



LONDON BUS MUSEUM MAGAZINE



The journal of the London Bus Preservation Trust, Cobham Hall, Brooklands

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£4 to non-Members

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01932 837994. The phone is manned by the duty volunteers during opening hours but please bear in mind that most of the officers work from home, so it may be a question of passing a message on. Contact by e-mail (see below) will usually bring a quicker response.

E-mail

Please use the General Enquiries e-mail form on the Museum's website.

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Please note that this address cannot be used for visits in person, which should be via the main entrance.

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FRONT COVER PICTURE

RT1 celebrated her 80th birthday in style on 24th August. On the cover she is seen negotiating Hyde Park Corner in the company of STLs 441 and 2377.

(Adrian Palmer)



The views expressed in this magazine are those of the individual contributors. They are not necessarily the views of the London Bus Preservation Trust Ltd, its Trustees, Directors or Officers, London Bus Museum Ltd, its Directors or the Editor.

ITEMS FOR THE MAGAZINE

Please send contributions for the magazine to the Editor at michaelhcbaker@londonbusmuseum.com, or by post to the Museum at the address opposite.

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From the Editor

Anniversaries come thick and fast these days and a significant one we commemorate in this issue is the inauguration of the removal of the world's largest trolleybus fleet from the streets of London... This began in March, 1959 and was complete by the Spring of 1962... Once it had been intended that the fleet would be even larger and had World War 2 not intervened almost every London tram route would have been replaced by a trolleybus route by 1942.

This raises the intriguing thought that maybe, just maybe, if that had happened might the trolleybus have so established itself in London that it would have been impossible to get rid of?.. There was more than one reason why trolleybuses, once seen as the future, did not long survive anywhere in the UK after the 1950s, the very last system, that of Bradford, kept going by judicious purchase of second-hand vehicles and rebuilding, finished on 26th March, 1972... Like the trams the necessity of a complicated and expensive back-up system meant that routes could not easily react to changing demands. At the same time UK manufacturers either gave up or switched to other modes of transport. But primarily it was the notion that the trolleybus was out of date, was yesterday's transport and even in a town like Bournemouth where the beautifully maintained, almost silent, yellow painted double deck trolleybus, the newest in the UK, and the forward looking seaside town seemed made for each other.

Of course the trolleybus survived in mainland Europe and elsewhere in cities such as San Francisco. If a UK system had really been determined to keep its

trolleybuses surely it could have bought abroad; after all by the 1970s we were buying diesel bus chassis from Europe. Now the electric bus in one form or another is back on the agenda and although we may never return to the fascinatingly complex wiring setups strung over such junctions as the Nags Head Holloway, Stratford Broadway, and North Finchley, so beloved of enthusiasts, if not town planners, the electric bus is far from dead. If you have any London trolleybus stories and/or reminiscences we'd love to hear from you.



Bradford 706, a Karrier W4 rebodied by East Lancs in 1960, is seen passing some complex overhead. This vehicle is awaiting recommissioning at the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft.

(Collection)

A fateful year for the London Trolleybus

By Michael HC Baker



Brand new BI short length trolleybus No.89 built especially to cope with the steep hill leading up to Crystal Palace, in Carshalton c1936 (MHCB coll)

1959 saw the beginning of the end of what had been the largest trolleybus system in the world. Had it not been for a nasty German with a silly moustache it might have been even larger. Experiments with 'rail less electric vehicles' had begun almost as soon as the tram had appeared on the streets of the towns and cities of the United Kingdom, and in 1931 London United Tramways introduced a fleet of trolleybuses serving the Kingston area and the die was cast. Frank Pick, genius that he was, saw no future for the tram, arguing that beyond a certain level of patronage only surface and underground

railways could cope with the vast crowds using public transport in London and its suburbs. The AEC Regent and the Leyland Titan, both designed by another genius, George Rackham, were a huge advance on all earlier motor buses, they could go wherever they were needed and could easily be diverted to new housing estates out in the suburbs. But the tram scored in that it could carry fifteen or more seated passengers, and much of the equipment which sustained it could be adapted to serve the trolleybus. The Kingston area was not the busiest part of the London Transport area. The 60 AEC trolleybuses which worked its routes rapidly aged in appearance but were kept running until the late 1940s.



