

COBHAM BUS MUSEUM

MAGAZINE



No 27. Winter 1999/2000

£2



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Editorial

Bill Cottrell

This New Year, more than any previous, we have reason to look forward. STL 2377 will be out and about before the next magazine is published, the culmination of a lot of work by a lot of people. However, there is a core of members that have given much more effort than most of us, and without them the project would not have come to fruition. The rest of us do what we can and we can all help by ensuring the next open day is a total success. The open day exists on many levels, to be an enjoyable event in its own right, to raise the profile of the Trust and also to raise money for projects such as the STL. Although some funding has come from outside sources, it must be matched by the Trust and our main source of achieving this is by income generated by the annual open day. This is a gamble because, all things being equal the weather can make the difference between a large profit and only breaking even. We need about 2000 paying customers to break even, after that every pound is a pound profit, so if the weather puts off the casual attendee, that's when the profit dives. Please do all you can to assist or attend. Either way, it is a good day out!

As I sit here staring at this erstwhile blank sheet of paper, my attention wanders and my gaze alights upon my Charlie Dimmock calendar. Inevitably, my I am drawn to 'Charlie's Tips' and I am inspired. 'If you leave your pump in the pond, turn it on once a week to stop it seizing up' she intones. What can the meaning be behind this advice? Use it or lose it? Yes that's what it must be. Obviously a sign. Time to get the old Q on the road for the first time in five years. Publicity manager Graham Smith is looking for a bus to feature in the open day programme, so I volunteer and after a quick inspection, some minor rectification, the MOT test is passed. The only problem is, in the intervening five years, someone has moved the steering wheel a lot closer to the seat. If I develop some prehensile stomach muscles, I could steer it hands free, or, alternatively, I could go on a diet (again).

Chairman's Report

Peter Plummer

Most notable this quarter was the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 27th November. It was explained that we had worked through a hard financial year, we had been over optimistic with our running days and display days and had suffered a decline in volunteer numbers throughout the period. The chairman's report in our magazine No 25 warned that lack of volunteer support would affect our ability to finance our major projects.

Regrettably, it was necessary to bring to the attention of the members that although all of the achievements made were through harmony and agreement, the issue of a trustee using the museum premises and mechanical facilities for personal gain had been the major source of disagreement within the committee. I have done my best to control this issue over recent years. As far back as December 1996, I had the Trust's solicitor, David Morgan, explain our legal obligations to the whole committee who subsequently agreed to abide by his advice. His words were quite clear and that we should do nothing to jeopardise our charitable status and it disappointing that the actions of one individual could reverse all that had been achieved by the sheer graft of the volunteers over the last seven years including the status of full museum registration.

Later in the proceedings, it emerged that an allegation had been made by a member, who questioned the integrity of the Secretary in relation to the running of the election ballot. The Secretary, in a statement to the meeting, explained that he had been notified of the allegation through a third party and on a point of procedure, left the meeting to enable the Chairman to conduct an enquiry and establish if the complaint could be substantiated. In the event, the allegation was not repeated, although I believe the perpetrator was identified in the room – and there was therefore no case to answer.

After discussion, I proposed a vote of confidence in the Secretary and this was passed unanimously. I was then instructed to write a letter of apology on behalf of the meeting and this has been done.

I feel I must state at this point how it disappoints me that we have a destructive element within the membership whose targets seem to be the hardest working volunteers the Trust has. In summary, the discussions revealed there had been some honest oversights but not least of which there was no register of gratitude to the committee for

their contribution during a difficult year. Therefore, I as a member, wish to redress this and express thanks to the committee who have served the Trust well over the last term of office. In addition, I should like to record my gratitude to Alan Charman and Graham Ruddock who no longer hold committee posts through either change of personal circumstances or failure to be re-elected.

However, I am encouraged by the election to the committee of Roger Stagg, Bill Cottrell and Mike Nash who I am sure will add strength to the team, but remember, even the best team needs support from other ranks if it is to make an impact in a voluntary environment and succeed in its objectives.

In keeping with the time of year, the metabolic rate of the museum has slowed down as the cold winter weekends sees progress on vehicles proceeding and our groundsman, John Broadhurst leading a small group of leaf sweepers.

Tony Lewis has adopted the Bedford tractor unit 702b and regularly attends to rectify the few remaining faults outstanding.

Guy G 351 chassis is rapidly nearing completion, the body of which requires a total rebuild but is unlikely to be proceeded with until the STL 2377 project loans are settled.

So, if you would like to see the Guy body rebuild started earlier rather than later, or possibly the four broken pillars replaced on STL 441 allowing it to be used more often, send in your donations - hold raffles, sponsored walks and the like and send the funds in. In addition, make full use of the museum shop for your purchases.

STL 2377 is set to make its public debut at the Open Day on Sunday 9th April. RT 2775 under my leadership is progressing well and I have been lucky to have a team of five all working on the vehicle at one time. The lower deck rebuild is well on the way to completion while the top deck is beginning to be stripped in preparation to tackle corrosion problems.

In contrast, member Keith Rose's Craven bodied RT1499 is currently occupying the member's space at the museum, the structural condition of which has been checked and found to be exceptionally sound. As a 1956 withdrawal with little subsequent refurbishment, my experience with RTs prompts me to record that I am impressed with the quality of the Cravens product.

I close by wishing you all a prosperous New Year and request that you consider assisting in some way;-our labour co-ordinator Keith Rose will be pleased to hear from you.

Membership and Treasurer's Report

Mike Nash

It has been a very quiet quarter for gaining new members but an extremely hectic one for renewals. However I'm pleased to report that a very high percentage of members have renewed such that at the time of writing (14/1/00) I was only awaiting ten outstanding renewals which is a great result. Current membership stands at 587 is very close to that which I predicted at our AGM but I am sorry to have to record the death of member David Limpkin who passed away just before Christmas. Our thoughts extend to his family and friends and I feel sure he will be missed by fellow RF owners of whom he knew many.

The dreaded 'flu thing knocked me for six over Christmas/New Year and the first half of January and this has rather put back my assuming the role of Treasurer, having been elected at the AGM. Alan Charman will of course be completing the accounts for 1999 but I plan to include an extended report of our financial situation in the next issue. What is quite clear is that we will be bouncing along the bottom financially until the Open Day at least but this is for a very good reason as the extent of progress achieved at Cobham in 1999 utilised every available penny (and more!). So 2000 is going to have to be something of a year of consolidation financially and every member is encouraged to help spread the load by renewing membership promptly, buying as much as possible from our shop and if possible making an extra donation here and there. It really will make a huge difference and despite our having at times over-stretched ourselves in 1999 there is so much to look forward to during this year as a result. Why not make 2000 the year YOU get more involved at Cobham. We need you!

The following members are warmly welcomed to the Trust :-

823	Eric Bateman, Hornchurch
824	R.S. Cole, Merstham
825	Malcolm Rickman Street, Somerset
826	Edward Worth, Ottershaw RH
827	Phil Picken, London W6 MN
828	Timothy Clayton, Birmingham MBA588 CS

Recruited by :- CS-Chris Sullivan MN-Mike Nash RH-Richard Hussey

Ken Simmonds

Simon Austin

As we approached Christmas it was a shock to hear of the sudden loss of Ken Simmonds, father of Peter, owner of the splendid RM642. He enjoyed so much the work he had done with Peter over the years. Ken always attended bus rallies, and would not let his health problems get the better of him. Even up to Christmas both he and Peter were planning what rallies for the year 2000.

Their RM was brought out for the funeral on January 5th as a tribute. Whenever I see the bus, I will think of Ken.

I and most other people who knew Ken well will always remember the warm welcome you got when you boarded the bus at rallies.

I am sure we all offer our sincere sympathy to Peter

STL 2377

Roger Stagg

This would be the point when I would normally include my report on the restoration. This time I am going to be brief and simply say Open Day will be on 9 April 2000 and bring your camera.

For those Cobham members who are far away and will not be joining us at the first Open Day of the new Millennium, I'm afraid you will have to wait for the next issue of the magazine.

In the meantime I will conclude with what I have concluded with so many times before that this project could never have proceeded or been completed without your generosity but I will still make one final appeal for donations no matter how large or small.

Rear-Engine Running Day

Mike Nash

As briefly mentioned in the last Magazine the date for the above event has indeed been confirmed as Spring Bank Holiday Monday May 29th. At this early stage many details have still to be finalised but support has already been promised from all the key societies and we hope to have at least twenty different vehicles running in service plus many static exhibits. Depot 46 in Redhill Road will once again be used as the rally site so expect this to be a very busy event and be sure to watch the press for full details nearer the time.

Meanwhile, another couple of good events have been lined up this year which are well worth a mention. On Sunday 4th June there is a very special AEC REGAL event at Eastbourne. Regals of all types are welcome including of course RFs of which it is hoped many will make the journey down including a planned convoy departing from Cobham. More details from David Howard on 01323 721903. Also, on Sunday 17th September Amberley Chalk Pits Museum are holding an 'All Leyland Event'. Leyland buses and coaches of every age will be welcomed and it is a fine location for a rally so hopefully a good few Cobham members will be in attendance, perhaps on board TD95?

Museum Development Programme

David Mulvey, Museum Development Officer.

So that we can make Cobham a more attractive and interesting place for visitors, we're going to produce a set of displays to provide information about the museum building and the collection.

To help us with the overall style and appearance of the displays and generally improve the "visitor experience", we will be applying for grants to make use of an external consultant, who has a lot of experience in this area and will be able to ensure that the museum has a professional appearance.

In the meantime, the plan is to start producing the material and get comments so that we get something moving quickly. The idea is to work on this over the winter so we end up with something reasonable by the time of the Open Day in April.

The kinds of information which might go on the displays could include:

- Essential information about the building, where to find things, dos and don'ts etc
- Overview of the collection
- The history of the London bus
- Bus restoration – typical projects and how we go about them
- History of the museum building
- Children's corner

and so on...

The idea is to produce a few drafts and put them up for comment – especially from the point of view of how they will seem to the typical visitor who may not know much about buses, or indeed ever travel on them (sad but true!).

Do let me have your views and ideas on what we should include. Good colour photographs which can be copied would be particularly useful. Also if anyone has graphical design skills and could help with laying out the information (in a way which would be suitable for production with MS Word 2000), I would be very keen to hear from you.

Open Day 2000 Update

Simon Douglas Lane,

The Open Day Sub Committee met on 20th January and we will have one more session in March to fine tune the event. Points of interest for members are as follows: -

The trees will be lopped in Redhill Road to preserve double decker roofs

- The lay out at Brooklands will bring catering, loos, stalls and the membership stand and shop nearer the entrance to the event and the bus service.
- Entry policy will be 2 children under 16 accompanied by an

- adult free with one programme between the two youngsters. Bus drivers plus 1 for rally entrants will be admitted free as Commercial Vehicles plus 1.
- Stallholders will be issued with gate passes.
- Plaques will be produced on the receipt of cards issued to rally entrants and volunteers cutting out over production.
- Theme at the museum will be centred around 50 years since the last petrol driven buses in LT service. STL2377 will be the Centrepiece around which the petrol vehicles will be placed. - *53/70 volunteers so far: but for North Kent, Bluebell, Mid Hants and London United we would be embarrassed: please respond to the next call: our volunteer level remains static even though the membership has increased SIX FOLD!
- The Shop is geared up for the day, and the Model for the Day will be kept a secret!
- Programmes will be collected from Ian Allan on 31/3/00
- Many of the services provided by our faithful suppliers will be at the same price as 1999 - thank you for that! Our admission fee is also the same as last year.

My thanks as always to the Sub Committee for the preparation we have all put into Open Day 2000.

All we need now is the membership to turn out and support our efforts. Have a great day.

