

COBHAM BUS MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER



THE LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST

COBHAM BUS MUSEUM

REDHILL ROAD COBHAM SURREY KT11 1EF

Telephone: 0932 864078 (Saturdays and Sundays)

Charity Registration No. 293319

WHO'S WHO IN 1994

OFFICERS

Chairman

Peter Plummer
Northdown Road Longfield Kent DA3 7QN
0474 776

Treasurer

Bill Cottrell
Shaffesbury Avenue South Harrow
Middlesex HA2 0AW 081 8240

Secretary

John Bedford
Albany Court 38 Alexandra Grove
North Finchley London N12 8NN

COMMITTEE

Membership/Events Secretary

Win Wickens
Brent Close Walderslade Chatham Kent ME5 0TG

Workshop/Museum Interior

Ian Barrett
Cox Lane West Ewell Epsom
Surrey KT19 9NA 081 3602
Collin Wickens
Brent Close Walderslade Chatham Kent ME5 0TG

Museum Exterior

Martin Gibbons
Foxlake Road Byfleet Surrey KT14 7PW

Museum Grounds

Simon Douglas-Lane
Church Street
Hampton Middlesex TW12 2EG

MAGAZINE EDITOR

Mike Nash
Stroudwater Park Weybridge
Surrey KT13 0DT 0932 310

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Please send all magazine contributions and advertisements to the Editor. Views expressed with this magazine are not necessarily those of the Editor and Committee.

When contacting the Committee, please enclose an S.A.E. if a reply is required. If phoning, please do so during sociable hours as our respective families may not share our enthusiasm for all things red and green. The deadline for material to be included in the next issue is May 1st. All contributions are welcomed.

EDITORIAL

This truly bumper issue of our magazine contains several very important features for your digestion, so I had therefore planned that my opening lines should be short and sweet. But there are simply so many positive things happening that I find once again my biro is running away with me!

As I write, the rain is lashing against my window and the rally season seems light years away. But by the time you read this it will be upon us, with John Hinson's "Kingston RF Re-union" and the Routemaster Heritage Trust's "Twickenham Open Day" occurring before the traditional start of the season, which is of course our own famous "Open Day" on 10 April. By then, it is likely that our membership will have crashed through the 200 mark and there is every reason to believe that this year's event will be the best ever. I do hope that a few of you will respond to this issue's appeal for help on the day, whether it be with marshalling, bus conducting or perhaps assisting with one of two publicity stands from which we will be recruiting as many new members as possible and selling Cobham regalia. Please pick up the phone!

I am well aware that many of you, and in particular our newer members, will have been finding some of the content of previous issues rather heavy going, and for this I apologise. But such is the importance of our task to re-unite the Trust with its rightful assets, and my wish to keep you personally informed, that it has been unavoidable. Could I ask for your patience and request that you read carefully both the Chairman's message and my editorial comments in reply to a particular member's letter. I believe that these items will answer many more of your questions, and make it quite clear that the regular volunteers, by fulfilling our obligations as a museum, have furnished the Trading division and resident members with heavily subsidised facilities and rents. Yet many of the latter, and in particular the Trading division, are the least prepared to put any effort back in return. Believe me, the days of individuals feeding off the Trust are almost at an end. Those who are prepared to put the most in should be entitled to the biggest benefits - would you not agree?

Changing the subject, in a move that would never have occurred under the previous committee, I have been invited to sit in on

committee meetings in a non-voting capacity. Thus, your editor will be better informed, and so will members! Further proof of your committee's open approach and desire to prevent a repeat of past horrors!

On the publicity front, a complete lack of input from other quarters has seen me getting stuck in to set the ball rolling. I would very much like to hear from any member who is prepared to take on this vital function. To date, my efforts have resulted in coverage from five local newspapers, LT News, and more recently a plug in the excellent "Classic Bus" magazine edited by Gavin Booth, all of which have yielded a number of new members. But no doubt the biggest influx of members will come from the feature on Cobham in the ever-improving "Buses" magazine (March issue). I am extremely grateful to long-standing editor Stephen Morris, who sacrificed a Saturday morning to visit the museum, for his support and enthusiasm in what he saw and heard. As can be deduced from his article, Stephen is delighted to hear of our progress and has promised further Cobham coverage later this season, possibly in the form of an exciting "road-test day" with Gavin. From the bus movement's point of view, it was good to learn that the circulation of "Buses" magazine, following a difficult period, is now at an all-time high, so I will be looking for some editorial tips from Stephen in due course!