BI No.65 in Tamworth Road, Croydon c1957 (MHCB)



Rebuilt H1 trolleybus 768 on route 698 (MHCB coll)



BI No. 80 at Reeves Corner, West Croydon c 1955
(MHCBC coll)

The true prototype of the standard London trolleybus was No.62, a 73 seat AEC with a Metro-Cammell body. This was 16 more than the contemporary STL petrol/diesel bus. Entering service in 1934 it was of such advanced design, comfortable, and supremely handsome that when the very last London trolleybus took up work in 1953 the differences between it and No.62 were merely superficial.



A Woolwich area trolleybus burns at the scrapyards at Charlton in the Spring of 1959, surrounded by others which will suffer the same fate.
(MHCBC)

It had been intended that the trolleybus would sweep away every tram by 1942 but the war put a stop to that and in the changed post-war world the trolleybus fell out of favour and it was announced that the remaining tram routes, almost all south of the river, would be replaced by the diesel bus. The first retraction was as early as 1950 when the trams working out of Wandsworth depot were removed and with them, just to keep everything neat and tidy, the small fleet of trolleybuses based there, also disappeared.



Three Woolwich area trolleybuses from Bexleyheath depot c 1957

(MHCBC coll)

When the final trolleybus removal scheme began, on the evening of 3 March, 1959, it made sense to get rid of two groups of routes almost completely isolated from the rest of the system, and it is these which we are marking 60 years later. Out to the east, south of the river, Bexleyheath depot became a bus garage and its trolleybuses, which worked two routes, the 696 and 698, were replaced, not as had originally been intended, by Routemasters but RTs, whilst to the west RTs also replaced the 654 route which ran out of Carshalton depot, although it had also once been known as Sutton, not to be confused with the Sutton bus garage (A), home between 1946 and 1954, to the 100 semi-austerity Park Royal bodied Daimlers, D182-281.



No.491, one of the slightly newer BI trolleybuses at West Croydon passes another heading eastwards on the last day of the 654 route, 3 March, 1959
(MHCBC)

Production of the Routemaster was slower than had been hoped, whilst at the same time there was a surplus of RTs and a number of newly overhauled ones had been held back especially, many of the Carshalton (CN) ones having roof number box bodies. It was not until the final replacement stage of 1959, number 4, on 11 November that the Routemaster finally took up the role for which it had been intended, 73 working out of Poplar and West Ham garages as they had now become.

RT4779 joins the fleet

By Peter Osborn

Now that RT4779 is on loan to the Museum and joins the operating fleet, I thought that some background to its colour change from green to red might be of interest. And inspired by Colin Fradd's mention in the Spring magazine of his and Phill Cruise's favourite, RT1065, I thought I would start the story in 1964.

In September that year, I arrived at big school already fascinated by numbers. Early meetings with others of like mind introduced me to the concept of bus spotting and the Ian Allan books. One of these lads had a favourite bus, also in that second batch of green RTs, long-term Leatherhead resident RT1008. So I decided to follow suit and have a favourite, settling on the first number I wrote down, RT4779. This was also a Leatherhead resident throughout my four or five years of bus spotting, having entered service at Windsor only in 1959 following five years in store.



RT4779 with RT3173 inside Leatherhead garage c1968.
(Michael Wickham collection)

Without ever entirely losing my interest, we need to jump forward well past 1979 (when I remember reading in the paper that the last RT had operated) to the early years of this century. Idly practising searching the internet, I typed in RT4779 and was surprised to find it listed as one of the surviving RTs, in Dorking no less. I also in due course discovered running days and Cobham Bus Museum. At the 2004 Open Day at Wisley, I saw an RF for sale, and with advice from Ian Barrett of said museum was soon the proud part-owner (but that's another story).

Fast forward again to 2008, by which time I was scheduling event bus services at the museum, and following discussion with Ian Barrett, I approached the owner of RT4779, the late Mike Clarke, with a view to acquiring it for restoration. I knew from Ian that following a long spell stored outside at Billinghamurst (with six other



RT4779 on the set of 'The Heart of Me' at the Bank of England in 2002.
(Mike Clarke collection)

RTs and an RTL), it had proved too bad for its next owner to take on and was taken in by Mike in part exchange, for spares. It had been hired out just once, for the film 'The Heart of Me', for which it was set on fire.

A deal was struck, and following the completion by Ian of RT1, RT4779 was towed across from Dorking to take its place in Ian's workshop. It was May 2008.