Open Day 2000 Volunteers

Keith Rose, Volunteer Co-ordinator

Well it's that time of year again, no not the mating season but the time to remind you all of the fast approaching big event. What big event? I hear you all cry. Is it that Asteroid heading towards a collision with Earth, that could cause a return of the Ice Age and kill off the remaining Dinosaurs - yes there are still at least 635 of them to be found in that large old house on the embankment, you know,

the one with the big clock. (This establishment has the distinction of being the only Mental Institution in the country to be run by its own In-mates) Or could it be a visit to Tony's Tent - sorry, The Millennium Dome (would make a good garage for preserved buses), or The Whiz Wheel (alias The London Eye), which was non-operational on the 1st. Jan 2000 due to failed safety tests on the passenger gondolas from France (and they say our beef is not safe!) Now as you all well know, the real big event is our very own Bus Extravaganza, a veritable Tour De Force, which takes place on the 9th April at Brooklands. Yes, the amazing OPEN DAY 2000 when the public will be able to feast their eyes on a plethora of buses from the golden days when Britain lead the World in bus design and technology - Yum, yum, can't wait. (I am just going to put on my Edward Elgar CD)

Alas, back to more mundane matters.

As mentioned in the Autumn 99 CBM magazine a large number of volunteers would be required to help with the smooth running of OD2000 at Brooklands at Cobham sites. Following this request I am pleased to report a splendid response from members who dutifully took their dogs walkies and posted their volunteer cards, thus bringing us up close to our required numbers. However in order to further reduce time spent on duty by members, and build in contingency reserves (some volunteers might still be going round on the London Eye or stuck under the Dome if the pole breaks!) I would ask those still considering helping with this most worthy cause to send in your volunteer card, and remember it's not a legal contract but a notice of intent to assist on the day/days specified therein if available to do so. (I'm beginning to sound like Bumpole of the Bailey, or what- ever his name is, Hmmm, I think I will sharpen my quill)

For those among you who may have mislaid or lost their volunteer cards and may be willing to offer assistance on the 8th/9th April, please advise me by phone/fax/email as follows:

Phone Office: 01784 225 (9.00 - 5.00 Mon. - Fri)
Phone Home: 01276 002 Evenings, (Sat & Sun usually to be found at CBM) Fax: 01784 679
Email: keith@ .co.uk

The Unexpected Journey

(Or, look after your keys!)

Peter Wall.

It was the Cobham display/Woking Classic Car/Rear engine day on 30th August 1999. A day that, for me, started with a trip by bus, but was to involve an unscheduled train journey.

After parking my car at Weybridge station the day began with a lively trip to the Museum on RT3491, whose driver gave a spirited ride reminiscent of journeys I enjoyed on RTs on the 65 route when I was a child (many years ago!). I looked forward to trips on the 65 as the drivers were always in a hurry, whatever the direction.

The 65 took the Petersham bends (sounds like a medical affliction) Petersham Road, Richmond/Ham, between Kingston and Richmond with gusto. Usually the speed gained on the twisting, narrow road gave the bus a good run up the hill onto the lower road into Richmond. It was very disappointing if there was a passenger inconsiderately waiting at the stop at the Dysart Arms pub immediately before this short hill, as the bus would not have the same impetus and would have to grind up the hill in second gear if fully loaded. A front seat to watch the driver operate the preselector gearbox was essential. Not that I knew it was a preselector gearbox then. That knowledge came later. It was fascinating as all the cars and lorries I had seen had the gear level sticking out of the floor. Also, London Transport had considerably designed the RT especially for small boys, with its low front windowsill and nice shiny handrail to hang onto.

On arrival at the Cobham Bus Museum a bus was loading for Woking. This took an attractive rural and circuitous route via West Byfleet, Woodham Lane and the A320 enabling passengers on the upper deck to get a good view of the countryside and other peoples' gardens etc. However, the driver had to make an unscheduled and deft manoeuvre in Woking. I won't embarrass him by saying more, but the passengers enjoyed themselves.

The classic car exhibition in Wokings pedestrianised streets was a fascinating but salutary experience, bringing back memories of cars I can remember going onto to the roads when new! Enid Blyton's Riley was on show (she never actually drove it apparently). There were the famous, the exotic and the ordinary; Lagonda, Number, Rover, MG; Morris Minor, Austin A30, flashy Ford Zephyrs and a little Commer

Cob estate. Vehicles from a less frantic age. There was a red Jaguar XK120 or 150 with the registration COG7, I know about COG5's but....!

At the Woking bus stop Cravens bodied RT1499 was waiting (the first I had seen in the flesh and one of only two left) and two particularly attractive vehicles, RT2043 and the handsome former Ipswich Regent 111 number 16 were also there at various times.

However, my return journey to Cobham was on flat screen Bristol RE, KHW 309E, ex-Cheltenham District in National Bus poppy red, which again look a pleasant route through attractive countryside via Old Woking, Ripley and the A3. Bus passengers have the advantage over car travellers because, sitting up high, one can see over hedges and walls. Local residents seemed to enjoy seeing us too. The driver of KHW 309E gave us a spirited (but not reckless trip) the bus giving a lively performance from its Leyland 0.680 engine, accompanied by a nice rorty Leyland exhaust note. Gear changes were handled with care, the driver pausing in neutral before changing up, thus avoiding damage and a jerky change. As my driving instructor said, "drive it hard; let the engine sing,"

To me the essence of bus preservation is riding on the vehicles, listening to engine and gearbox sounds, the smell, sight and sound of it all. Cobham is a living museum. Beautifully restored and painted vehicles in static ranks look nice, but I am sure most people appreciate spectacle and movement. A donation to the 'Diesel fund' of these owners/drivers to show our appreciation is a small price to pay. A recent half-hour journey to work from Ashtead to Surbiton, when I was car-less, was not as long, or as interesting and cost £2.75. In comparison, the train journey via Stagecoach South West Trains and London Underground via Wimbledon, to the open day for the cavalcade to celebrate the 100th anniversary of London motorbus operation at Acton LT Museum Depot, cost £5.20 return inclusive from Ashtead.

Later I caught the bus back to Weybridge (less common green RTL1256). Having got off, I felt in my pocket for my car keys. No keys. The bus had already started its return journey to Cobham, so it would be another thirty minutes before it (or another bus) returned. I checked the grass by the bus stop and underneath the car. At this point panic set in. I thought of the cost and problems of replacing keys; for car, engine immobiliser and steering wheel lock. I had just a new immobiliser key made due to one wearing out. 'They don't make that type anymore' the garage had told me. Somebody may have

found the keys and could work out which car they belonged to. Where was the nearest police station etc? Some quick thinking was needed, not my strong point at the best of times.

It is a short distance by road (or bus if there was one) from home in Ashtead, to the museum, but the only way to get home for my spare car keys was by train. This is complicated because Weybridge is on a different railway line to Ashtead. My reasoning being that I could not take a chance on someone finding and handing the keys in at the Museum. They could be anywhere. They may have been handed in at a police station, or they might never be found. It would also take an hour to get back to Cobham at the very least, allowing for waiting for a return buses, with no guarantee of being re-united with the keys. Luckily I keep my house keys separately from the car keys. The homeward bound journey was to include three changes of trains, although the return trip only required one change at Wimbledon.

So it was off to Weybridge station, where I asked at the ticket office if any keys had been handed in, but as I did so I was already buying a ticket for home because a train was approaching. The station staff advised me to change at Clapham Junction. It was not until I was on the train that I remembered that a change at Wimbledon would suffice. The train did not stop at Wimbledon but it did stop at Surbiton. I got off and asked the only man on duty the time of the next train to Wimbledon. He was very helpful, but it would be a fifteen-minute wait. Arriving at Wimbledon it was another dash across the bridge to platforms 7/8. I asked about train times and was told 'second train on this side'. My train did not work straight through to Ashtead; I had to change at Epsom.

All the trains I travelled on (Stagecoach) were in sad condition. One had seats missing which had presumably been thrown out of the drop-back ventilator windows. Exteriors were smeared with graffiti, one ventilator was missing altogether, which must make travel in the rain interesting! The Stagecoach stripes don't appear to be in durable colours either, the blue is easily broken down by strong, infrared light. Where graffiti had been removed, the paint had also come off giving a generally scruffy, blotchy and neglected appearance. At least there was a man on the Epsom train picking up litter left by my fellow passengers!

At Epsom the count-down display told me I had another eight minutes to wait for my train to Ashtead; a journey of less than five minutes. During this interlude Stagecoach and Connex train and

station staff put on a free "entertainment" for the amusement of passengers (sorry, customers). An argument erupted which almost broke into violence and involved a display of temper and bad language, which created a poor image.

During my frantic journey I had time to sit back on the trains and reminisce a little about my past employment in the National Health Service as I approach retirement. When I started work one of the menial jobs (or perks actually) was taking drug samples for testing to an analyst. I got to know this railway line and its electric multiple unit trains quite well in the late fifties to early sixties. The analyst was originally based at London Bridge, in the Borough Market. The laboratory was above a shop, the ground floor of which was occupied by a market trader. The building smelled strongly of potatoes and other vegetables being traded and there were lorries and barrows all over the area. The girl in the office (she was a bit older than me) was a blond cockney, smart and dressed typically for era; tweed skirt, woolly jumper and a string of pearls. She always wore flat, brown leather lace up shoes; very unflattering I used to think. (Sexist!).

The trains were an apple green, which was being replaced by a darker shade. Steel 4SUB and 4EPB types, but there were some nineteen thirties trains. Station signs and 'furniture' were also green. Waterloo (and Waterloo Junction on the Charing Cross and London Bridge line) seemed dark and grimy. The Diesel-Electric multiple unit trains (with the generating units in compartments at the ends of each of four-coach unit) for the Hastings line were much in evidence. They did not stop at Waterloo Junction, but went past in a series of slow moving putt-puttings as each powered unit accelerated past. The sides of these trains were flat (instead of having the convex outward curve of EMU trains) necessary due to the restricted width of tunnels on the Hastings line. All trains on this section were subject to low speed limits imposed due to the complex track with its tight curves and numerous points.

There was still evidence of World War 11 bombing. Both Waterloo Station and County Hall had large splinter holes in the stonework from shrapnel. I used to take my sandwiches and eat them sitting on one of the seats beside the river close to the Royal Festival Hall. The strange outrigger-decks attached to masts still hung out over the River, unnervingly bouncy on their steel hawsers. They were left over from the 1951 Festival of Great Britain. The riverside was quite pleasant then, but now the walkways between the river and Waterloo

are best avoided due to muggers. This journey to London Bridge and back to work could be strung out for two thirds of the day! I was sixteen then. The NHS has changed since then. It's common practice for my colleagues and I to work a 60-hour week, and seven-day weeks were necessary until recently.

Later the analyst moved to Godalming, The train was divided (and re-united on the return) at Woking. One had to ensure one was in the right half or an unscheduled trip to Alton and beyond was on the cards. Godalming was (and still is) an attractive little town. The girl had gone though, flat shoes included. The station is still a little gem of stone and iron. The River Wey navigation starts here (or ends depending on your direction) and links with almost the entire British waterways network of about 2,000 miles; York, Llangollen, Peterborough, Worcester, Gloucester, Birmingham etc. can be reached by boat from here. The number of cathedral cities linked by water is amazing. EMU Corridor trains dating from the nineteen thirties were often used. I could now sit and eat my sandwiches in the memorial garden commemorating the bravery of local hero Jack Phillips, who went down with the SS Titanic, remaining at his Marconi radio sending the SOS as she sank. I suppose if you know there is no alternative and no escape you just carry on, but what a brave man.

I arrived at Ashtead at about 2.30 p.m. Then a five-minute walk home to collect the spare car keys and back to the station. It was quite a hot day too! By the time I got back to the railway station I had just missed a return train (naturally) and had to wait half an hour for the next. Two young blond women speaking a language I did not recognise arrived, accompanied by a young man and a little boy. The girls were almost identical twins. One got on a Victoria train and eventually my Waterloo bound train arrived at about 4.30. It ran non-stop from Epsom to Wimbledon with no change of trains at Epsom being necessary. Back to Wimbledon where I asked for the time of next train to Weybridge. The man on duty was a little surprised to see the same passenger within about 90 minutes. The train whisked me back to Weybridge station. Amazing what you can do on public transport when you have to!

I retrieved the car and drove to the Museum to enquire about my keys. I arrived in time to see an AEC Swift squeezing out and skilfully avoiding pruning a Museum tree. I need not have worried quite so much. the keys were safe and I would like to thank the honest busman who handed them in to the museum.

