside my old schoolmate and RTW fan Colin Stannard (Stan). We photographed the last few as they arrived, and then at the appropriate time, the Union Flag was unfurled in front of RTW476 destined to be the last one and earmarked for preservation. At that point it was noticed that the buses were being put through the wash and allocation plates affixed ready for another day in service. Ooops! We just assumed the last day in service would be a Friday. I thought you checked. No, I thought you did. Oh ****! Same time tomorrow night lads! But the next night, I wasn't there.

However, I was there when RTW467 was picked up from, I think, Shepherds Bush garage. The 14 co-owners and friends made a fair busload as we set off for Wilmots of Southall to get the bus MOT'd. Arrival at the yard saw progress halted due to a low telephone wire. The chap doing the MOT decided a test drive was all that was required, as in 'I've always wanted to have a go in one of these!' So off we set around the back streets of Southall, when without any warning, he decided to test the brakes by a full emergency stop. The passenger in front of me, caught unawares, smacked his face on a seat stanchion which dislodged a lens from his glasses that then found its way embedded into his forehead via his eyebrow. We hurriedly returned to the yard while the pass certificate was made out and then diverted to Southall Cottage Hospital for the removal of the wayward lens and the application of a couple of stitches. That was the last time I rode on an RTW, as I was unfortunately not able to attend the excellent recent running day.

REAR-ENGINEED RUNNING DAY 30TH AUGUST

Mike Nash

1999 has been Cobham's most ambitious season ever in terms of special events, and as a result the 'regulars' have without doubt felt the strain on more than one occasion. But what we have offered this year is variety, and no more so than on August Bank Holiday Monday, when everything clicked to make for a most enjoyable and very successful day.

The concept of a rear-engine rally at Cobham had started off as a casual suggestion at the start of the year, but with all the right names involved, things soon gathered momentum. Not that it was all plain sailing. Originally scheduled for August 1st, a late change of date prevented our clashing with the Lingfield Rally, so with the Bank Holiday Monday being the only workable alternative, suddenly we were thrown in at the deep end in terms of having to provide the bulk of services to and from the large Woking Classic Car Show. Now, the idea of rear-engined machinery handling these duties did not prove popular with some of our more blinkered members but in the end two rear-engined routes and a vintage direct route were concocted whereby everyone was happy. The route numbers 510, 590 and 680 were chosen for obvious reasons with the two rear-engined routes being of a lengthy nature.

Suffice to say that despite a number of hitches, none of which had stemmed from those involved with the rear-engined event, but which had conspired to make the day potentially something of a damage limitation exercise, we had a terrific day, with all those involved clearly enjoying themselves and vehicle owners of all types mixing and mingling and generally enjoying the copious sunshine and relaxed nature of the event. Added to which, the museum was doing steady business all day with the shop enjoying much patronage.

We were able to use Depot 46, a yard further up Redhill Road, as our operating base and this worked brilliantly with LN8 as the control bus. No fewer than 17 different buses went out in service and the intensive schedules made for much activity both outside the museum and at Woking, with many drivers reporting capacity loads.

In addition, no fewer than sixty different buses could be seen at Depot 46 during the day ranging from GSs through to an ex-London Coaches open-top MCW Metroliner. There were photo opportunities a-plenty with one of the most popular line-ups being that of the LT Museum's MBA582, Bryan Nash's MBA641 and the Trust's SMS369 (see photo). And surely the gathering of no fewer than 27 Leyland Nationals on site is a record which will never be beaten at a rally!

It was most important to me that those who had either provided vehicles or labour enjoyed the day and judging by the positive feedback, this aim was fully achieved with several participants claiming it had been their favourite event of the season thus far. Without doubt the weather was a big bonus but particular thanks must also go to Alan Fairbrother and Paul Brophy who handled so expertly the timetabling aspects, and the RP90 Group who were 'depot shunters' both before and after the event. Special thanks also to all those who provided vehicles, some of whom did up to five rounders, especially Dave Jones of Stagecoach East London for providing T1, Andy Barnes for bringing along two vehicles for service and route evaluation, and John Broadhurst who got roped in at the last minute with his VR. Grateful thanks to all those others whose efforts were beyond the call of duty. You know who you are! We're going to do it all again next year, only this time on Whitsun Bank Holiday Monday 29th May, so do make a note in your diaries now.