Routemaster fans will no doubt enjoy the feature by Andrew Hayward on his "The Delaine" liveried RM2059, which was of course splashed across the cover of "Buses" magazine last November. Geoff Rixon's feature on RM254 will now appear in the next issue. Whilst on the subject of features for this magazine, can I request that members who promise me contributions actually come up with the goods, on time. You are all benefitting from a nice fat quarterly publication, so please do your bit in return. Keep those features, and particularly photographs coming, and I'll do my bit, but please don't make false promises. At which point I'll remind you not to phone committee members (or me!) at silly times. None of us likes being got out of bed and some of us have wives/girlfriends/partners who can turn into Rottweilers when provoked!

You will find a substantial list of Diary Dates in this issue so

you can mark your calendars early. Please pay special attention to the Beamish and Finsbury Park events. No doubt the Trust will be well represented at most events this season, as indeed it was at the RT/RF Register "Christmas Lights Tour", when quite a number of us piled on board David Pring's RM2180 to join another eight RFs and two RTs. The various participants donated over £200 to charity and the fares collected by David boosted the Cobham Clubhouse fund which now stands at a healthy £1250. All in all, a very worthwhile evening.

Which brings me to David's letter in the last issue and the queries it raised from some regular volunteer members. David indicated that he spends many weekdays at the museum, but so as to avoid any confusion, he has since pointed out to the Chairman that this time is not spend on Trust projects, but is to facilitate the maintenance of his own Timebus Travel buses, hence of course his apparent affiliation with the Trading operation.

I must stress that midweek access to the museum is not always possible, and I have heard too many stories of both members and visitors being made to feel unwelcome when visiting on weekdays. This is a matter the committee will be addressing. Meanwhile, I recommend that for the time being, if you want to get more involved, it is best to do so at the weekend or to ring Bill Cottrell first.

I look forward to reporting further substantial progress in the next issue and hope to see plenty of members and their vehicles out and about this season, especially on 10th April! Bye for now and thanks for your support. And remember, the best is yet to come!

Mike Nash



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to new members and an apology to existing members. I am aware that in reading through the pages of recent newsletters, some people may be confused and possibly even disturbed by the continuing debate on internal issues which they may think makes disappointing reading.

If so, let me assure you that these are short term growing pains. The Trust is preparing to move rapidly into a higher gear and shake off the antiquated way of thinking of the past and previous committees.

The re-written Memorandum and Articles of Association, drawn up by the Trust's solicitor, has been submitted to the Charity Commission for approval. Re-acquisition by the Trust of its rightful assets is, I believe imminent. When this is achieved, it will be the springboard for the implementation of exciting new projects – the building extension, members' new club house, and vehicle restoration workshops. There is much to look forward to.

In recent weeks, my thoughts and concerns have turned to those of our members who garage their vehicles at Twickenham and now face a worrying and uncertain future. I believe we have a duty to assist them in their predicament if we can. A similar situation had existed at Ockham, where garaging facilities, so promising in the early days, turned sour to the extent that several of our members felt obliged to move elsewhere. Several members have secured alternative accommodation, albeit extremely basic, at Dorking, thanks to the magnificent effort of Trust member Mike Clarke in getting the project off the ground. All this, to me, reinforces the fact that Cobham residents are fortunate in enjoying a secure environment and reasonable garage facilities at exceptionally low cost.

In recent months, since my election as Chairman, I have become increasingly aware that while the minority of residents appreciate this, there exists a significant majority who apparently do not. Their continued absence and lack of commitment to support Cobham has aroused resentment and drawn adverse comment. This and other major causes of concern to members, mainly inherited from the previous committee, can be summarised as follows:

- 1 The advantages and disadvantages of trading activities being conducted on the museum premises – which are outside the control of management.
- 2 The introduction of a variable rents scheme.
- 3 Friction caused by the lack of commitment of some Cobham residents.
- 4 Delay in the re-acquisition of the principal assets of the Trust.

To these questions, the answer is simple. For the benefit of everyone, and particularly the “hard-liners”, I am putting the explanation in question and answer form.

Q Why is the rent for vehicle spaces at Cobham so low? (£432 per year or £480 paid monthly in advance by Bankers Order)

A Principally because, as a Registered Charity, the Trust is eligible for an 80% reduction in its Council rates. This reduction offsets the largest single item of expenditure in the museum’s balance sheet and this is reflected in lower rents.