When I got home I had a bath and watched a video of the World War 11 film "Ice cold in Alex". I am sure you remember the story. Two English and one South African army officers and a nurse escape a siege of Tobruk by driving an Austin K2 army ambulance (Katy) to Alexandria. Austin K2's were affectionately known as 'Katies' to the troops, the name being derived from the chassis type of course.

The film starred John Mills in an unsympathetic role as an alcohol dependent officer at the end of his tether, Harry Andrews as the Sergeant, Anthony Quayle claiming to be a South African officer and Sylvia Sims as the nurse. Earlier, a second nurse was killed in an incident with a German patrol and the British trio became suspicious of Anthony Quayle, who turned out to be a German.

The film showed the famous scene of them winding 'Katy' backwards up an incline of soft sand using the starting handle, by putting the ambulance in reverse gear and with the spark plugs removed to reduce resistance. It was actually done. As they get to the top of the incline let go of the starting handle and Sylvia Sims is brushed aside by the ambulance as it rolls back down the hill. This scene was a bit too realistic apparently. The actors had insisted that the film director fit a steel hawser to the ambulance as a safety precaution to slow the runaway. He did not, so it set off back down hill very quickly. The actors were not pleased!

I read that three Katies were used. They are normally two-wheel drive. For the film, one was converted to 4x4. You can see the change early in the film when the first Katy is two-wheel drive. The front, driven, axle came from a Canadian truck I think a Chevrolet or a Ford. They made a mistake at the end of the film when a Land Rover appeared after the scene in the Alexandria bar when they are enjoying their ice cold lager; production of Land Rovers did not start until about 1947. The bar scene was used in a fairly recent TV advert for Carlsberg.

What of the other events? Several happy memories:

- The GS day was the first opportunity I had had to travel on these vehicles. They eluded me when in revenue earning service and then they were gone! The sporty exhaust note and lively performance were a new experience.

- The RTW 50 day, with a trip to Effingham station on RTW467 and the privilege of meeting Colin Curtis (Mr Routemaster) very briefly.
- The incredible line up RTs on RT60 day.
- Watching the outline shadow of RTL139 moving over the grass and hedges as she travelled down the A10 from Duxford. Even the driver's hands were visible on the wheel. This took me back to my childhood watching the shadows of RTs and RTLs moving magically along.
- A little boy at Acton Museum Depot on the centenary cavalcade day looking at 1935 Q55 and shouting to his mum; "that bus is as old as granddad."

Appeal for Adverts

As many of you will have seen RTL139 is looking a bit bare, the sides of the bus have been brightened up by new adverts kindly donated by a member, but the front and rear corners together with the rear, below the platform window are still bare, therefore are there any members out there who have hidden away in an attic or cupboard some adverts suitable for RTL139.

Adverts of the period 1960-1967 would be preferable but late 60s would do providing that they do not give any relation to age, i.e. stage shows or events etc.

So have a rummage around and see what you can find and if you think suitable contact the museum on one of the contact numbers in this magazine. Our aim being to make the bus more attractive and photogenic and as original looking as possible.

THANK YOU.

Four Men and an RF

Simon Lambert

A few weeks ago, four of us, that is Brian Dabbs, Phil Cruise, John Rawlins and myself agreed to attend the Amersham running day in Brian's RF319. As a group we divided the various jobs between us and started bright and early on Sunday morning.

My first job was to start early at about 6.30am from my home in South Devon to reach the garage where Brian's RF is parked in West Sussex. I was not allowed to have the bright part as it was tipping down with rain. The other two did not have to worry about the early part – 'meet me at my house about 9.30, we can have coffee and make a start from there' -but had the bright bit, as the weather was good in the South East.

Living the furthest away I arrived first- (it was always the same at school!) closely followed by Brian. We opened up the garage and Brian started up RF319 and pulled out into the sunshine. Having spent the previous weekend cleaning his bus, 319 looked in top condition and ready to win first prize. Finally we all assembled and started off for Amersham.

Taking turns at driving we had progressed some ten or fifteen miles when, the driver of the moment failed to select second gear correctly to pull away from a busy roundabout and just produced full revs and no movement. Various helpful and polite suggestions made by the passengers followed, only to confirm that it was not driver error but second gear would not select. To avoid further impolite suggestions being made by our fellow motorists behind we pulled away in first, leaped to third, and made progress once more.

We pulled into a nearby lay-by and, after several attempts, confirmed that second gear would not select. Someone remarked 'What we need is Dr Spanner'. Regular readers will know that Dr Spanner is the super-hero of bus preservation. At this point, when called from an ailing bus, I had visions of an enormous AEC Militant Master Breakdown vehicle drawing up and a figure in white overalls rightly stepping out, strolling up to our bus saying 'Hello boys, having a bit of trouble with the old gearbox?' Let me help'

Nothing happened. Again in unison ' We need Dr Spanner'. It started to rain. Some old bloke walked past with a geriatric dog. 'He's not Dr Spanner, we had better phone Paul Morris. Mobile phone to the ready Paul, reliable as ever, answered straight away. 'I'm in the

North.' Good, we said we're going to Amersham as well. 'No, the real North, Leeds!' Bit far on a dodgy gearbox, but What do think the trouble could be? 'Well' he said ' there's a grommet on your selector arm and it may not be engaging with the wallace plate on the gearbox.' At least, that what I think he said!

After further discussion, and bearing in mind that Amersham has one or two steep hills, we agreed to drive to Cobham for further advice. This is the equivalent of 'refer to Chiswick' in the works manual. Happily it was the first Sunday of the month and a regular open day and we were sure that there would be someone there who could help. The drive to Cobham was uneventful. Starting off in first and changing directly to third, the jump was not quite so bad on the level and 319 coped very well.

Pulling into Cobham we were considerably relieved that both Bill Cottrell and Andy Baxter were both in attendance. They immediately dropped what they were doing - drinking tea, and were under the RF in a moment looking at the offending gearbox. Bill walked round the front, sat in the driving seat and, grasping the selector lever, said with great authority ' There's a grommet on the end of this.' ' Its not engaging with the wallace plate on the gear box,' came a voice through the floor hatch.

This may not actually be what they said but it was only a matter of adjusting the length of the gear selector rod through a screw adjuster and second gear could again be found. Such is the benefit of wisdom and experience that simple solutions can be found to what can seem more - serious problems. Thanks to Bill and Andy for getting us on our way so quickly.

One of the pleasurable aspects of dropping in at Cobham is to see who is there and what's going on. Lots of familiar faces helping out on a public open day and especially nice to see Roy Adams up from Bristol to do a bit of gardening around the grounds. Roy acted as temporary gate man holding up traffic as we pulled out of Cobham on our way to Amersham.

Our original plan (cunning or otherwise) had been to take a gentle route from Sussex to Amersham along less busy roads more suited to the speed of an RF. However, to make up time and get to Amersham at a reasonable hour we agreed to use that well known short cut- the M25, well, it's not so bad on a Sunday. Motorway driving is really easy, just stay in the near-side lane and let the rest of the traffic get on with. To be fair, 319 put up an excellent performance maintaining a steady 45mph without giving the

impression of being 'thrashed' at full revs. We even held off a Mercedes caravanette until we reached a hill and he crawled past! Within about half an hour we were turning off for Amersham and back to more gentle driving better suited to the RF. It was certainly the right decision to fix the gears as the venue was a car park just along from the station which is right on top of the hill. Approaching the rally we saw a collection of RTs and RFs with a couple of RLHs for good measure. It had been raining but was quite bright when we arrived. We eventually parked up with some other RFs and a GS in the centre of the site.

I don't often have an opportunity to visit the smaller and medium sized events in the London Area. Having to travel from Devon I generally only attend major events such as our own Cobham Open Day at Brooklands and Crowthorne, so it was a real pleasure for me to attend the Amersham event which was a good mix of vehicles and trade stands. Having once owned RF633 I know a little about the commitment in time and money that any bus owner makes to keep his vehicle on the road and attend rallies, so I hope the many vehicle owners will forgive me for mentioning just two of my personal favourite vehicles that were in attendance.

Firstly there was the Craven RT 1499 owned by Keith Rose. This vehicle has a real vintage feel to it and, although part of the RT family, is markedly different inside. The window trims are flat not rounded and the window winders are in the centre of the window bars. The extra window bay on each side adds to the vintage look from the inside. Quite a rare vehicle and a great pleasure to have seen this out several times this year. The other bus, which particularly caught my eye, was a green RLH running on the bus service. I am not into number crunching and my days of collecting bus numbers disappeared about forty years ago so I didn't get the number. But those who were there will remember the gleaming paintwork and, in particular, the polished brass trim on the lights and elsewhere. No matter if LT did not have polished brass the vehicle looked superb!

Having spent some enjoyable hours at Amersham, we left at about 4.30pm for the run back to Sussex. Uneventful this time but a lot of the run in the rain. However, it was fine on our return to the RF garage which is just as well as the driver of the hour forgot to reverse in and drove on to the garage forecourt which caused a lot of shunting and 'left hand down a bit' before handing over the more expert owner to finish the job.

Having over come the small gearbox problem, we left 319 with a further small problem. Having switched off (or is it shut down?) the engine, we tried to restart for a final reposition. All that was forthcoming was a heavy click but no starter turn over. There was nothing to be done at the end of a long day and so as 319 was safely in the garage, this was a problem for next time. I was relieved and very pleased to hear a couple of weeks later that a quick recharge of the battery and tightening of the dynamo belts has solved that particular problem. 319 has also passed the MOT for a further year. It only remains for me to thank all those who in some way contributed to our day out. Organisers of Amersham and bus owners for attending, Bill and Andy for being there at the right time and, of course, Brian and RF319 - thanks for a great day.

Letters

From Colin Elsdon

RT981

Dear Bill

In the light of gossip which is doing the rounds over the disposal of RT981 with particular reference to John Hinson's comments in "Beyond The Gates" in the Cobham Bus Museum magazine, I am enclosing a letter which I would appreciate you publishing it in the next Museum magazine to clarify my actions.

The purpose of this letter is to clarify certain facts concerning London Transport RT981. At the outset I feel I must make it clear that what I do with my own property is my concern, but in the light of interference by someone who had nothing better to do than to stir matters, I feel that I should state the true facts on the reasons for disposal of this vehicle, to stop, as would be usual, waters to be muddied within the bus fraternity.

When I purchased RT981 last year it was my intention to have major work to be done on it, one of the features would be to restore it to its country bus colours. This decision was two fold - firstly it was always green in public service and secondly when as a young lad, I used to

travel on it to school (on the 341 Hertford to St Albans route). So the bus was precious to me.

Things were progressing well until out of the blue I lost the accommodation which housed my buses through circumstances entirely beyond my control, and as a result RT981 had been on my car park for the last ten months.

I was now faced with a dilemma. What to do with the bus? To let it deteriorate outside or to seek planning permission for an outbuilding to be demolished and erect a building which would not only accommodate my cars but also the RF and RT.

After many months the Yorkshire Dales National Park agreed a building could be constructed on my land for my two cars and two single deck buses. They would not allow it to be high enough to take in the RT because I reside in a Grade 11 Listed Building.

I now had to face up to a decision that I was reluctant to make - make it a donor vehicle for spares or to sell it.

One of my "treasures" is a school book of mine in which I have JXN9 recorded. I therefore decided to talk to DVLA with a view to transferring the plate over to my Rolls Royce and this has now been done. I am fully aware of what certain bus enthusiasts think of switching registrations around but would ask them to bear this in mind - bus operators very frequently do this, indeed London Transport themselves "tampered" with Routemasters in this way.

It should be recognised that in relation to the RT family, buses lost their "identity" at their first overhaul when London Transport had governmental permission to switch bodies and chassis around at Aldenham.

I approached someone in London who was only too happy to take the vehicle off my hands and carrying a different registration did not worry him. I agreed a price that reflected the registration change and in such a way I made no effective loss, or made any profit from the deal.

At the end of the day, it is nobody else's business with what I do with my vehicles. It is the same argument as should buses carry adverts or not, and so on and on and on.