The vehicles in service on the day were as follows: -

Routes 510 & 680

Leyland Nationals LS7, SNB257, SNB 259, SNB312, SNB540, AYJ 97T and NPJ 472R.

Bristol RE's KHW 309E & JDK 911P, Bristol VR WKO 132S. Also T1 and M161.

Route 590

RT 2043, RT3491, RP90, Regent 111s MTJ 635 and CDX 516.

WOKING 2000

Roger Stagg

Following yet another success at the Woking Running Day, where both rear engine and traditional vehicles operated a service I am looking already towards August Bank Holiday 2000. After discussion with interested parties I have come to the firm conclusion that this is such a good event that it is unreasonable to try and restrict it to one type of vehicle. It will be in the interests of everybody to operate it as a Classic Vehicle Running Day.

It is proposed that the service will operate generally between Woking and The Museum but utilise three or four different routes that are suitable for the type of vehicle being used. There are two potential routes for double deck vehicles and two more for single deck. In addition, if the event is sufficiently well patronised then circular routes starting from Cobham to other destinations will be included to improve the interest. The event will be open to all classic vehicles with no restriction on type, engine position or operator. Participants may opt to attend only, attend and run on one of the routes out of service, attend and run in service with restricted passengers, attend and run in service with unrestricted passengers. Participants are welcomed for one journey or to operate all day. The intention is to spread the interest as far as possible and provide the greatest possible range of classic transport. For those who do not know the event we are linked with the classic vehicle display in Woking town centre which attracts a very substantial number of family visitors. Experience over the last three years has shown that these family visitors are well behaved and appreciative and everybody who has taken part in the past has enjoyed their day.

The best events for the owners and the general public are always those that are properly organised and that involves making the arrangements well in advance. Therefore, I would earnestly ask all of those members with their GSs, RFs, RTs, RMs and later whose designations are too numerous to list, together with all provincial vehicles who would be interested in joining us on this varied and interesting day to drop me a line expressing that interest. Not even a stamped addressed envelope required at this point.

AN INTRODUCTION TO LONDON'S BUSES IN MINIATURE

Alan John Purssey

As a young lad, living in the Wood Green area of London, I was always curious as to why LT had such an assortment of buses in service during the late-forties and early-fifties.

At this time, the area was served by three LT bus garages; one at Palmers Green, which housed ST and STLs, one at Wood Green which housed trolley buses and 5Q5s on route 233 Finsbury Park and Northumberland Park, after the construction of a low bridge in Station Road. Lastly, West Green, which housed STs and STLs.

Much later, I learned that the intervention of the Second World War slowed LT plans for standardisation by a decade.

I have always been fascinated by London's buses, and in those days bus preservation was in its infancy, nothing at all like the wonderful examples we can see today.

Back in the 1960s, I was offered a model railway set for my son, and wishing to improve and expand his layout or him, I looked in various model railway magazines for suitable additions.

It was in one such publication that I came across an article on model buses, and this single article has led me into a long and enjoyable hobby, making London buses in miniature.

For those not familiar with cast metal models, the kits come in boxes with full instructions, and have to be assembled and painted. They are all to a constant scale of 4mm. to the foot, the same as EFE and OOC.

My first attempt was an RT by Cotswolds model castings, and by today's standards was rather crude, but it was a start.

Other models soon followed, including an RLH low height, an LT scooter, a Bluebird, and Guy Special from GS models. Further written articles in the model press revealed that a firm called Mabex, produced a fine range of transfers for this scale of buses. Fleet names front and rear, posters, side adverts, and destination screens for all periods, which meant I could finish off my buses in some detail.

Pirate models appeared next with kits of an open top NS, closed top NS, Interstation Leyland Cub, all completes with transfers.

Reg Varney came on the scene with his transport replica series. These were and still are superb kits of the Tilling ST, like Cobham's

example, General ST, round and square cab versions, 10T10, Leyland Cub, B type, and Godstone STL. These models set the standard that others followed.

I had the privilege of meeting the man who put together these kits at one of Cobham's open days back in the seventies, where he was running a stall selling Dinky toys.