RT4779 being towed through Dorking in May 2008.
(Peter Osborn)

Ian had kindly agreed to treat me as a sort of apprentice, so over the next few years, I spent as much time as I could doing some of the donkey work of the restoration. The first stage was to strip the bus down to its essentials, then take it outside for a thorough clean.



RT4779 skeleton driven by Ian Barrett, July 2009.
(Peter Osborn)

The next two years were taken up with refurbishing what could be saved of the frame and replacing what couldn't and what was missing.



RT4779 as a road-legal skeleton complete with MoT at Spring Gathering, Dunsfold, 2011.
(Peter Osborn)



Four of the 8 'Billingshurst RTs', RTL326, RT2177, RT4779 and RT3228, at Dunsfold 2011. (Peter Osborn)

The next two years saw the bus restored as a Leatherhead bus c1965, including the adverts it wore at that time.



RT4779 launched with some of the paint still tacky, Spring Gathering April 2013. (Peter Osborn)

But in the late 1960s, LT's Country Area had started converting routes to one-person operation and there was a surplus of RTs, so in April 1969, when RT4779 went in for its second and last overhaul, it emerged (with a different body and chassis of course) as a red bus (the RT4779 that I had known emerged as red RT2294 and went for scrap in 1976). Having worked as a green bus for ten years, RT4779 went on to achieve another nine as a red bus, successively from Plumstead, Walworth, Catford and finally Harrow Weald, where its last day in service was the last day of RTs on the 140.



RT4779 at Mill Hill East on 14 July 1978, last day of RTs on the 140. (John Parkin)

So 50 years on, in March 2019, RT4779 made its appearance at Barking as a red bus again.



RT4779 at Barking, with LBM controller Simon Greatwood. (Mike McDermott)



A similar view to that in the previous column taken outside Leatherhead garage in about 1965. (Peter Osborn)

Wartime visitor to London restored

By Michael HC Baker

AEC might have styled themselves 'Makers of London Buses' but they didn't neglect the provinces and Wythall Museum has just completed this wonderful restoration of possibly the only operational 'piano front' Regent in the UK. Post-war Birmingham also

bought a few RT chassis. No.486 has a 1931 Metro Cammell body and restoration cost around £500,000. It is one of 30 lent to LT by Birmingham in October 1940. Sent to a scrapyard in 1946, it was eventually rescued from a Herefordshire farm in 1969 and

then bought by the Birmingham and Midland Motor Omnibus Trust, which set up its base at Wythall in 1976. To quote Alan Millar in the June Buses, '486 was effectively the seed from which the museum grew'.

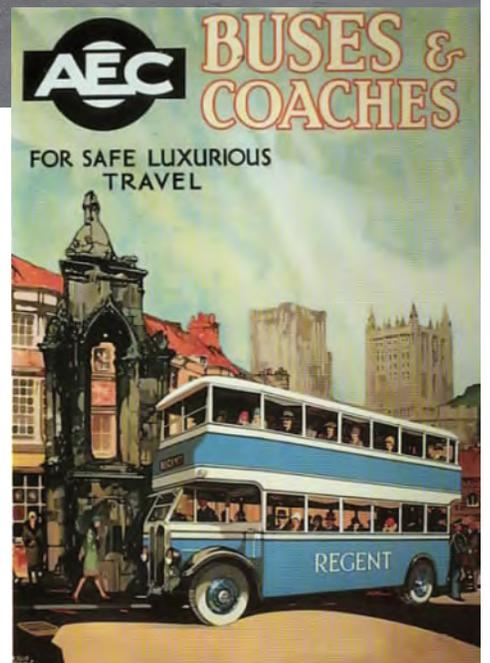


Restored Birmingham 486

(Wythall Museum / Denis Chick)



A present day tram on its way from Birmingham city centre to Wolverhampton (MHCB)



Many are the connections between London and the UK's second city. Both had very extensive trams systems, which were given the death sentence in the 1930s although both survived the War, Birmingham's by a year longer than London. Sadly, despite the size of its fleet, only one original Birmingham tram has survived. Like London design development had virtually stopped c1930, which did not help chances of survival. However where Birmingham has really scored over London is that today trams once again serve the city centre, connecting it with Wolverhampton, whilst extensions are under way. Birmingham also had trolleybuses, but very few compared with London. The standard Birmingham bus had many variations and was built, not only on AEC, but, in very large numbers on Daimler, as well as Guy, Crossley and Leyland, chassis, but always to very exacting standards which made travelling in them a real pleasure. You can still do this from the comprehensive collection based at Wythall Museum, south of Birmingham on the A435 to Evesham and very close to the M42. Wythall also has a railway station on the line from Birmingham to Stratford upon Avon.