I rest my case!

Marton Arms Hotel Thornton-in-Lonsdale Carnforth
North Yorkshire LA63PB

From David Boshier

RT/RF BROWN REXINE PVC SUBSTITUTE.

Those that were supplied with this material may well find that the 30-metre quantity originally recommended for RT types may well no be sufficient to complete the entire vehicle. The recent restoration of John Hertings 'Green Line' RT3228 has been the first test of this material. I am pleased to report that the material looks very authentic and is without doubt the best substitute. The material was applied by David Simmonds who has undertaken a wonderful job. Unfortunately, other owners may well find they have insufficient material from the experience gained with RT3228. I would therefore suggest that when you undertake the work that the material is cut with 'economy' in mind. In the event of running short, I would suggest you contact me as some owners ordered in excess of what they required.

The experience gained with RT3228 also has shown that the material is best applied using TX528 EVO-STIK Fixo-Tropic contact adhesive. It is also recommended that the back of the material 'roughed up' with a suitable grade of sandpaper.

The adhesive is available to vehicle owners at a 40% discount in the following quantities:

5 litres	£46.64	£32.88 discounted
2 1/2	£26.18	£18.46
1 litre	£12.42	£ 8.76

to order, call John Herting on 0181 7016.

From Tony Beard

Assistance requested

Dear Peter,

I expect that our conversation at the LOTS extravaganza regarding the salvaging of major components from RT 77 might have slipped

your memory. This was no doubt due to the number of people at the event all of whom made demands on your time.

The owner of the vehicle, Clayton Banks wants to reduce the bus to scrap by Easter 2000 but I feel it would be prudent to make plans now. Items on our 'shopping list' are the engine, compressor (for Ray Wood), gearbox, prop shafts, air system components and the differential.

What may sound somewhat ambitious could be brought into reality with assistance from a dedicated team armed with the correct tools and guidance.

I would be extremely pleased if Cobham could provide any assistance; engine removal is not for the fainthearted!

Perry Street
Billericay Essex CM12 ONA

From Andy Baxter.

After attending the Agm on November 27th, and after listening to the reports and debates that ensued, I felt I had to put pen to paper and comment on some of the issues raised. The first being the cost of the recovery of RTL139 and the reason why this was so high.

As most of you know I was the project leader on this vehicle and as such I was told as to the state of the vehicle, mechanically as well as bodily prior to its arrival at Cobham.

Recapping back to that time, Paul Morris the engineering manager, myself and Bill Cottrell discussed the vehicle's condition and the options available to us with regard to its safe recovery back to the museum. Our collective thoughts were that in the interests of safety that recovery by suspended tow by a professional recovery firm was the only option and that the towbus was unsuitable for a journey of that length anyway. It was this recommendation that was presented to the committee by Paul Morris at that time.

Our reasons for recommending a suspended tow were as follows; -

- 1) The bus had no brakes whatsoever, not even a handbrake.
- 2) The tyres were almost illegal.
- 3) There was no electrical power available, i.e. no batteries, therefore no means of warning.

Then to our surprise we find out that this recommendation had been totally disregarded by certain other members of the committee, and to that end the Chairman, Richard Hussey and others proceeded to Harwich intent on recovering RTL139 to Cobham against all the advice given. Whilst on the way to Harwich the gearbox on the towbus failed requiring this to be the vehicle needing recovery back to Cobham at additional expense to the Trust. An expense that could have been spared had the powers to be heeded our advice in the first instance, but who were we to argue, they knew best!

If we take the scenario that the RTL was on tow behind the towbus on a tow bar and a problem was to occur in the vehicle being towed, how would that driver attract the attention of the towing vehicle in an emergency? With no electrical power there would be no horn or lights working. On a more serious note, what if, for some reason, the towbar broke or came adrift. You are then left with a bus careering out of control without any form of braking whatsoever. What then if it mounted the pavement and mowed down pedestrians before crashing and coming to a halt? Doesn't bare thinking about, it may be only a scenario but the possibility for it to happen is always there, hence the reason for the recommendation if, for nothing else on the grounds of safety alone.

When questioned about this at the Agm, Richard Hussey informed the meeting that they went with the towbus to Harwich to inspect the bus to see if it would be viable to tow it back. John Bedford had informed me that very same afternoon that he was being chased to remove the bus from the dockyard and that they had gone with the specific intention of towing it back irrespective. Two different explanations from two different committee members. The question is who to believe? I know who I do!

The subject of inspecting the bus is also cause for concern as neither committee members on the trip have any mechanical qualifications whatsoever, our Chairman freely admits to this fact on his part, so on what grounds did they deem themselves capable of deciding whether it was fit for towing. The facts are that Ian Barrett went and inspected the bus before its purchase in Holland and reported back its condition both bodily and mechanically, therefore its condition was already known to the committee. I knew of its condition beforehand so surely so did they. the feeble excuse given at the Agm I feel is just a smoke screen to hide their gross misconduct in this matter and I feel that they should be made to answer for their actions and further more be asked to reimburse the Trust the cost of the towbus recovery plus the fuel used unnecessarily. They took it against all the advice given therefore they are responsible because they were irresponsible.

If the decision of a committee member with professional qualifications is overruled by an officer or committee member without any, why have any professionals on the committee? It seems that we don't need them. Their judgements obviously mean absolutely nothing.

A subject raised by the Chairman was the case of lack of volunteers on display days. I would like to ask him to explain his reasons for not volunteering his services to assist with the driving duties for the museum bus service using RTL139. It's been active for nearly a year now.

Another was the lack of drivers for the run out and run in on display days. Myself, Graham Ruddock, Bill Cottrell and Paul Morris have between us made a point of making sure that the run out and run in has been done on almost all of the display days during the year. We make a start at 9am and all the buses are parked up and we are ready to run the first duty with the RTL before 10am. Note: The Chairman would normally arrive between 10 and 11. (Funny that). We've done it so many times now it's become a matter of trying to beat our record each time. The few occasions that the any of us were unavailable are obviously the times that our Chairman was referring to, and he commented that there were many vehicles that he could not move. Seeing that the Chairman has been a member for 20 years one would have thought that he would be type trained on all the buses by now. If not, why not? Perhaps it's about time he was. The Chairman wrote in one of his magazine reports, 'by equalising the input'. I quote, 'practice what you preach'.

On a different subject entirely, in 1996 I requested to the committee that the membership be kept up to date with decisions made at committee meetings. This was agreed as stated in the winter 1996 magazine, with reports to be compiled by Richard Hussey, and a copy would also be posted on the canteen notice board. To date I have seen only one such report, the same report stating that the reports will be done. Does this mean that nothing has been discussed or decided upon, or that the compiler couldn't be bothered to do any more reports? I consider this to be an essential way of informing the membership as to the status of the museum.

Following an incident that occurred in the summer of 1996, I requested to the Chairman that a current code of conduct be made available for viewing by the members, this being the code of conduct we all must abide by, and this was agreed by him with the following statement appearing on page 6, section 8 of the committee report of the winter 1996 magazine: A code of conduct will be drafted out by Richard Hussey and the 1997 version will be in place on the notice board by January 1st. 1997. It is now 2000, three years later, and still nothing has materialised. If we the membership have no knowledge of these rules how do we know that committee members or we are infringing any of them.

Members will have read in the magazine last year that we were the subject of a sneak thief entering the canteen and office and members losing some items. I understand that this was discussed at committee shortly after and that a security upgrade was to be implemented immediately. I assume that a committee member was allocated the task. At the time of writing nothing had yet been done, 8 months later. Do I see a pattern emerging, I wonder if a certain person was allocated this task as well? Hasten to say I wait with bated breath for an answer, or will it be another smoke screen?

I ask the question, if we the members are answerable to the committee, who are the committee answerable to??

I invite your comments.



Book Reviews

LONDON BUSES IN COLOUR: 1970's by Kevin McCormack.
Ian Allan Publishing £14.99 Reviewed by by Mike Nash

Another fine colour album from Ian Allan and yet another (fifth at least) by Cobham member Kevin McCormack. And this is probably his best yet.

Whatever your view of the Seventies the decade offered staggering variety for the bus enthusiast and the London scene was no exception. The 80 glossy pages cover so much ground and bring back so many memories for this reader at least that this book has remained on my coffee table far longer than most.

It gets off to a good start by featuring a red RF on the cover, and a Kingston one to boot, but inside can be found a magnificent collection of material covering all the LT standards plus many classes which seemed almost to disappear overnight. Remember London Country's BTs? Or the elusive AFs? Well, they're all here, from a Strachans bodied Merlin to a Strachans bodied Transit! Along with the classic MS4 at Clapton Pond / MS4 in Clapton Pond sequence. And on the rear cover is a lovely rural scene featuring red MB72, one of those with the lower driving position, on hire to LCBS and passing through Bookham on route 418 in 1975. A rare and interesting shot and do you know what? Twenty-five years on and that old Merlin is looking pretty damn good – even though we all hated them at the time.

The material is from a number of sources including Cobham members such as our Chairman and the captions are nicely anecdotal. It's also pleasing to note that a good few of the subjects have since made it into preservation such as Eddie Knorn's 'Shillibeer' DM2646 which looked really smart in that livery.

I really can't recommend this book enough as it transcends two generations in terms of the motive power and really does evoke strong memories of a much derided, but in hindsight rather fascinating period. Want a copy? Look no further than the Cobham Shop!



K502 and Mike Sutcliffe's Leyland confusing the passengers at Victoria. Photo Tony Lewis



RCL2223, subject of an article in this issue Photo David Boshier



Reflecting on the weather RF672, 319 and 534 contemplate going for a paddle on the RF running day on the 24th October 1999. Photo Mike Nash



Can anyone assist dismantling RT77 for spares? The damage sustained after falling into a ditch can be seen here. Photo CBM



RTL1163 and RM158 shiver in the snow a few winters ago. Photo CBM.



Another taste of winter shows Roy Gould's BEA on a visit to Cobham. Photo CBM



RT 3491 providing a duplicate for CDL899, the oldest class 6 bus in regular service, at the battery terminus, Isle of White in October 1999. Photo Graham Smith



Another angle, with the Needles in the background. Photo Tony Lewis

BUSES IN BRITAIN: THE 1970's by Stewart J Brown.

Capital Transport £25 Reviewed by Mike Nash

Rather along the lines of the above title but somewhat more ambitious this 200 page colour album covers the whole country and contains more than 400 photographs. It follows on from two similar titles which were released in 1994 and 1996 and which covered the bus scene at that time, so presumably another retrospective title covering the Eighties will emerge in due course. I hope so because these are fine albums and whilst £25 is a lot to ask they do contain a wealth of material and perhaps look rather better value than the Ian Allan albums weight for weight.

The author takes you on an extensive tour of the UK, starting in Scotland and ending up in Wales, and looking at the plethora of operators large and small which existed during the decade. Now, if your interest is in LT only then there are probably only a couple of dozen pictures to interest you, good as they are, but for anyone with wider tastes this book is a gem. Half-cabs remained prolific, especially further north, and some of the independents, many of which are now but a memory fielded some marvelously eclectic machinery and liveries. Amazingly, a handful of the vehicles depicted are still in service and others survive in preservation. But there are far more which have disappeared without trace, some of which are notable losses.

As you wade through the 200 pages it's surprising how many memories are stirred. Add this to the extensive text supplied and informative photo captions and it all adds up to an excellent read and one of those books which you'll keep going back to time and time again. Thoroughly recommended and once again available from the Cobham Shop.

LONDON TRANSPORT TRAMWAYS 1933-1952 E.R.OAKLEY and C.E.HOLLAND published by the London Tramways History Group at £29.50 Reviewed by Phill Cruise

Yes it's not a bus book, but any student of road transport in London will find plenty of interesting information and transport history in this expensive but very plump volume. There are 464 pages in this hard back book which is between A4 and A5 size. I haven't counted the numerous monochrome photographs, but the centre section of the book has sixteen pages in colour of all the varieties of bell punch ticket issued during the period covered by the book.