My collection was now growing fast, with more offerings from Pirate including trolley buses, RTW, 6Q6, 4Q4, and 5Q5. They all helped to increase my ability to assemble the kits.

From time to time, I have had some professionally made for me such as a wonderful model of LS6, a single deck in the class of 12, CR1 which has minor differences from the rest of the class, T31, the same as Cobham's, STL1 D/D and Q188 experimental D/D coach, and some service vehicles.

Graham Orchard's Model Bus Company bought us models of front entrance STL, Tunnel STL, TF and a Bedford mobile canteen based on Cobham's example and many more.

Model Bus Company sadly does no longer produce bus kits, however they offer a magnificent range of transfers, including Badges for radiators, number-plates, running plates, screen and fleet names all to 4mm scale. These are the fine details in which to complete a scale model

Which leads me to RTC Models of Harrow, whose current range includes General Dennis Dart, CR Cub, Mann Egerton T & TD, 5Q5, LTE, RFW, Regal 4RF4, Bea Coach and 11T11 Regal. They also supply a full range of transfers to complement their range of models.

Future kits planned are Regent Leanback STL, AEC Regal IV prototype UMP227 and RTC1 prototype.

Kit Building

My preferred method to building the kits is with impact adhesive such as Loctite, but some modellers prefer low melt solder, which does fill in any deficiency in the casting. Firstly I do a dry run after checking all parts are complete and then clean up the castings.

Cast metal is a soft medium and is therefore easy to work with; any filling is done later with body-putty

Some of the early kits needed to be assembled by fitting the interior first, but this could have lead to a problem with the painting, so I have found through experience that painting the window surrounds before assembly is necessary to avoid paint on the glazing. Modern kits are designed for the interior fitting last method of construction. EG: Body shell built first to allow painting, then the floor and seats together with the glazing are fitted last. I use a solvent free Bostic, for glazing to avoid any smearing.

Before painting, wash the kit in washing up liquid. This cleans any greasy finger marks off, before applying a cellulose primer which must be allowed to dry completely. (A word of warning. This must be Cellulose not Acrylic primer as they react to one another causing blistering).

Over the years I have tried most types of painting, brush, and air brush but have found that by far the best method are spray paints from any car shop. But do follow the instructions on the can. Painting must be done at room temperature or the paint will dry to a matt finish. If this should happen put the spray can in hot water for a few minutes. Allow the kit to dry first, then heat for a few moments with a hairdryer and spray again. After about 6 coats the final results will be well worth it.

Finally apply the transfers; allow about 12 hours then complete the model by coating completely in Gloss or Matt varnish. My recommendation would be Humbrol. This protects the transfers and stops any flaking.

Most of the model kits previously mentioned from Varney, and Model Bus Company are still available from John Gay and are marketed under the "Street Scene "series; they also stock LT and Predecessor Trams and Trolley Buses. Having bought out Pirate Models the range continues to expand with some models that are simple to build and would be a good starter kit e.g.: Central T Types.

In closing none of this would have been possible but for the foresight of the British Transport Museum, now at Covent Garden. And individuals Alan B. Cross and your own Bill Cottrell whose

dedication and skills have preserved the magnificent examples we can enjoy today.

Part of the enjoyment of building your own buses is to visit places such as Cobham to see and take photos for paint schemes and finer details, which go into making a scale model

In anticipation this has fired your interest in Model Bus making, listed below are the names of better known kit suppliers.

John Gay

Horsham Lane, Upchurch, Sittingbourne, Kent. A1E9 7AL
Lists Supplied £1. 50 SAE

Model Bus Company, Bondi Praa Sands, Penzance. TP20 9TQ
SAE For Catalogue

The Little Bus Company, Queenswood Avenue, Hutton ,
Brentwood, Essex. CH13 1HU
SAE for full details

RTC Models, Rosslyn Crescent, Harrow, Middx. HA2 2RZ
Catalogue £1. 50 and SAE

Mabex Transfers, PO BOX 2581, Eastbourne,
East Sussex. BN21 2UQ
SAE and 35P

LETTERS

From Hugh D. Ramsey

What a splendid, sheer nostalgic, line up of RTs/RTLs on the Cobham Stn car park this afternoon. Such 1950s nostalgia, I was transported back to the rear of some of the 1950s LT garages which had similar line ups every Sunday! Magic! And just to be sat upstairs on an RT on the 462 route and to see a gleaming red RT approaching and passing us were moments to savour! All credit to

those responsible for organising "RT60" today, a worthy tribute to a classic class of London Transport bus, and thoroughly enjoyable. I do remember in the mag there being a note that an RT brochure would be available on the 6th June, but I never saw one on sale, either in the museum, at Cobham Stn, or on the RTs to/from the sites. Did it appear?