One of many of the despised in London DMSs that were welcomed by Birmingham

(MHCB)



An RML taking on a second life in Birmingham beside the iconic John Lewis store in the city centre

(MHCB)



The one surviving Birmingham tram. The only one left of 843 trams, the gauge was 3'6", much the largest such system in the UK.

(MHCB)



Photo by Adrian Palmer

On The 23rd Jun

Photos by Phil Hambling ex



Photo by Adrian Palmer

The Buses June 2019

except where otherwise credited



Memories of Aldenham Works

By Brian A L Jones

When I was at secondary school in Harrow during the early 1950s a regular sight, morning and afternoon, was a procession of elderly London Transport (LT) buses making their way to or from that company's Aldenham Bus Overhaul Works. Those buses carried workers to Aldenham from all over the Greater London region and in some cases beyond. As I lived in North West Middlesex, I was able to make frequent visits, by bicycle, to the perimeter of the Works to observe the developments that were taking place there.

During the Second World War, some of the works buildings had found interim use as an assembly site for 712 Handley Page Halifax bombers constructed from major components supplied by companies, under the direction of LT, which formed the London Aircraft Production Group. Separately, de Havilland Aircraft had part of the planned train maintenance shed and a group of buildings, which they utilised for construction of Mosquito aircraft fuselages from delivered components and subsequently for overhauling and testing Rolls-Royce Merlin aircraft engines. Finally, Napier, the Acton-based aircraft engine manufacturer, was also given space, in connection with construction of their Sabre engines.

The Overhaul Works had been initially opened in 1950, for licensing and overhaul of the new fleet of LT RT class buses, which had been ordered in large quantities, and the creation of buses in the SRT class (I). The first works building had been converted from a building originally intended to be the cleaning shed for Underground trains to be deployed on the extension of the Northern Line to nearby Elstree and Bushey Heath, which was cancelled as a result of the Government introduction of Green Belt areas around UK cities.

The three photographs below and in the next column show the post WWII alterations and extensions to the site underway to enable its adoption for overhauling the LT bus fleet.



While the Aldenham Works finished overhauling buses officially on 15th November 1986, the buildings remained until 1996, when the site was cleared by its owner, Slough Estates, and, in 1997, a industrial estate created named Centennial Park.



SRT 150, one of the buses assembled at Aldenham using the reconditioned chassis of pre-WWII AEC Regent (previously STL2361) and a new RT class body manufactured by Park Royal. The smaller engine, 7.7L against 9.6L, extra chassis weight and poor brakes all conspired to make them generally unacceptable to bus drivers, when compared to new RTs.



STL1850 is pictured here at Aldenham on 13 September 1954. It was one of the 40 buses built for operation through the Blackwall and Rotherhithe tunnels, entering service from March 1937 and was not disposed of until 13 January 1956.



RT4154, delivered in May 1951, has obviously fallen onto its offside, with passengers potentially having escaped through the upper deck emergency window.



An unusual Aldenham visitor appears to be C31 which looks to have received an impressive re-paint, if not a full overhaul.



Another casualty awaiting treatment. An unidentifiable roofbox RT has obviously suffered a severe offside front impact.



STL2674 carrying an LGOC 60 seat body mounted on its WWII "unfrozen" chassis. This bus only departed from the LT fleet on 25 June 1958.

Notes

(1) The unsuccessful SRT class was produced by using reconditioned pre-war STL chassis with a new RT class body. This resulted in underpowered vehicles that were universally unpopular with drivers and thus had a short existence before the bodies were remounted on new chassis.

(2) All the photographs used to illustrate this article come from the collection of LBM member Jim Andress.