The topics covered include rolling stock of all kinds, including the works cars and road service vehicles, depots, track and power supplies, staff training and equipment, routes and services, destination equipment, car dimensions and electrical equipment and the disposal and replacement programme. In other words it covers everything. There are diagrams of depots, fare charts and at the end of the book, a service map.

To those readers familiar with E.R.Oakley's series of soft cover booklets on the London Tramways system what we have here is the 'combined volume'. It is going to be the standard reference book on the subject for the London Transport years. I cannot recommend it enough.

LONDON BUS FILE 1940-45 Ken Glazier,

Published by Capital Transport at £9.95. Reviewed by Phill Cruise

Unless you've been abroad for a few years or locked away, this series of handbooks from Ken Glazier and Capital will be quite familiarly seems to have started in the middle and alternate issues have moved forward and back in time. The last one took me into my bus 'spotting' days but this one goes back to before my awareness of buses, but only by relatively few years. I can remember the STLs, Ds and some of the later Ts included, during their final years. For many Cobham members this book will take them back to their early days of bus enthusiasm when an interest in such things was considered nothing out of the usual.

The variety of vehicles about was good, but the family likeness could be easily identified. The 'Bluebird' LT set the style for the double deck fleet until the RT came along and the T and single deck LT matched. When the single deck Q appeared it started a whole new approach to detail design which culminated in many features on the RT and RF types.

The book has full details of types with variants of body and chassis and where appropriate entry and withdrawal from service. It can be 'read' and/or used as a reference work. It shows how the fleet coped with the war and evolved into the first stages of its post-war form. I look forward to a volume devoted to the golden age of the L.P.T.B. 1933-39.

CLASSIC COMMERCIALS IN COLOUR by B.S.Watson.

Ian Allan Publishing £14.99 Reviewed by Mike Nash

Another fine colour album from Ian Allan, this does feature a few PSV's enjoying second careers but it mainly covers interesting commercials photographed between 1963 and the early 1980's. And believe me, there are some mouth-watering sights.

Not surprisingly there are plenty of fairground vehicles, wreckers and other obscure machines, most of which will long ago have disappeared, but it is the sheer variety, interesting backdrops and informative captions which make this such an enjoyable book. If you like buses there's enough to keep you happy, but if elderly commercials are your thing too then this album is an essential purchase. Great stuff!

RF (Regal Four) Running Day - 24th October 1999.

Peter Starks RFOC

I always understood RF to mean Regal Four, but this year I found a different meaning, Regal Flood -

11 RFs attended this years event and heavy rain flooded part of Unit46 and created Cobham's own skid pan.

This year an excellent collection of RFs were available for inspection and to be ridden on the circular route to Ripley and Send, although Mike Nash managed to end up at Chessington Zoo. We were very pleased to see Donald's BEA RF, fresh from extensive repair/overhaul and repaint into original colours, looking superb.

Although attendance may have been down, due to the poor weather, everyone enjoyed the day, with plenty on time to catch up with Cobham news.

Many thanks to all the owners who made their vehicles available today

RCL2223

David Boshier

The advent of the Routemaster was not welcomed by us all including a large percentage of London's travelling public, particularly bearing in mind its main purpose in life was to replace London's-Trolleybus system, which in today's language could be described as

environmentally friendly in as much as the form of propulsion being electricity driven was giving way to an even larger fleet of diesel buses giving off objectionable fumes and gases on the population of London. Naturally, that statement might provoke further correspondence from those who might not have experienced the trolleybus in London. However, despite the fact that the Routemaster might display a 'brash' appearance unlike the classic lines of the RT, the breed is very much part of London's bus history and represents the last design to appear from the drawing office of Chiswick Works based on years of operating experience.

During 1995, I was approached by the management of AVS Graphics Ltd, a company who market 40 digital editing systems to the television industry both in the UK and internationally.

The company owned former Green Line Routemaster RCL2223 which was being used as a promotional and training vehicle for its products which were being marketed under the umbrella name of OMNIBUS. I was asked if I would be prepared to look after the vehicle whilst also driving the bus to various locations within the UK which included television companies and various trade exhibitions.

It was apparent that the bus required some 'TLC' (if only from the driving aspect). This became evident when I met the previous driver who openly boasted at the speed which could be achieved on long downhill stretches of motorway whilst 'Out of gear'!

The first outing was to Anglia Television in Norwich, a trip which I won't easily forget due to the number of breakdowns brought about by fuel problems. The last of these occurred about 10 miles from Norwich and was accompanied by a few carefully selected words not normally to be found in the Oxford Dictionary. Following assistance by a Green Flag agent, we managed to reach Anglia Television in the centre of Norwich. Needless to say, I was pleased to finally get to the hotel which was reached well after midnight. Arrangements were made for the Green Flag agent to return the following day and check out the fuel system further on site at Anglia Television. Despite this the RCL broke down again in the afternoon rush hour in Norwich, you know that feeling in this kind of situation, when you wish you weren't really there! Since those days, the reliability of the RCL has been improved despite the fact that when my back was turned, the vehicle was often subjected to "battery abuse" resulting in non-start situations when I arrived to move the vehicle.

During September 1995, I was asked to drive the RCL to the Netherlands and to an annual trade fair at the Rai Exhibition Centre

on the southern outskirts of Amsterdam. I delivered the bus to P & O at Felixstowe. Being one of the first vehicles on the ferry, Despite the fact RCLs have limited clearance at ground level, loading on the ferry was effected without a hitch. Stowed on the lowest deck, the bus was soon surrounded with a large number of articulated trucks of multinational origin. I was soon to realise that truck drivers really do get looked after on these commercial ferries, it wasn't long before I found the restaurant and needless to say got stuck into a wonderful three-course meal. The night crossing to the Hook of Holland was extremely smooth and seemed to be slowed down deliberately so that we arrived at a 'half sensible' time in the morning. Being woken up at 05.00 left me with loads of time to kill particularly bearing in mind that the RCL would be one of the last vehicles to be unloaded. Breakfast was the first order of the day and once again the chef excelled himself! Just after 07.00, RCL2223 rolled off the ferry to be checked out by Dutch Customs. Once clear, I had more time to kill before a rendezvous with an escort company (no not that kind!). As the RCL exceeded the maximum height restrictions permitted on roads in the Netherlands it was required to be escorted whilst underway to Amsterdam. Due to certain restrictions on the direct route from Rotterdam, we were forced to take a longer route which in itself was subjected to one or two diversions. Just after 09.00, a bright yellow VW Transporter van appeared with large graphics proclaiming 'CONVOI EXCEPTIONNEL'. After coffee and a get to know each other chat we commenced the drive to Amsterdam and the Rai Exhibition Centre with the VW being followed by the RCL. The journey was uneventful but was made interesting by the sight of a bright yellow painted RT travelling in the opposite direction from Amsterdam with no obvious escort! The bus was used as a focal point on the AVS stand at the exhibition whilst offering demonstration facilities of the AVS products. The RCL made a subsequent trip to Montreux, Switzerland, a trip that I wasn't involved with. Unfortunately, the bus did not fair well on this trip and was subjected to fuel pump failure and damage to the fuel tank due to grounding. Much work has been undertaken to the RCL since I became involved with the vehicle, due to the failure of the air bags (more than likely brought about by driving the vehicle before the airbags had become inflated). Andy Baxter and Paul Morris were given the task off replacing the old pair with a new set secured by David Jones. A repaint undertaken in 1995 into LT bus red replaced the rather flat burgundy livery, with the mouldings surrounding the windows being

picked out in Chiswick Cream being added later. One nice touch was the replacement of the single headlamps with the original twin headlamps and panels that were lost when LT Aldenham overhauled the RCLs for work at Stamford Hill and Edmonton

Some history about RCL2223

Delivery took place in February 1965 to Aldenham Works entering service at Romford (RE) Garage in March RCL2223 became the first operational vehicle on routes 721 and 722. The RCLs were generally associated with (RE) Romford and (WR) Windsor the later working them on routes 704 and 705. RCL2223 as with the rest of the RCL fleet passed to London Country Bus Services in January 1970. March 1971 saw the coach at Aldenham for an overhaul returning for continued Green Line use at (RE) Romford 'but not for long'. The writing was on the wall, RCL2223 was demoted to bus work at Reigate (RG) on routes 405 and 414 a slight revision in livery also took place with yellow band and LONDON COUNTRY fleetname. De-licensed due to accident damage in December 1974, the vehicle was not repaired until May 1975 when she was placed back in store having also been repainted in a coat of NBC green. RCL2223 reappeared in service in February 1978 for its final stint of service with LCBS at Reigate Garage. By January 1978 she had been sold back to London Transport and used initially as a driver trainer at (WN) Wood Green Garage. Due to lack of use, she was withdrawn and placed in store but re-appeared in March 1979 on driver training at Wood Green. Thanks to the National Bus Company take-over of Green Line services, one can confidently come to the conclusion that the 1970s were not a happy period for the RCL fleet. The 1980s were begun with a surprise move of withdrawal from driver training and dispatch to Aldenham works for overhaul emerging in June 1980 painted in LT bus red and devoid of platform doors. Together with other members of the RCL fleet which were treated the same, RCL2223 was placed in store at Victoria Docks. On August 10th 1980, the bus entered service at Stamford Hill (SF) with other members of the class whilst others arrived at Edmonton (EM) to take up service on routes 149 and sometimes 243,243A and 253. Then came the ultimate insult, withdrawal in March 1984, a move which many of us will never understand. RCL2223 was placed in store at the then closed Turnham Green Garage (V), officially withdrawn for disposal in April 1984, the bus was moved to open storage at the former AEC Works at Southall. By September 1984,

the bus had been sold to a Mr Payne of Maidstone, Kent who had proposed to use it to transport fruit pickers.

Within the month, the bus was sold to E H Brakell, a dealer in ex-LT vehicles. The next change in ownership was not until March 1986 to Mr Andrew Gillespie who restored the platform doors and placed the contract conversion work with Bus Engineering Limited at Aldenham. The lavish conversion produced a very well equipped corporate entertainment and hospitality vehicle. By April 1988 the vehicle had passed to PAG of London SW20 who undertook further conversion work to enable the vehicle to be used as a demonstration/show vehicle. The work included the fitting of removable display units, television monitors, and video on the lower deck. Other on board facilities included a 9kva generator located under the staircase and fully insulated. A bar was also located on the lower deck together with a cold cabinet. The upper deck included provision for 22 at dining tables, a small kitchen facility at the rear included a microwave, hot plates, hot & cold running water, coffee machine and fridge/freezer. The general interior colour scheme made use of the standard burgundy used on the Routemaster interior this complemented the use of beige velour roof lining. The exterior was finished in burgundy with wheels in Chiswick cream when outshopped by Aldenham.

Thanks to AVS Graphics, we have been able to show the bus at various rallies whilst also making good use of the onboard facilities at BUS of YESTERYEAR when the vehicle has performed as a rally control bus.

The future is somewhat unsure for RCL2223, but I would like to think that the vehicle will survive in the UK and be preserved perhaps in the condition in which it was converted as a corporate entertainment suite at Aldenham in the dying days of that establishment.

London Buses in Miniature

Alan John Purssey

I have two apologies to make after my article in the autumn issue of the Cobham Bus Magazine.

First to Jim Varney, not Reg Varney (who appeared in the series on the buses) and one to any readers who sent for a Mabex catalogue. I have since learned that Mabex have changed hands due to the ill health of John the previous owner who ran the business for nearly

fifty years. The new owners are continuing the excellent model transport transfers and hope to expand the range with new lines in the future.

Their new address is –

Mabex Products, PO Box 52, Tunbridge Wells, TN4 9ZS (enclose 85p for a catalogue).

There have been some interesting new London Transport related models on the market in the past three months, two from EFE and one from RTC models

New Releases - EFE

XA Atlantean, London Transport

With a short life of the XA class in London Transport fleet this version is quite interesting in that it features the open bullseye livery. XA18, registered CUV18C is depicted on route 234 to Selsdon, due for release in January 2000.