*Lowther Road,
Dunstable,
Bedfordshire. LU6 3LP*

From Peter Williams

I wonder if you could please put an advertisement in the next issue of the magazine for me. As well as my interest in London Transport buses, trolleybuses and trams my other area of interest is the Crystal Palace. Could you therefore ask if any member has any photographs or old postcards showing London Transport, or their predecessors, vehicles either along the Parade in front of the Palace, at the train stop or in fact any picture of a public transport vehicle with the Crystal Palace in the background or somewhere in shot. I am willing to pay for any copies they need to make.

Thank you for your kind assistance in this matter and keep up the good work on the magazine.

*Pembroke Road,
Basingstoke,
Hampshire RG23 8QH*

From Roger Stagg

Uniforms

When several years ago I was looking for uniform items at the various shows and rallies I found that I was far from being the only one. Where have all those thousands and thousands of uniforms gone? They can't all be in garden sheds although I am assured that

great coats are ideal for the allotment in winter. I do not see a lot of call for remnants of uniforms that are at the best a couple of years old and are only on the second hand market because most of the operating companies now seem to be happy to allow their staff uniform to wear jeans, trainers and T-shirt. Remember the inspector's immaculate uniform that could frighten the living daylights out of a schoolboy who had gone one stop too far for his ticket? Contrast this with the jumper who boarded RT1790 when Mike Clark and I were running it on 9 August; probably pushing twenty-four, female and dressed suitably for working on that allotment but without the great coat.

Nevertheless, it transpired that I was far from being the only person looking for old uniform items and equally having little success. Despite this lack of availability and indeed the number of requests that have appeared in various columns for similar items my requests for those who might be interested in uniforms received virtually no response. People who did approach me were generally concerned that new uniforms may cost more than £5.

I have not therefore progressed the general uniform items any further. I have however progressed on the matter of caps having found a source. The correct cap should feature a blue piping on an otherwise black stricture with a plasticated white removable cover with similar blue piping for the central area and with similar green with green piping for country area. At the present I can resource suitable caps and covers for the central area but they are absent of the blue piping. The quality is superb and the cost is around £20 plus VAT including the white cover. The manufacturer is quite prepared to produce them with the blue piping but as one might expect there would have to be at least fifty or the cost will be totally unacceptable. I cannot resource the green unless there are at least one hundred required which seems highly unlikely. I am looking towards the potential of an off the peg green cap so if this is your particular interest please let me know to enable me to determine whether there is the interest before undertaking more in depth investigations.

If you are therefore interested in caps with or without the piping and have not already been in touch via the article in the RT/RF newsletter please let me know of your interest as soon as possible.

Teston Road, Offham, Kent. ME19 5NE

BOOK REVIEWS

RT 60.SIXTY YEARS OF THE RT BUS -A POTTED HISTORY-

Published by Roger Stagg, reviewed by Phill Cruise and available from the Museum Shop at £5.

Roger produced this concise illustrated history of the RT to accompany the celebrations of 6th June which were attended by many Cobham members and their vehicles.

The book which measures 6.1/2"x 9.1/2" contains thirty-one pages' fourteen of which consist of primarily colour pictures of RT family vehicles. Most of these were participants in the road run/service from the Aldwych to Stoke D'Abernon Station at the RT 60 event. A brief history of each vehicle appears at the end of the book. The soft covers are illustrated with the 'first and last' of the class or more accurately the first body and vehicle with the last set of registration plates and bonnet numbers.

This attractively produced booklet is a fitting souvenir of what was a really good day and will be of interest to those who could not attend in person. It is also a good introduction to the RT for any people who for whatever reason have missed out on London's most famous bus.

LONDON'S CLASSIC BUSES John A.Gray Published by Capital Transport at £16.95 Reviewed by Phill Cruise and available from the Museum Shop.