References

- The STLs* - Ken Blacker – Capital Transport (1984)
- London Bus File 1946-49* – Ken Glazier – Capital Transport (1998)
- London Bus File 1950-54* – Ken Glazier – Capital Transport (1998)
- London Bus File 1955-62* – Ken Glazier – Capital Transport (1999)

Happy Birthday RT I

By Michael HC Baker

RTI decided to celebrate its 80th birthday in style on 24th August by once again working route 22 as in days of yore but this time inviting several guests, namely STLs 441 and 2377, RT4779, another 1939 vintage bus, former Brighton Hove and District Bristol K5G CAP229 to act as a photographers' grandstand and, amongst others, your editor and Mrs editor, Maeve, provided we wore the correct attire, which we did.. Beginning at Putney Common, the weather shone on us, as you can see, with nearly all windows open. One wonders when three pre-war vintage AEC Regents were last seen gracing the streets of London together?





2020 London Bus Museum Calendar

The 2020 London Bus Museum is now available to purchase for the price of £8.50 from the museum reception or online at <https://www.londonbusmuseum.com/shop/>. It features paintings by Stan Hider of historical London street scenes including various forms of transport. A couple of the paintings used are reproduced below.



Lewisham



Bricklayers Arms

From the Workshop

By Roger Stagg

To suggest it has been a busy quarter would be an understatement. "On the Buses" agreed that we would bring back from store all of our vehicles to Brooklands, most of which were not mobile. As the time drew nearer the magnitude of the task became clearer, especially the time frame to get them there and away again. Just two days each way. With the help of a group of volunteers at each end, two mammoth low loaders and a wrecker from Stathams works began at 8 am on the Thursday to a timetable in ten minute sectors aptly named Operation Overlord by Museum Driving Assessor Bill Ackroyd. The plan expected that the last vehicle from both Northchapel sheds arrived on the finishing straight at 14.40. It was complete at 14.30! The Friday saw the emptying of the Rusper facility and also involved removal of propshafts from vehicles with pre-selective boxes. All completed 15 minutes early.

Monday saw the reverse procedure but vehicles going to different homes. Two were retained for repair, UMP and GS34 but T504 went to storage replaced by C94 on loan from LTM. Expectation was completion by 15.15 and report from Rusper saw the last put to bed well within the programme. Meanwhile the opportunity of



A peek into the workshop during the 'On the Buses' event reveals the progress being made on D142, with UMP227 raised up alongside it. (John Norman)

rearranging some of the exhibits was taken and the Museum was ready for business on the Tuesday morning.

Thanks go to all those members who assisted at the three locations. T448 returned to us recently from Ian Barrett's workshops and was immediately set upon by the bodywork crews. 25 years of accumulated parts were removed from inside and works are now already in hand on both body frame repairs and internally.

D142 is well advanced in its rebuild and the waterproofing to the upper deck is applied and now awaits the upper deck boarding. The external staircase has been dismantled due to corrosion and is now being rebuilt. Meanwhile progress on NS174 looks to have stalled but behind the scenes the seats are being made and assembled.

On the mechanical side a programme of replacing leaking and now unrepairable bellows glands to rear differentials with modern lip seals is underway, with bronze wheels worms and bearings being replaced as necessary. Is yours leaking? Contact the Museum for details of repairs.

GS34 has had the master cylinder and vacuum assistance cylinder removed and these are currently being relined.

In Mid July both RT1 and RF19 featured in the City of London Cart Marking at the Guildhall. The 5 shillings having been paid the "carts" were branded in the presence of the Lord Mayor in an over 500 year old ceremony. It's not clear as to whether these two vehicles can now operate for 12 months in the City as class 6 without a road fund licence!



This offside view of T448, taken during the June 'On the Buses' event, shows what remains to be done. Compare with the nearside shot on page 10. (John Norman)



already been looking at works that need attention on the three light (the one used for rides) to get this into "Horse Bus Class 6" condition and, also, are seeking advice and costings for the refurbishment of the knifeboard.

RF19 at the Cart Marking ceremony with Roger Stagg in front.
(Adrian Palmer)

RT1 at the Cart Marking ceremony
(Adrian Palmer)

Currently the Museum is having RT front spring rebound rubbers remade. Very limited supply so first come, first served basis at £40 each.