In marked contrast the second release is a Daimler Utility in Greenline service on route 721 to Brentwood. The utility looks good in Greenline colours, particularly the pale green window surrounds. The gold bullseye logos stand out well against the dark green body colour and with legal lettering, unladen weights and running codes, makes a welcome addition to our Greenline fleets.

RTC

This company has a reputation for producing high quality kits and their latest release is no exception. It's their first double deck kit and is a 1933 AEC Regent Chiswick bodied STL leaning back version, very similar to Cobham's STL441. Everything about this kit is superb. The packaging comes with a colour illustration on the top. The instructions are clear and precise with an exploded drawing on the back, including a list of parts and seating diagram. I have never built a model bus in this order before, so I followed the instructions to the letter and found that it was one of the easiest that I have ever constructed. The kit contains 43 parts including glazing and rubber tyres and full interior cab details. Construction follows the practise of interior fitted last. One tip, paint the roof as it needs fitting early in construction to hold the body square. Attention to detail in this kit is amazing. Interior details include handrails up the staircase, fairstage and information boards fitted to the staircase, even down to the flywheel cover. The castings are clean and need little attention. This style of bus lends itself to the old colour scheme of silver roof, white window surrounds, central red with black around the roof and centre.

Don't be put off by the black blinds, try a calligraphy pen. They are waterproof and cover gloss paint and are available from most art shops. For small details such as headlamps and filler caps, use a wooden cocktail stick. The STL class was built with many different body designs and this variant was unique with its sloping front and back, as London Transport wanted to get away from the LGOC box style of design; it makes it a must for any collection.

I am told David Eden from RTC now has the bit between his teeth and has some exciting new projects in mind, including the first style STL, a LGOC 60 seater bluebird type, and side door double-deck Q.

By the time this article appears in print RTC should have the transfers to complete the STL number-plates, fleet number destination screens etc to complete a superb model.

I have completed mine with vintage posters from Mabex and it compliments my existing collection of STLs.

The new owners of Mabex will be attending various bus-related venues around the country and they look forward to meeting us.

RTC will be attending Cobham Open Day on 9th April at Brooklands. With their distinctive stand, they look forward to meeting customers both old and new.

If you cannot wait until then, the STL can be purchased from RTC Models, , Rosslyn Crescent, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2RZ
Kit No. 202 £29.95 plus £1.50 postage and packing.

The Ghosts of New Years Past

Elvis Dickens

The city bound D stock train screeched to a halt at Embankment Station. The tail end of the evening peak found a mix of office workers and late evening shoppers on their way home. I stood by the door waiting for the orange glow of the passenger open button to signify that the train had stopped. As it did I pressed the centre and the door slid open and a blast of warm Underground air entered the car. That comforting mixture of Jeyes Fluid, electrical equipment ozone and brake block dust that has been a familiar part of sub-surface travel in the capital for so many years. I left the train and walked up the platform accompanied by a number of fellow commuters on their way home. Up the stairs and through the barrier

collecting my travel card as it popped back out of the machine and out into the crisp cold winters night. I was sorry to leave behind the warmth and security of the Underground.

Villiers Street was, as it had been for years, a lively corridor between London Transport and the main line railways. The usual mixture of evening revellers, commuters on the way home and the down and outs. Frost gleamed on the trees in the near by gardens and the air was thin and chill. My breath formed steamy clouds as I trudged up the incline leading to the Strand and Charing Cross Station. Reaching the steps leading to the main concourse of the station I turned left and started climbing. Half way up a care in the community case was begging for money for 'food' of the liquid variety, wrapped up against the chill in his dirty stained sleeping bag. At the top of the stairs the light and warmth from the station contrasted with the cold of the late evening as I looked at the train indicators to see what was about to arrive. A Gravesend via Woolwich 'fast' looked the best bet, as there was nothing stopping at Erith. I could catch a bus for the last part of my journey. I walked through the barrier and on to the platform, which became steadily colder as I walked down to the Hungerford Bridge end. In the distance lights and strange wailing sounds from the equipment indicated the imminent arrival of my train which soon pulled up disgorging its complement of mainly young revellers up for a night on the town. I was glad to be back inside in the warm, even though the rudimentary upholstery of the seats was not up to the standard of the District's best D stock. The carriage soon began to fill modestly with a similar mix to my previous train. Young 'city' girls and office managers in their familiar 'uniforms' middle aged shoppers loaded from the sales in the West End, a man in a long overcoat, scarf and wide brimmed hat, the compulsory sprinkling of loud mouthed yobs and a few children who had been reluctantly dragged along with the female members of the family to go shopping.

With a whistle, a bleep-bleep from the door-warning device and a wailing from the control equipment we were soon on our way via the 'Chatham' to Woolwich Arsenal. The Networkers can certainly get themselves moving and providing they don't have the almost routine 'flat' or set of 'flats', do so in a very smooth and comfortable manner. The gentle swaying of the carriage and the musical noises coming from the equipment coupled with the warm comforting environment bring on an almost trance like state after a long day at work and a chilly stroll through the winter's eve.

The rhythmic rumbling sounds from below indicated the train's passage over Hungerford Bridge. Looking out of the window provided a fine view of the river and the buildings of the South Bank. Music lovers were on their way to concerts at the Festival Hall complex and on the Northern bank an illuminated panorama that the regular commuters take for granted and tourists pay dearly to see stretched out along the rivers edge. Past the bust of Nelson Mandella and the almost constant rebuilding works a small group of Metrobuses was parked out of service just before the large circular cinema on what had been just another round-about at the South side of Waterloo Bridge. Various second and third generation double deckers owned by a diverse range of privatised companies made their way around heading in and out of central London. The train entered Waterloo East and more commuters got on happy to leave the chilly evening behind for a warm if not particularly comfortable seat. London Bridge came and went and the Networker picked up a bit of speed accompanied by its almost surreal electrical sounds. The heaters and smooth gently swaying motion induced a state of complete lethargy.

A sudden jerk from the brakes and squeal as the iron blocks bit shook me back to full consciousness. Across the narrow compartment the three wooden frames on the matchboarded wall contained between them a map of the complete Southern Railway network and two inducements to take a trip to sunny Bournemouth and visit North Cornwall. As the ultimate destination of the train was Dartford via Greenwich we weren't in any danger of seeing either tonight. I looked out of the window as the train was leaving Westcombe Park and in the distance the lights of the CRD at Charlton indicated that the late shift must still at work re-furbishing the trams that were expected to see out the system till it was all converted to trolleybuses in three or four years time. The Sub showed a good turn of speed with its light wooden ex SECR body on a modern frame with the latest MV motors and control equipment. Past the Valley and Woolwich Dockyard Station and through the short but tight tunnel and in to Woolwich Arsenal Station.

I opened the compartment door and stepped out on to the chilly platform, slamming the door behind me. At this time, late in the evening I could make the short walk over to the Earl Of Chatham and get on a 99 or make my way round to the stops outside the Arsenal which would give me the chance of a nice new trolley on the 698.I

decided on the latter course of action and turned right out of the station. An EI tram on the 46 ground it's way past on the long way round to Embankment-Savoy Street. the driver wrapped up against the cold in his long melton overcoat and his gloved hands gripping the control and brake handles. Unfortunately for him his tram had not yet gained its windscreen. Maybe it was due for withdrawal soon. The eel and pie shop was doing good business with some cloth-capped workers from the Arsenal or other factories from alongside the river down near the free ferry. A trolley on the 696 sped past on its way to the latter destination. The wires gleamed in the streetlight and the cobbles looked wet and slippery as I crossed Plumstead Road near where the tram tracks interlaced at the junction with Woolwich New Road. Walking towards Plumstead to the bus and tram stops I looked around to see if anything was coming. A nearly new D2 trolley cascaded into Bexley from Hanwell glided past on its way to Dartford. In the distance bouncing across the cobbles was a bus.

Manoeuvring to negotiate a stationary tram the familiar shape of a 'Bluebird 'LT' came into view. There was an evens chance that it would be a 99. The shiny red and white paint of the bodywork glistened in the light of the quite new electric lamps attached to the trolleybus traction poles and the silver showed bright on the roof. A tribute to the high standards at Plumstead Garage. Even better it was a 99 on its way to Erith, Prince of Wales. As it pulled up at the stop in response to my outstretched hand I made the quick decision to forgo the relative warmth and fresh air of the lower saloon for the usual 'fug' of the top deck and its better view. The stairs in a 'Bluebird' are a little harder to negotiate than the standard variety, but nothing special after Country area STLs and soon I was on the top deck in that rarefied atmosphere of Player's Navy Cut, Old Holborn and Condor Sliced! The usual range of passengers on their way home after the late shift or some last minute bargains in the market did their best to keep the atmosphere choking as we skirted the high wall of the Arsenal on our way towards Plumstead. The humped bridge over the railway next to Plumstead Station brought us to that narrow part of the High Street where the tramlines are singled. Sure enough a 36 was waiting at one end of the section as a depot working on the 40 just ahead of us negotiated it. The Bluebird with its superb combination of petrol engine and pre-selector transmission passed the tram at the first opportunity and soon left Plumstead with its LCC Fire Station, Police Station and Public Baths all within a short

walk of each other, well behind. The tram tracks swept away to the left towards Abbey Wood as we started the long climb up Bostall Hill. Despite a good load we made confident progress up the long incline, between the oak and silver birch trees whose leafless branches glistened with frost in the clear moonlight. The exposed ground around the trees and bushes was also iced with a sparkling carpet of frost crystals. For all the beauty of the scene I was glad to be in the relative warmth of the top deck even if it was difficult to see all the way along and there were droplets of nicotine forming on the ceiling. The road levelled out as we reached Bostall Heath and the ranger's house and the flat grassy area used for cricket matches in the summer. The frost here looked like snow and the moon cast eerie shadows at the edge of the woods as it shone through the branches of the oaks, which reached up like scrawny arms and hands. The convent school over to our right indicated the start of another populated area and houses soon started to appear either side of Woolwich Road. Those on the left marked the border with Bostall Woods, which dropped down to Abbey Wood, and Lessness Abbey and the alternative route to Erith on the 698 trolleybus.

A little way ahead to our right, another LT, this time one with an older type of body, pulled away from the stop near Upper Belvedere police station and the top of Albert Road. The drivers doubtlessly waved as it passed us as we slowed to a stop outside the Eardley Arms at Upper Belvedere. A number of people got off and most crossed over the road and walked off in the direction of the village. Some turned sharp left and into the welcoming interior of the pub. Woolwich Road became Erith Road at the junction with Nuxley Road, with All Saints Church on the corner and we were now well on the way home. As we passed the sailor's home the road started its descent down Friday Hill. At the corner of Riverdale Road the 'Pom Pom' was yet another oasis of beer and warmth. I made a mental note to stop off at the Prince of Wales when we arrived at our ultimate destination.

The section of road where Erith Road becomes Fraser Road marks the edge of Erith proper. Fraser Road named after the engineering equipment manufacturers Fraser and Chalmers had been a local centre of engineering and manufacturing since the last century. Only recently was the Cannon and Gaze flourmill on the waterfront demolished after a disastrous fire. The 99 picks up good loadings in either direction along Fraser Road, many workers coming from Callenders cable works. As we left the stop on the incline to the junction with Bexley Road a B2 trolleybus crossed the junction and

turned left at the 'Wheatley Arms' and descended Walnut Tree Road on its way to Woolwich Free Ferry via Belvedere and Abbey Wood on the 698. It would soon pass the old Erith tram depot which passed back to the Council a few years back after the London Passenger Transport Board deemed it surplus to requirements. It now houses the dustcart fleet and other Erith Borough Council vehicles. What a come down for such a distinctive and noble building. Whatever next, would they keep buses at a Council dump! We waited at the top of Fraser Road for another trolley, this time a newer D2 ousted from Hanwell on its way back to Bexleyheath Clock Tower and then judging by its haste, to the futuristic depot which points the way to the future of transport in and around London.