This hard cover book is a rather unusual size, being 9X10 inches. There are ninety-six pages, most of which are colour plates with informative captions. The beginning of the book consists of an introduction with some manufacturers literature and early colour photographs. Unfortunately the author's definition of a classic London bus is one with two decks and all the excellent photographs are of RT and RM family vehicles. I am sure that all of us would consider that the RF was also a classic London bus. Included in the background are an SM and LN but not an RF in sight! This large omission aside, the selection of pictures, all in colour is brilliant with some classic shots and rarities side by side. The 'classic' shots include a Mortlake RTL on the 9s, RTWs in the slush outside Willesden Garage, RTW13 at the Liverpool Street stand in 1965 and RT3162 operating from Swanley at Farningham on a 'short' to Eynsford. I remember them all well!

The rarities include colour shots of green RT2s, RM1 at Victoria on the 2, RT2776 at Wanstead and from Bill Cottrell a Sunday (morning?) shot from 1969 of Abbey Wood's experimental RM738 doing a duty on the 99, passing what became the Tramshed Theatre in Woolwich.

Apart from the lack of RFs then, this book is a winner and a reminder of what were mostly better times, which for some reason always come back in black and white!

ROUTEMASTERS IN COLOUR by Geoff Rixon. Ian Allan Publishing £14.99 Reviewed by Mike Nash

Member Geoff Rixon is well known within our movement, both for his outstanding photography and his immaculately presented Routemaster, RM254. Therefore, there are not many better qualified to compile a glossy landscape album on the subject in question.

Quite simply, regardless of whether you love or loathe these iconic machines, you cannot fail to be impressed with the sheer quality and variety of material on offer here. Concentrating on the period 1979 to 1999, there are a myriad of detail differences and livery variations to be enjoyed, together with nicely relaxed captions which only go to reinforce ones appreciation of the worlds most famous bus. As half-cabs go, they don't come much purer in design than Routies, and this is confirmed when you consider how stylish the model looks in almost any livery. Around half the pictures depict RMs in their natural environment, i.e. London, but it is the remainder which to these eyes are of more interest. Whilst LT red maybe the definitive livery for a Routemaster there's no denying that they looked just as handsome in that of Blackpool Transport, or Green Rover, or East Yorkshire. By contrast, Stagecoach stripes really didn't work on a Routemaster, which is strange because they can look so fresh on certain other types.

But I digress. This album presents the reader with page after page of high quality colour studies of the Routemaster all over the globe and in almost every guise you can think of. And many shots almost seem to jump out of the page at you such as RM560 when owned by Western Buses in 1997.

Such is the familiarity of the breed that it is very easy to overlook the significance and sheer diversity with which Routemasters have gone about their business, and no doubt will continue to do so for years to come. This book then is a fitting reminder and Geoff has

done a fine job of assembling such consistently first rate material. It is bound (no pun intended) to sell like hot cakes but I do wonder if, at £14.99, Ian Allan have priced it a couple of pounds too dear, reliant perhaps upon the subjects pulling power.

GROUNDS FOR IMPROVEMENT

John Broadhurst

A number of members have expressed an interest in helping to keep the grounds at the museum tidy. If I haven't yet been in touch with anyone who gave his or her name to me it's because I've mislaid it! Please be assured that your assistance is still needed and appreciated.

I am at the museum most Sundays and occasionally for an hour or two during the week when the weather is fine. This is a busy time of year with leaves falling when anyone sneezes! You may have noticed the number of trees in the grounds. I've cleared quite a lot of stinging nettles (and have the rash to prove it!) only to have thistles take their place. Should anyone be thinning out any perennials from their garden, i.e. Asters (Michaelmas Daisy and the like), or maybe taking cuttings from flowering shrubs, I'm sure we could find a spot for them in the grounds. I would like to introduce more colours and scent so if you have anything available let me know. Oh! By the way- it shouldn't be palatable to rabbits! I never knew that rabbits liked African Marigolds, but they ate all mine, a beautiful show they were (for one day only).

I've dug out a hole where the old water meter was and want what Charlie Dimmock would call a 'water feature'. Pond to you and me. (Ed's note: - Charlie Dimmock in a wet tee shirt, that's what I call water feature!)