Our horse buses are all well over 100 years old and it's not surprising that the maintenance on these, especially if used for passenger carrying, is critical and specialised. I am pleased that David Kinnear who has looked after these in the past has now been able to re-join us after a long illness and has agreed to take responsibility for these under my umbrella. We have



Membership and Volunteering

By Steve Edmonds

Can you believe it? We have entered into our ninth year of London Bus Museum at Brooklands. I was delighted to read John Bedford's letter in the Spring issue and his tribute to the early pioneers who laid the foundations for today's Museum. That, in spite of the rollercoaster of change they had to constantly ride and the differences of opinion about the future they had to resolve. Fast forward to today and fresh foundations are being laid in the completely different environment of running a national Museum open all year round.

It has been said that there is only a fine line between optimism and delusion. With my knowledge of our current financial position and the capability of our people, I am

confident that we shall safely arrive in fine fettle to attend our 10th anniversary party on 1 August 2021.

The AGM in July was modestly attended in the new ground floor venue of the Vickers building. The innovation of publishing Trustee reports in advance worked well; the outcome being a professional, efficient and effective gathering.

The summer event was the most successful so far in terms of attendance and receipts. It has been amply recorded elsewhere in this issue so all I need to say is a big thank you to the volunteers who again "produced the goods" to ensure we had a great day to offer our visitors.

The steady trickle of new volunteers joining the various

teams is encouraging. It is good to see how newcomers are welcomed by the "old hands" and quickly fit in. As we know, trust and respect have to be earned and I dare say that at times some of us have struggled to achieve this across the board. On the other hand, honour cannot be earned; it has to be voluntarily and freely given. I have come to realise that the key to the success of our teams is very much down to the high level of honour with which we treat each other. Long may it continue.

Date for your 2020 diary. The annual New Year luncheon will be held on Sunday 26th January at Silvermere's "Inn on the Lake", cost in the region of £30. Full details to be published in the autumn.

Book Reviews

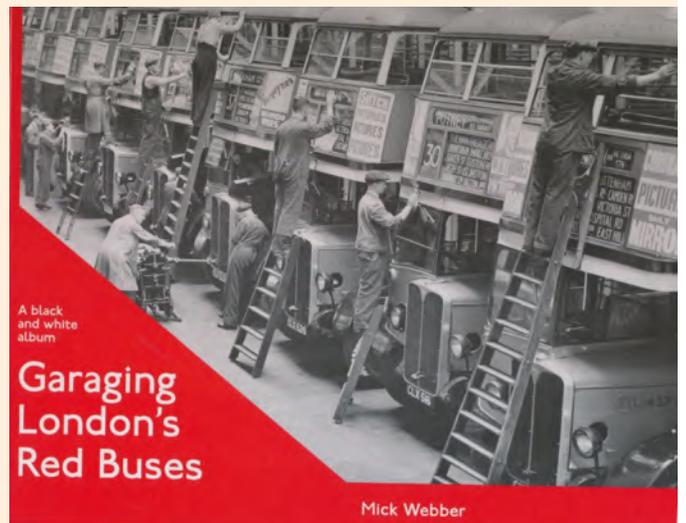
Garaging London's Red Buses by Mick Webber
Published by Capital Transport ISBN 978 1 85414 436 2
184 pages black and white hardback, £35.

This excellently comprehensive latest Capital Transport volume by the authoritative Mick Webber does exactly what it says on the cover... They are all there, past and present, in their considerable diversity... London bus garages have probably a better survival rate than those in any other part of the country, the break up of the old corporation, BTC and Tilling companies, and the rise in land values proving too tempting to resist, meaning that, if not an endangered species, they are less commonplace than they once were... Many London garages started out as tram depots, later becoming homes for trolleybuses... Conversion often meant replacement, but not always so that Bexleyheath, the only completely new depot for trolleybuses, is still operational, we still have, if not Walthamstow tram depot, then the Municipal Offices of which it was a part, whilst the best known is Fulwell, built by London United Tramways in 1903, the first – and last - home of the London trolleybus and still very much in business... It is also rather grand...