Another 99 passed as we crossed the railway bridge next to Erith station and travelled past the 'Wheatley' to start our journey down Pier Road flanked by an array of prosperous small shops. Erith Council is slow to remove all traces of the trams and its difficult to remember that this branch which went along Crayford Road to North End was abandoned before the end of the Great War. Woolworth's is one of the largest shops in Pier Road apart from the well-known local store of Mitchell's which occupies the corner and stretches round into the High Street. You can buy anything there and the local public transport brings many local residents into town to shop. The bottom of Pier Road has long since lost its pier and Cory's coal wharf occupies the site with a wonderful steam railway all its own, which transports coal from the colliers at the deep wharf to the connection with the Southern Railway on the way to Slades Green.

We had almost reached the 'Prince of Wales' and on our left the Art Deco Odeon was doing very good business as usual. I wondered if they had an American film as the main feature, maybe a new one starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rodgers or some home grown comedy with Will Hay. He is supposed to be releasing a film about railways, which should prove interesting as well as very funny. Too soon the 99 reached the stop outside the 'Prince of Wales' and it was time to get off. Riding on these Bluebirds from Plumstead is always a pleasure even in winter providing you're well wrapped up. The crew went to make use of the facilities and so did I, but not in quite the same order. I entered the faded Victorian opulence of the saloon bar and bought a mild and bitter, settling in a cosy corner near the blazing coal fire to enjoy it. From the public bar next door an upright piano belted out some old favourites and some new tunes from the latest films and shows. The pianist obviously thought he was Charlie

Kunz or a half of Ivor Moreton and Dave Kaye. A country area STL in the attractive two tone green livery had pulled up in front of the LT. These have very draughty lower decks in spite of the 'scientifically designed' front entrance, which unlike Chiswick's 'scientifically designed' seats doesn't work very well.

Some well-lubricated voices nearly managed to keep up with the pianist as I treated myself to my third pint. Sitting in my cosy corner I felt warm and contented.

The sound of a scraping stool jolted me awake. A mixture of family groups and yobbos of both sexes were tucking in to their Big Macs and Monster Fries. Across the chrome and plastic dominated eating area the long scarf of the odd looking man from the Networker collected globules of mayonnaise as he tentatively bit into the multi-layered concoction in front of him. I stood up and walked out of Macdonald's towards the motorway that had once been Queens Road. I decided to risk the traffic rather than use the pedestrian subway to reach the bridge over the railway that had once carried traffic as part of Park Crescent. The frost was still building up on every available surface and my breath was clearly visible in the thin night air. At the junction with Lesney Park Road I looked to my right at the sturdy tower and spire of St Johns Church, pointing skywards between the trees. The long coat, scarf and wide brimmed hat, which almost overwhelmed its owner, melted into the night. At the bottom of the road a shape hovered past. A whisp of mist from the river or the lingering ghost of some long dead B2 trolleybus making its way back to the depot, Who knows? Here we were at the start of a new year, a new century. What wonderful changes would we experiences . Who knows? I expect so.

Beyond the Gates

John Hinson

As we surge through winter, the preservation world is at a low, dwarfed by the hype and excitement of Christmas and New Year celebrations. Nevertheless, there are still some interesting reports coming in of vehicles found, and of others changing hands.

RF89, which I last saw in the mid-1980s as a very nice caravan conversion, in full Green Line livery, appears to have been in the ownership of travellers in Dorset since then. Late last year it was advertised for sale, because it had to be removed from where it was but wasn't particularly drivable owing to a cracked block. A couple of interested parties enquired but time ran out and the vehicle was sold to a local "scrappie" who I understand is in no rush to break it in case a suitable buyer comes along.

I am pleased to say that I have been able to buy up most of the stock of spares held by the owners; there is however one item which is of no use to me personally but would be to some - this being a spare curved drivers windscreen for modernised RFs. I didn't inspect this, but apparently it has one minor scratch but is otherwise perfect. If anybody is interested in this, please contact me urgently as I will be calling in again soon and could bring it back. Price is obviously dependent on the state of the scratch, but this is probably repairable with modern windscreen chip-filling techniques.

Another vehicle apparently in use with travellers was an RT seen by one of the attendees of the Christmas Lights Tour parked in Bermondsey. The vehicle hasn't been identified - can anyone advise which this was?

According to my records, GS73 is another vehicle that has been used by travellers for some years, but John Clarke tells me that he has had contact from the current owners - the vehicle is now in North Africa!

A few editions ago I reported on GS36 passing to a new owner. This was the one that carried Stevenson's of Uttoxeter Yellow and Black livery. It has now apparently been restored and repainted back into London Transport green livery, and I look forward to seeing it at rallies in the south during the year.

RF667 has changed hands and is now with some good friends of mine, Mike and Ian, in Tring. My strongest memories of this bus were during the 1980s when owned by Alan Brown and restored in Central Area red livery. Since then it has changed hands a few times, and picked up the more correct green livery and a class VI test along the way. This isn't Mike and Ian's first RF, at one time they had RF643 which is now in the care of Memory Lane Travel although not currently in use.

Two other RFs are on the market, if not already sold. RF168, a modernised Green Line coach, is available from Tony Quince on 01462 811230, whilst RF530, in red, is available in the Croydon area

on 07957 155031. Both of these are, from memory, very nicely restored vehicles.

An old friend (or enemy) by the name of Ninny was also advertised for sale recently. This is one of two Dodge minibuses built in 1982 that I recall being allocated to Potters Bar to work the local PB1 route, probably better known to us old 'uns as the 284 circular, the haunt of Potters Bar's only RFs (for a few months) and later (more famously) FRM1. Ninny (NYN 1Y), fleet number A1, and her friend were taken out of service one weekend having been replaced by "something else". We were not to amused to find our RFs (which at that time were housed in the garage) blocked in by these two which had become total non-starters after being parked up for less than 48 hours! That rather hampered our rallying that day. I'm sure Ninny is much healthier now, and if you would be interested in adding to the increasing numbers of more modern (and unusual) vehicles in preservation, call 01582 435.

RT1499 changed hands again last year, and is now in the care of Keith Rose. It will be nice to see this rare vehicle at rallies again one day, but I expect Keith plans to do some thorough work on it first. Roland Graves has kindly written with some details of his Leyland PS1 for the "non-London" spotlight in this column, which I had been allowing to gracefully die owing to apparent lack of interest! He owns WAL 782, which is an ex Barton Leyland PS1, manufactured in 1947. It is particularly interesting to me as the chassis is of a type intended for single-deck bodywork but it carries a double deck body. Roland has given me the history behind this. The vehicle started life as a single deck coach in 47 lasting until 1957 when Barton transport decided to rebody a batch of PS1 chassis some from their own fleet and others bought in. The chassis and mechanical units were stripped down and overhauled in the Companies workshops at Chilwell, Nottingham. They were sent to Willowbrook for fitting with Lowbridge Double Deck, 8' wide, L31/30RD bodies. These were very large but well proportioned bodies of all steel frame construction with aluminium panels. 782 does in fact have a London connection as the seats were trimmed with RM style moquette. Several Barton vehicles were so trimmed at this period. There is a Yeates Dual Door Bus bodied Bedford VAL preserved that also has RM Moquette. Roland has been involved with the preservation of this bus since 1977 and over the years much work has been done both mechanical

and bodywork including at least three repaints! The latest has been a two year project to refurbish the upper deck. This involved stripping out everything back to the bare metal and wooden floor. New lino floor covering put down together with several yards of steel pyramid tread strip between the seats and down the gangway. All the seats have been renewed with correct RM material. After the repaint of all the surfaces it now looks particularly fine.

The next project on the vehicle looks as it will have to be the lower deck!

Many thanks for that, Roland, perhaps this will encourage other non-LT vehicle owning members to write with their mini-histories and help blinkered London Bus people like me to understand what went on in the provinces!

As usual all reports and snippets are welcome at the usual address:

The Shambles, Graham Road, Wealdstone, Middx. HA3 5RE
Email: shambles@...com

Events for 2000

With the lessons learned from last years' over ambitious event programme the committee has decided that a more controlled approach will be undertaken this year. We also hope to encourage more members to take advantage of trips out on RTL139 throughout the season. Many of the areas considered to be weak last year will be improved. Some of these problems concerning publicity and liaison have been tackled but one area needs extra attention. That is, members of the public visiting the museum, left on their own to wander about, were not getting very much out of their visit. To alleviate this, it was decided to have a pool of guides to show people around at fixed times during days we are open, The exception to this will be 9th April as there will be too many visitors and stallholders to control. In much the same way as the shop has its corp. of volunteers, we are hoping to have the same set-up with guides. In charge of this is Bill Cottrell. So please contact him if you would like to volunteer. A meeting will be set-up to discuss how this will be achieved and also how training will take place. It should prove to be enjoyable if enough volunteers can be persuaded to join. Please

contact Bill to join the Guides (uniform provided, knobby knees an advantage!)

Events planned at the museum so far

Sunday 9 April:

Cobham 2000 Annual Open Day, a major event at the Museum and at the Old Runway at Brooklands with bus & coach gathering. Many sales stands and frequent bus services operated by a wide selection of classic and newer vehicles, connecting Brooklands Runway with Cobham Bus Museum, Cobham Village, Weybridge Town and Station. Also, free circular vintage bus service from Brooklands Runway. Event sponsored by Buses, Preserved Bus and Classic Bus.

Bank Holiday Monday 29 May: Rear-Engined Day, with a network of free services operated by a wide selection of rear-engined vehicles. Organised by Mike Nash

Sunday 2 July: Museum Display Day, with photographic runs by Trust and visiting vehicles. The main theme for this is still under negotiation.

Organised by Roy Adams and Bill Cottrell

Bank Holiday Monday 28 August: Classic and rear-engined vehicles running on a variety of free services to and from the Classic Car Show in Woking Town Centre.

Organised by Roger Stagg.

Saturday/Sunday 16/17 September: Running Days recreating long-disappeared local routes, in connection with events in Downside Village.

Organised by Bill Ackroyd

Sunday 29th October A perennial favourite, the RF owners running day. Transport: Special bus service 462, operated by RTL139 (subject to availability), linking Weybridge Station, Town & the Bus Museum on all Event Days. Separate enhanced arrangements on 9 April. Variation to service Downside Village event.

Organised by Peter Starks

Additionally, the museum will be supporting the following events

7th May HCVS London to Brighton Rally

We have entered STL2377 and other museum buses for this prestigious event. At this stage we do not know if we have been accepted as an entrant. However, RTL139 will be going to Brighton either as an entrant, or as a support vehicle for STL2377. Either way, tickets are available to either follow or take part in the run. Timings at this stage depend on whether any bus has been accepted and the start time. The fare will be £10. This does not include entrance to the display area but tickets are usually available at the gate for 50p. To reserve a seat and register for further details, contact Graham Ruddock

14th May Classic Automotion at Crowthorne

A large contingent of buses from the museum will be attending this super show. We would like this to be a member's day. Take the opportunity to book a ticket on RTL139 for £12.00 (including admission), you can ride on any Trust bus during the day on the extensive private roads within the Road Research Laboratory Complex. Other buses also give rides to members of the public. Fantastic opportunity for photographs within the complex. Any member making their own way there is also welcome to ride as riding on the Trust vehicles at this event is not conditional to buying a ticket on RTL139. Civilised time of leaving Cobham, about 9.00am, return about 6.00pm. Tickets and further details from Graham Ruddock, address

11th June Southsea Rally

Ride on the RTL to the seaside, less than two hours from Cobham. The rally site is just across the road from the beach. A chance to placate the family, take the family to the seaside and attend a bus rally and large transport flea market. Tickets from Graham Ruddock for £8.00, free admission to the rally site.

We will also be attending **Ardingly** on the **8th and 9th July**. The museum will be having its own display so many vehicles will be attending. The RTL will be running both days, as it will be used as a ferry bus on the Saturday. Make a note of the date, more details in the next magazine. If you want to reserve seat, contact Graham Ruddock.

Amberley Museum will be having a Leyland event on **Sunday 17th September**. The RTL will be attending this venue in the verdant Sussex Downs; more details next issue, or reserve a seat now with Graham Ruddock

The Aldershot and District and Dennis Bus Owners Association invite you to the **Aldershot and District running day** on **Sunday 30th April and Monday 1st May**. See enthusiast magazines for further details.