Has any member got a supply of 'granite sets' (free if possible) or other such suitable material, its all to do with the pond. I'd like to have water flowing down the sets into the pond below. I know we haven't got any water there yet, so, anyone capable of laying electric cables? Any offer of help with any of the above would be most welcome. You know I even saw people just sitting in the grounds this summer, just sitting and enjoying the rest

I can be contacted on mobile phone **04674 17**, thank-you, JB (the younger!)

SUNSHINE BUSES, POSTSCRIPT

Roger Stagg

Part 1 of this article appeared in the spring 99 issue (no. 24)

The Barbados Transport Board has taken delivery of 450 new single decker buses. All are rear engine Mercedes chassis with a mixture of Marco Polo and Ciano bodies, which are of virtually identical external design and manufactured in Brazil. The only external differences appear to be that the Marco Polo bodies have roller destination blinds and the Ciano have dot matrix. Very few of the older vehicles are now in use and are generally in external store adjacent to the Fairchild Street Depot. Vehicles remaining in service are generally the older 7m vehicles for the more obscure routes. The new vehicles all are 11.5m.

Bread van operation for the independent operators has diminished severely, although there are a few new vehicles in service but they are still of essentially the same basic home built acme road runners on Hino chassis. In some places these have been replaced by 10 and 12 seater 'Z' vans.

I saw an interesting article in the local paper and I quote: 'Dees new buses of de transport board are dangerous wid de engine at the back. All de weight is at de back and as dey go 'long de road de front wheels lift up and der is no steering. Better we go back to de old buses. De best bus be one wid an engine stick up in de middle 'tween de wheels. I have much experience of dese buses skidding.' signed:

J Stoute, Driving Instructor, Chairman of the St Phillip Road Safety Committee and Ex London Transport Driver.

This letter is not a joke, it expresses a serious viewpoint in an Island where anything new is regarded with considerable scepticism and where the newspaper not only regularly prints letters in the West Indianese (which is still used by the older generation) but reports upon court proceedings in the terms of: 'He say dat'. The moral must be to keep a very safe distance from brand new rear end Mercedes buses driven by an aged West Indian!

Finally for those who are far more experienced than I in the intricacies of Bedford vehicles, I apologise if in the early part of this article I may have referred to Bedford OBs when they were actually another Bedford. I am afraid that to me anything that looks like a Bedford OB is an OB, even if it may actually be an AB or ZB. I am sure most of our readers understand the term 'OB' to be a particular classic shape even if the reference is not 100% correct. To those who know better, my apologies.

THE MILLENIUM EXTRA SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PRIZE QUIZ

Bill Cottrell

Something to exercise the remaining active brain cell during the coming dark, dank winter evenings. The quiz with a difference. Something for everyone. An opportunity to win a twenty pound voucher to spend exclusively in the Cobham Museum Shop. (Mail order accepted)
Here are the answers: -

1	142635	11	Bournemouth Corporation
2	Flanders and Swann	12	Great Bookham to Uxbridge
3	OLD589	13	CR Class
4	W	14	Old Kent Road
5	Summer Holiday	15	Acton
6	Scooters	16	178, 230 and 248
7	Vanguard	17	RT2775
8	406F	18	Weymann Bodywork
9	4P2R	19	Stonebridge Park, Middle Row
10	'Old Bill'	20	9 th April 2000

There you are! The answers to the quiz.
I want you to provide the questions to the above. More than one question will fit the answers, but all the questions must have a London bus connection. For example, you may think the question for no. 1 is 'In what order did the lottery numbers come out last week?' This would not be an acceptable entry, but 'What was the maximum number of driving instructors that could be housed in Chiswick Canteen at any one time?' would be considered.

In case of a tie, the winner will be decided by the best tiebreak question. The answer to the tiebreaker is - (B) False.

Good luck!

I look forward to receiving your entries, closing date 14th January 2000

BEYOND THE GATES

John Hinson

On October 9th a significant date in bus history passed, celebrated by just three people in one bus. This was the centenary of the London motor bus, for on the very same day in 1899 a service commenced between Kennington and Victoria via Westminster operated by two Daimler buses.