Very few garages have ever had delusions of architectural grandeur, being happy to be regarded as large sheds of one sort or another, but there are plenty of exceptions... Much the most famous is the iconic Stockwell, the only bus garage, countrywide, we think, to have achieved listed status, something arrived at almost by accident, although richly deserved, as those of us allowed within its hallowed precincts last year along with RTL139, will attest to... A shortage of steel in the early 1950s when trams were being abolished and Stockwell tram depot needing replacing, meant that its nine soaring arches had to be of reinforced concrete... Like many garages it is very large, able to accommodate

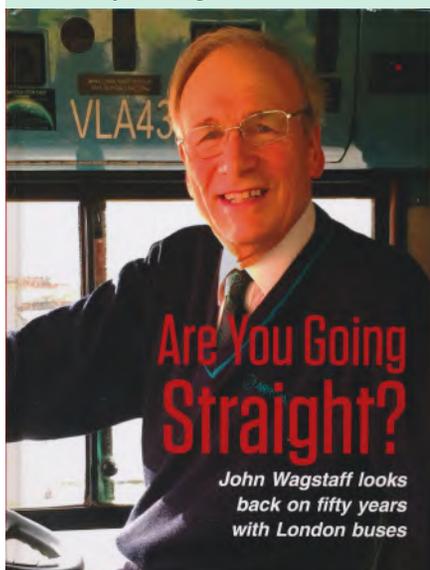
over 200 buses, although within these pages there are plenty of examples of smaller ones... Some, like Norbiton, built in 1952 and closed in 1991, had relatively short lives... Nearby Kingston, of blessed memory, which specialised in single deckers, was also a bus station.

Of course there are examples in this book of just about every variety of bus operated in the period 1933 to 1983, typified by the wonderful cover picture of the inhabitants of Chelverton Road, Putney, almost brand new STLs, receiving lots of tender, loving care by men on ladders with chamois leathers... Other scenes are a bit gloomy, but then bus garages often are, thus, as many readers will recall from the days of their youth, making it easier to sneak in and jot down the numbers of its residents.



Are You Going Straight? by John Wagstaff
Published by the author ISBN 978 1 5272 3859 6
127 pages hardback, £14.95.

Readers will no doubt recall a contribution in two fascinating parts by John Wagstaff some time ago in this magazine, reflecting on his career with London Transport. Now he has gone into considerable more detail in this hardback book, covering his years as a schoolboy who grew to love London buses as a small



child, not least the 2RT2s on his local 37 route, on to his years as a pupil at Dulwich College, then beginning work with London Transport at 55, Broadway on Monday, 3rd October, 1966. He provides some interesting asides and pen pictures of colleagues and superiors, names which will ring bells with many readers and other ex LT

employees as he rose through the ranks until, as he records, the creation of London Regional Transport 'at the age of thirty-six and quite possibly at the height of my supposed intellectual powers with a wife and four young children, and a pre-war Vauxhall' meant he had 'no discernible future job.' In fact he became the Principal Assistant to the Head of the Unit for Disabled Passengers.

This is a role to which John devotes a great deal of thought and energy and does much to raise the profile of something which, until then, was hardly on the horizon of the powers that be. Despite this sterling work John never loses his enthusiasm for both conducting, for which he qualifies and serves for a time as a conductor at Croydon garage and, rather remarkably, becomes a driver on the Original London Sightseeing Tour at Wandsworth garage. Then, even more remarkably the reader might think, he embarks on a new career as a long time driver for fourteen years on the 176. I used to keep a lookout every time I espied a 176 going about its business between Penge and the West End in the hope of seeing John at the wheel of his Norwood based double decker, but never managed it.

John was, and is also an owner of various vintage vehicles, including buses, and although he retired in 2017, one can be sure there are several more chapters of his story yet to be told..

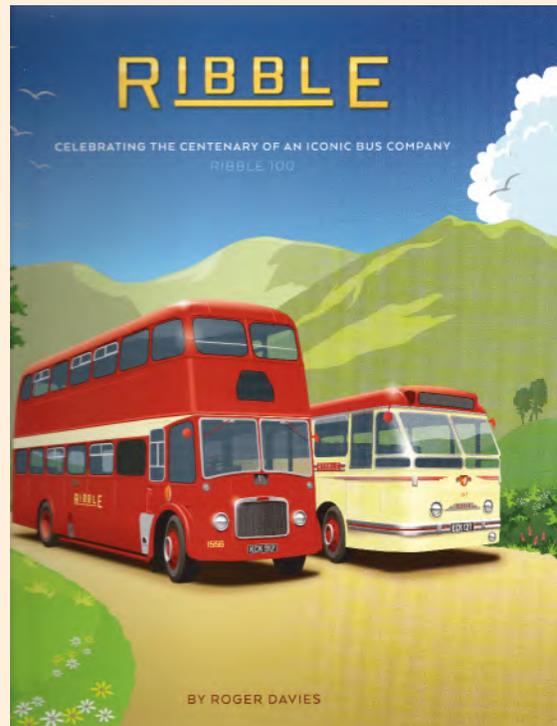
Ribble by Roger Davies

Published by Best Impressions, ISBN 978 0 9565740 4 6
194 pages, hardback £38.