Finally, our good friends from the North Kent Vehicle Preservation Group will be at the **Detling Transport and Country Festival** on **the 12th and 13th August**. There will be craft exhibits, demonstrations, model engineering displays, traditional fairground ride and one of the biggest displays of every type of vintage and classic transport. Further details from Ash Keys, Vigo Village, Meopham, Kent DA13 0SL.

Also, members are invited to a slide show featuring buses of the 60's and 70's on Wednesday 22nd March at Borough Green Village Hall starting at 800 p.m. Further details from Roland Graves 01732

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Powered Vehicles in my Life

Tony Lewis.

From a very early age, I have always had a fascination for the many varieties of vehicles propelled by various means, together with a great desire to drive and control them.

The first car was pedal driven but it was far more fun to take it to the top of the steep hill where we lived and with my feet well clear of the pedals, let it go. Some of the tyres were missing so it was very noisy and the handling tended towards oversteer; at our house it was full lock into the sideways, to be stopped by the back fence. A few years later my friends and I built various go-carts with trailers, which were a lot faster. The last one was modified with a handle operating a crank, sprockets and chain to drive a rear wheel and steering wheel control to the front axle. The manual propulsion soon was replaced by a 12V starter motor and a controller providing 4, 8 and 12V tappings from the battery. Performance was brisk but no brakes, so quite exciting. When I was about 12, my father acquired a 9½ inch

gauge electric locomotive based on a Lucas Dyno-Starter, passenger coach, track, points etc.; then a 7½ inch gauge 0-4-0 steam loco so the track and the electric loco carriage were all reduced to 7¼ inch gauge to suit the new arrival. We all had a lot of fun with the railway.

My father was heavily involved with steam; coal-fed power stations in the UK and abroad, also steam lorries and rail-cars with Sentinel in Shrewsbury. In the days of steam railways, he managed to arrange rides on the footplates of locos on country lines e.g. Yelverton to Princetown and Buckfastleigh to Ashburton in Devon (the latter now buried under the A38). He was also a great enthusiast for steam cars; he owned two Doble cars, the later one previously owned by Abner Doble and which could be moved from cold in under one minute. The boiler was of a monotube type, fully automatic, ran at 85 bar and this and the engine were almost silent in operation. The car was very advanced for its time and comparable in refinement to the best petrol-engined cars. My father worked for a company in Brentford who purchased a Sentinel DG (double gear) steam wagon from J. C. Chipping of West Ewell. Dad drove it with me as fireman to Brentford where its winch was replaced by a tank to carry oil for the nearby soap works.

As a youngster I had a good collection of Dinky Toys; I still have some of them. My main interest however was building cranes with a separate clutch and brake for each function i.e. hook, jib, slew, forward and reverse travel and a motor running at constant speed to simulate an engine. When I was 14, I first drove a car, an Austin 10. Soon after I was treated to a high speed ride in a Jowett Javelin by the Plymouth agent – what an advanced car in its day – it had a flat four 1½ litre engine, independent front suspension, superb roadholding and room for six people.

I went to school on STLs on the 408 and 470 routes, some with front entrances. About twice a year I visited a great aunt at Maryland Point, by train to London Bridge, then a No. 10, usually an STD. Keith Rose has recently found a ticket in his RT detailing all the main stops on this route. Recently I bought a Corgi model of STD101 with wartime white mudguards and rear disc and with Route 10 blinds, which revived memories from those trips.

From the age of 16, I and my friends owned a succession of motorbikes, some with sidecars or just a sidecar frame – I am amazed that we all survived after parting company with these

dangerous contraptions so frequently. In my second year at Kingston Tech., studying engineering, I spent six months at the Cooper Car Co. at Surbiton who made 500 cc racing cars for enthusiasts including a very young S. Moss. One of the slowest road outfits I have ever driven must be a Ford 1172 cc van, full of toolboxes and 5 or 6 people, and pulling a trailer carrying a racing car. We went to all the main race tracks that year and met a lot of the racing fraternity and very colourful characters they were.

When at Kingston Tech. I used to work weekends for a small firm doing wiring installations, electric motor repairs, gas and arc welding and refrigerators mainly but an interesting mix of other creative jobs. Two of these were firstly making a milk cooler for milk churns at a farm; secondly to fit a Cyclaid two-stroke engine into an Austin A40 pedal car for someone's children.

After a year with this firm, I was requested by the Queen to join her Army so I agreed and became a small cog in R.E.M.E. for £1.8s.0d. per week. Following the soldiering bit in Devon in winter getting wet and cold, but luckily not being shot at, was a vehicle mechanic's course on the then current Bedfords, Fords and Gardner-and Meadows-engined Scammells. This was followed by an intensive course on excavators, cranes, waterproofing, tracked and wheeled vehicle recovery equipment and driver training.

One of the course exercises was an engine and gearbox change on a Centurion tank out on the heath, in the night, in winter, in the rain and mud and with no electricity. The engine was a V12 27 litre 640 HP version of the R.R. Merlin, which powered the Spitfire and Lancaster aircraft; the Merrit Brown (Professor Merritt/David Brown) gearbox positively drove the tracks at different speeds when a steering tiller was applied, the difference being larger in the lower gears. In neutral, the tracks move in different directions when the steering tiller is applied.

Most of the group was posted away but two mates and I from AEC and Leyland, stayed at Bordon in Hampshire as instructors, and we had a great time with tanks and recovery vehicles. A prize job was taking a tank to Aldershot behind an Antar tractor; 26 tons plus 36 tons of ½ cwt. weights to give adhesion, pulling a 10 ton trailer with 32 wheels carrying a 55 ton tank.

When Her Majesty had finished with me I joined the precision engineering company, D. Napier & Son at Acton for a graduate apprenticeship, working mostly on gas turbine aero engines and turbo blowers for marine diesel engines. While there I was seconded

for four months in a very cold winter to the Sentinel Works in Shrewsbury (which had just been acquired by Rolls Royce Oil Engine Division) to sort out a problem with the superheaters on locos destined for Dorman Long the steel makers. I used to commute weekly (weakly?) in my 1934 Austin 10 and in those days it took 6 hours each way plus an hour to thaw out on arrival.

There were not jobs available for all of us at Napiers so I joined the Development Department of Borg Warner at Letchworth and learnt the intricacies of automatic transmissions. The test fleet included an XK 140, a Mark VII Jaguar and several popular saloon cars of the time (1958). I owned a 1936 Lancia Augusta which had an integral body/chassis, a 9 degree, 4 cyl. engine, and independent front suspension; it was a "pillarless saloon" so one could carry large bulky things with no trouble. Its bad feature was the "Bibendum" wheels which had an eccentric well base and a diameter of 400mm which was about ¼ inch smaller than the 16 inch tyres causing multiple chafing of the inner tubes. Overall it was a very interesting car and we did take it over the St Gottard Pass to Italy for a holiday one year. Apart from the tyre problems the only incident was an exploding meths. bottle under the front passenger seat. Well, you have to drink something when you are young and hard up!
(continued next issue)

Somebody Rescue Me! – RT 3154 (KYY 883)

Mike Nash

I have recently been contacted by Stephen Harris of the Cambridge Omnibus Society regarding the above bus which has served as a tea kiosk at the Audley End miniature railway near Saffron Walden in Essex for twenty years. Not surprisingly, it has been frowned upon by the food hygiene people and it now has to go.

A temporary stay of execution has been negotiated by Stephen in the hope that the RT can be found a home in preservation, even if it is only used to help with another restoration project, but it's definitely too complete to go for scrap. RT3154 is mechanically complete and has been run up occasionally though the last time was about five years ago. All glass and most of the seats are there save for where a small kitchen area has been installed. The rear platform has collapsed and the bodywork, whilst complete is now rather worse for

wear. However, it definitely has potential and is still in its London Country livery.

Interested parties are encouraged to quickly contact Steve Grainger who is Estate Manager on 01799 356 or 354. I do hope someone from Cobham can take pity on this venerable old lady before it's too late. Such opportunities do not occur very often these days.

Christmas Quiz

Bill Cottrell

Quite a few members entered into the spirit of the quiz and the questions to the answers to the quiz gave me a few chuckles. Nearly every question received was factually correct, but not every question was on the same wavelength as me. Here are the questions I had in mind.

1 142635. What was the firing order of the AEC 7.7 litre engine common in many pre-war London buses? The incorrect answers included How many times during 1998 was the number 15 bus turned short at Marble Arch due to late running? (Possibly factually correct) and 'What is the combination of the lock on (a certain member's) wallet?'

2. Flanders and Swann. Who wrote and performed the song about the six-wheeler, scarlet painted 97 horsepower omnibus? Coincidentally, they may also share their names with the two conductors at Willesden with the worst sick record, but then again, probably not.

3. OLD589. A straight forward 'What is the registration number of RT4825?'

4 W. What was the service vehicle designation for a vehicle based on an AEC Regal? Well done Keith White and hard luck to anyone who had a Cricklewood connection.

5 Summer Holiday. In which film did Cliff Richard drive an RT?

6 Scooters. What was the nickname of the single-deck LT class?

7. Vanguard. I was looking for any reference to the bus company that was the pre-cursor of AEC here.

8 406F. This refers to the Epsom Derby meeting special bus route. Several members suggested this was various young ladies bra size, something I'll have to look into.

9 4P2R. Was the chassis type of the later members of the MB class? I did enjoy the suggestion from Paul Harvey that it was C3PO's bus driving cousin in 'Star Wars 9 – Return of the Routemasters'.

10 Old Bill. Any reference to B43 was the preferred answer, although the editor and the local constabulary also got a mention. Minus one mark to Jim Andress for being a clever dick and suggesting that the answer was wrong and it should be Ole Bill.

11. Bournemouth Corporation. I never realised how many valid connections there were between Bournemouth and LT, from buses hired to London Country in 1976 to trolleybuses in the war. The reference I was looking for was that scourge of the running-shift when I was at Stockwell, the DMO class.

12. Geat Bookham to Uxbridge. This was pre-war Greenline route L, on which Q83 was a regular performer in its youth. (I wouldn't expect you to know that last bit)

13 CR Class. Any reference to the first rear-engine London buses will do here.

14 Old Kent Road. Thank-you for all those 'Going for a P' answers

15 Acton The home of the LT museum's reserve collection

16 178, 230 and 248. Mike Nash's answer of 'Name three London bus routes' was a bit too all encompassing, so any additional reference to RLHs got the mark here.

17 RT2775. Only one wrong answer here although I suppose 'What is missing from this sequence: - RT2772, RT2773, RT2774, RT2776?' Is factually correct.

18 Weymann Bodywork. Once again, only one wrong answer ' Who was runner up to Park Royal Vehicles in the annual constructors dominoes final?

19 Stonebridge Park and Middle Row. Coincidentally, the garage codes are SE and X, something I hadn't thought of (not for three seconds anyway) but the question was 'What two garages closed when Westbourne Park opened?'

20 9th April. Yet another crude attempt to remind everyone the date of the next open day

Many thanks to all who entered, and the deviousness of some of the minds out there leads me to suggest that one or more of you may like to compile a quiz for a future magazine.

I enjoyed particularly the answers from Mike Nash and Paul Harvey; Jim Andress amazed me with the background facts to his answers, with occasional lapses into poetry. Most people had most of the answers factually correct, but the person on the closest wavelength to me on the answers was Keith White. I therefore declare Keith the winner of the £20 voucher to spend in the Cobham shop. If it had gone to the true or false tiebreak the winner would have been Paul Harvey. His question was "Passengers never complained of the constant rattling of the windows on a Northfleet garage MBS, True or False?"

Photo Captions

Front Cover

RTL326 at Ealing Broadway October 1965. Photo CBM

Inside Front Cover

Line up at Stockwell Garage prior to the Centenary of the London Motor Bus event 16th October 1999.

Inside Back Cover

London trolleybuses 260 and 1768 at Carlton Colville September 1999. Photo Richard Zarywacz

Back Cover

RTL1050 doing a tour of Lowestoft. Photo Richard Zarywacz

London Bus Preservation Trust

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Next copy date April 16th

I am glad my computer turned out to be millennium complaint

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