At least, we think so. Books covering the history in those early days vary in their accuracy - one claims the date was 7th October, whilst others suggest the route ran from *Notting Hill Gate* or *Kensington*!

Our RT1784 was the vehicle that did the honours, starting at Stockwell Garage, then proceeding to Kennington in order to follow the route to Victoria. From there, we continued to "The Depot" - the newly built outstation to Covent Garden Museum.

Does this all sound familiar? Of course it does - the "official" celebrations did the very same the following Saturday (this date was chosen to coincide with an open day at "The Depot"), and our function was really to perform a dry run to check for complications. Nevertheless, it seemed a privilege to be there on the real date, although it did seem strange to do this with so little company.

For us, the late part of the summer seems to wind-down rallywise. We always feel that with event organisers avoiding August dates, and our taking our holidays in early September, the season seems to fizzle out a bit after July. I really think that with the high number of events these days it might be worth having more August events rather than the intense flurry of chilly autumnal events in October.

One of these October events is the Amersham Running Day, with which I have some involvement on the timetabling front. I'll avoid saying how wonderful the timetables were (!) but will comment that there did seem to be more RT and RF class vehicles performing on the free local services than ever before. Some of these vehicles are old friends with new owners, and Chris Bateson's green RTL1256 certainly created some interest. Apart from this gem, there were plenty of RFs and RFs (green and red), some GSs and of course Richard Proctor's ever sparkling RLH48. RLH32, discussed in these columns before, was there too, and although it wasn't scheduled for service it was certainly seen at out at one point. All in all, this event has turned into one of the biggest running days around London.

A new running day destined to become a regular feature on the rally calendar took place in September at Hertford, ably organised by Colin Rivers. We dashed back from Scotland to reach there just in time to catch the last bus, which was Colin's own RF679, taking up some delightful country lanes to Little Berkhamstead and back. We heard that there had been plenty of interesting vehicles at this event, too, including RTL1256 and RT113.

I certainly am pleased to the green RTL back on the road; I hadn't seen it since the early eighties. Around that time it was purchased by somebody in Yorkshire, who subsequently became unwell and the bus saw little activity. I would emphasise this is the only surviving RTL to have genuinely carried LT green livery in service - I'm afraid to say that the one that lurks at Cobham is a fake!

A few interesting vehicles have been up for sale recently. My old friend TD118 is for sale once again - contact Dick Bole on **01304**

431. This vehicle used to be kept in the Finchley area while I was at school in the 1960s and a group of us showed an interest in purchasing the vehicle when it might become redundant from its role as holiday transport for students. Apparently, it traveled as far afield as Russia. Anyway, needless to say, the owner forgot all about us when he had cause to sell it, and I didn't see it again until the 1980s when I espied it again from a train passing through Hampstead. I managed to locate the owner, who was having difficulty keeping it roadworthy and had no off-road parking for it, although he subsequently moved to Southport and took it with him. Indeed, I helped arrange its transportation for him. He, too, had

solemnly vowed to offer it to me if the need to sell it arose, but of course he didn't and it slipped away from me once again. Now the opportunity is here, I am ashamed to admit that circumstances have changed, and it would be too large a project to take on in addition to our other vehicles, so I just hope it finds a good home. It may already be sold by now.

If restoration is completed, we could soon have a record number of four TDs in preservation - 89 (Tony Quince), 95 (here at Cobham), 118, and 130 (Roy Adams).

RT981 has been sold again, I hear, although the previous owner has apparently retained the registration for use on his car. Shame on him! The new owner is apparently Peter Newman in Essex, and I wouldn't be at all surprised if this one is destined to appear on some sort of PSV work in the near future. We shall see.

I've already hinted that our holiday was in Scotland, and as usual I did my best to make it a busman's one. I wasn't entirely successful in this respect, for we discovered the Scottish Bus Museum at Lathalmond has rather limited opening hours. Most of our time was spent on the islands of Shetland and Orkney. We do seem to have a bit of an obsession of going just about as far as we can, and for this holiday this meant a couple of days spent on Unst, the northernmost island of the Shetlands.