Ribble was a very big company, with a wonderfully diverse selection of vehicles, although Leylands were always predominant. It covered a very big slice of England, from Merseyside to the Scottish border. 2019 marks its centenary and such a company deserves a very big book. This it has got, and how. The combined talents of Roger Davies, Michael Eyre, the Lavenham Press and, above all, Ray Stenning of Best Impressions, have produced a 194 page hardback book which quite simply has set the standard for all others. It costs £38 but the vast amount of time, effort, research and, above all, attention to the tiniest visual detail, means that it is cheap at double the price. From the first to the very last page visually it is an absolute delight. There are perfectly reproduced colour photographs of vehicles dating back to the 1930s and wonderfully evocative black and white ones going back much earlier. Just about every picture shows the settings in which the company operated. To almost randomly pick a few there are two fashionably dressed ladies in the early 1930s admiring the view of Windermere in front of an early Leyland Tiger, a policeman with immaculate white sleeved uniform directing PSI coaches at Aintree racecourse, a Bristol RESL in an absolute downpour in Ulverston, a PD3 amongst the snow capped peaks of Grassmere, another PD3 passing two trams in Blackpool, a group of very 1950s passengers, and an all-Leyland Royal Tiger bus in front of the great bulk of the roof of Liverpool Lime Street station, and an absolutely stunning 2016 picture of a Stagecoach Enviro 400 beneath the 2,848ft Blencathra.

Many pages feature relevant ephemera, timetables, tickets, publicity handouts, maps, and so forth. There are

white coated drivers standing proudly beside their all-Leyland TDIs, passengers queueing whose attire precisely dates the picture, staff and an all-Leyland Royal Tiger coach taking part in the Preston Guild parade, a Dinky Toy Atlantean for 7/11 Id, scenes inside the Central Works at Preston, the unique Sentinels which must have shocked a perhaps over complacent Leyland, beautiful Burlingham Seagull bodied Royal Tigers, long lived prewar Tigers with post war 8ft wide bodies, flat faced Atlantean double deck coaches, a very peculiar 100 seat, dual entrance Tilling Stevens double decker, and, oh so much more.



Letter

RTLs and other matters

Around 1968 I went past Leatherhead Garage and saw green RTLs lined up inside. Without destination blinds and obviously out of use I was wondering if these were the same green RTLs which had worked out of Hertford in July, 1960, where the drivers disliked them immensely. Withdrawn there after a year they went to Chsiwick for training duties..

My first sight of an RTL was at the Black Horse, Addiscombe terminus of the 59A, near where I was born. Based at Camberwell (Q), RTLs were rare in Croydon, a few working on the 68 out of Chalk Farm garage (CF). RTLs from Camberwell could also be seen on the 159 at Thornton Heath Clock Tower terminus and at Norwood Junction on the 196. Even rarer were RTWs in the 1960s on the 109 from Brixton, just before withdrawal of the type. In their early days they appeared on the 119 from Bromley.

I wonder how many people know about the Mother

Garage system? For instance Croydon (TC) had daughters at Thornton Heath (TH), Streatham (AK), Norwood (N) and Elmers End (ED). This was to simplify the ordering of parts and with all the garages spread over London it must have saved an awful lot of work.

H Daulby.



RTL691 in London Road Thornton Heath

(MHC B)

Members' Excursions

Unfortunately due to reduced resources a decision has been taken to cancel all members' outings until further notice. Further announcements will be made when we are in a position to resume these. This includes all outings that had already been planned for the remainder of 2019.

Adrian Palmer



Another shot from the On the Buses event on 23rd June shows our 9T9 and 10T10 together, T448 and T504 respectively. T448 is now in our workshop to complete its restoration. (Colin Read)



RT 4779 attended the annual Alton Bus Rally on 21st July. Here it is seen next to Silver Star Leyland Atlantean 1013 MW waiting to leave Alton for Guildford on the return 324 route feeder service. (Adrian Palmer)