It would seem that great effort is made to ensure the islanders don't feel cut off or subservient to mainland Scotland. One noticeable feature throughout the Shetlands was ample provision of bus shelters, although I can't say that we saw a single bus on Unst! The population of that island seem to have noticed the lack of vehicles, too, by providing many of the shelters with chairs, tables, and even armchairs. One particularly well provided one had net curtains, carpet, sofa, television, pot plants, clock, food, crisps and bicycles. There was even a dummy cyclist lounging on the sofa. Strange!

When I started this column a few years ago, it was my intention to include a regular feature on non-London vehicles belonging to members. Despite there being quite a few of these, little response came to my requests for information so I let this fizzle out after a few issues. I certainly owe apologies to Gareth Crowther in this

respect, for he kindly sent me details of all the vehicles in his ownership/part-ownership, but I didn't write about them all.

Anyway, Tim Stubbs wrote to me recently with details of one of his vehicles. Tim has quite a collection of ex-Aldershot & District Dennises, but the vehicle he sent details of was in fact ex-London RTW178. This RTW has had a bit of a chequered career in preservation, but is now fully fit and running again in Tim's ownership. Tim's special interest in this vehicle is that it retains the yellow and black livery and fittings of Stevensons of Utoxeter, a company local to him and for which he has worked at times. In fact, Tim purchased an RT some years ago to convert into a mock Stevenson's condition, but then circumstances suddenly changed and he was able to purchase the RTW.

The vehicle had a steady career with London Transport, working from Clay Hall, Bow and Putney. Most RTWs went to Pickersgill & Laverick in Yorkshire for scrap or to Ceylon for further service, but a few escaped to have further life, and 178 went to Stevensons in 1966, working for them for some twelve years with the fleet number 11.

It entered preservation in 1978, being purchased by Tony Sewell and two colleagues. Substantial renewals were carried out - a full set of window pans had to be fitted and much timberwork was renewed, along with floor coving panels. All the places where all RT family vehicles seem to suffer, in fact.

Unfortunately, Tony died in a road accident in 1995 and in due course Tim was able to purchase the bus. Since then, Tim has carried out some quite remarkable renewal work to the riser and platform. Some of the upper deck timberwork had rotted badly, too, and has been dealt with.

All this work was amazingly completed in good time for the vehicle to take part in the RTW50 celebrations at Cobham this summer. I wonder how many people that admired it there realised how hard he had worked.

Tim adds that the bus reaches 21 years in preservation this year and he hopes to commemorate this in special style. Some service

runs on the Stevensons "main road" are planned and retired bus crews will be able to wallow in nostalgia. Maybe these have already taken place by the time you read this.

Shhhh. Don't tell Tim there is a GS around in Stevenson's livery.

Any snippets for this column?

Contact John Hinson at The Shambles, Graham Road,
Wealdstone, Middx. HA3 5RE

Or email shambles@ com.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS TOUR

AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Apart from the fact that you might like to know the date of this year's event (11th December), would you please also note that the event starts from a different location this year. Vehicles will now congregate in Holborn, facing East, commencing just east of Chancery Lane Underground station, and depart at the usual time of 5.30 p.m.

Anybody needing route instructions, please contact Gill or John Hinson on **020 1062**.

Back Cover.

Photo Peter Plummer

An impressive line up at Cobham Stoke D'Abernon station on the occasion of RT60 showing 2293, 113, 3148, RTL1427, 593, 935, 2291, 2177 and 1702



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH 1999

Date: Sunday 12 December

Venue: Silvermere Golf Club Restaurant (Upstairs)

Time: 12 Noon, lunch starts at 12.30pm

Cost: £14 per head,
£7 per child under 12

All Cobham Museum members, friends and family
welcome.

3 course buffet including carvery style meal and coffee

Maximum number 110, first come first served.

No seating plan

Must have numbers by end of October.

Money to be paid in full by 25 November

Ring Debbie Morris to confirm place/places

Telephone number **0181 8394**

LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST

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Photo Peter Plummer

An impressive line up at Cobham Stoke D'Abernon station on the
occasion of RT60 showing 2293, 113, 3148, RTL1427, 593, 935,
2291, 2177 and 1702

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 (**0181 8394**) or Bill Cottrell (**0181
8240**), who will pass them on to the appropriate person.

Or e-mail at any time to BILLCOTTRELL@freecserve.co.uk

Your co-operation is appreciated.

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