Q What does this mean in figures?

A We currently pay about £2,500 per annum. This would equate to about £13,000 if we paid the full business rate and were not eligible for an 80% reduction.

Q What obligations do we have to fulfil in return for this considerable benefit?

A Principally, to make the collection available for public viewing at specified times of the year and providing some basic facilities. By doing this, we are offering an “educational facility”.

Q How do we ensure that we fulfil our obligations and qualify for continued eligibility for these benefits?

A By appointing key holders who have specified duties under a rota. They open up the building, supervise visitors and carry out other duties to enable the public to have access and view the collection.

Q If the Trust was not registered as a Charity and had no external obligations (and paid the full business rate), what would the effect on rents be?

A Taking everything into account: water, electricity, general rates, insurance, the cost of accommodating the “trading” vehicles which do not pay rent, maintenance of the building, repair cost

for Trust vehicle, etc, rents would rise to at least £1,000 per year.

Q If we had not received charity status, could donations from the trading activities make up the shortfall of at least £10,000 each year to enable us to pay the full council rates?

A A good question. Information about the trading operation and its financial results have not been discussed in detail with the Trust committee, although until recently, four company directors occupied seats on it. It seems unlikely, however, that it could make up the shortfall. My understanding is that, even in the best years, the maximum the “trading” has ever donated is £3,500. The original covenant to pay a donation to the Trust expired in 1991. In 1993, nothing was received and the original covenant has not been renewed.

This sum of £3,500 might be considered a substantial contribution in itself, but what most members do not know is that the Trust has carried the major part of the running costs of the site since its inception. These costs were by rights the responsibility of the London Bus Preservation Group Ltd., because as owners of the freehold of the building, the land and the vehicles, the responsibility rested with them until such times as the draft agreement to transfer those principal assets to the Trust was implemented.

In this connection, I would also draw your attention to the statement made by the Treasurer (newsletter no 3 – page 23) concerning donations paid to the Trust.

Q Could we survive without this considerable reduction in rates?

A It would be a struggle. It would mean a complete reassessment of priorities and there would be little to spend on the restoration and maintenance of the 13 Trust owned vehicles or the building.

Q Could it be said, then, that the duties performed by the key-holders and volunteers in maintaining a service which enables the visiting public to view the collection, is crucial to the continued existence of the Trust?

A Yes, because if they failed to do so and did not provide the basic service, we could not fulfil our obligations as a Charity. Those responsibilities are mandatory.

Q Could it be said that the work put in by keyholders and volunteers who perform a positive function in managing the museum is benefitting those residents who do not assist in any way, by indirectly putting money into their pockets?

A Sadly, yes. This is one of the main causes of concern and the source of much resentment. Not only is the involvement of these few volunteers crucial to the survival of the Trust, but it is the same few people who find themselves holding the organisation together as well, in looking after the membership, building maintenance, organising the Open Day, social evenings, assisting members with vehicles by sorting out problems and finding spare parts, liaising with the media, etc, and most importantly, collating material for this magazine and making sure you receive it regularly.

Q That sounds like hard work for a few people – how can you resolve the problem?

A Simple – BY EQUALISING THE INPUT. The introduction of a variable rent scheme will generate additional income and resources in the fairest possible way. There is no compulsion because the final choice rests with the individual. Those who choose not to make a contribution will have to pay a more economic rent. The extra income derived from this will be put towards “buying in” the professional services which cannot be provided “in house”.

After discussion, the committee is unanimous in its resolve to implement this procedure. They have a remit to ensure that good management puts the Trust in a strong, healthy and respected position, to safeguard its future.

Peter Plummer (Chairman)

OPEN DAY
SUNDAY 10TH APRIL 1994
11.00 am – 6.00 pm

DIARY DATES

With our fast growing membership, it is likely that Cobham will be well represented at most events this season. We hope to have some windscreen stickers produced in due course to identify members' vehicles, but for now, please mark these dates in your diary and give those vehicles some exercise. And don't forget to tell other enthusiasts about Cobham's progress with a view to signing them up!

- Sunday 27 March Kingston RF reunion: details this issue.
Routemaster Heritage Trust “Open Day” at Twickenham Garage. Details from Geoff Rixon on 081- 0765
- Sunday 10 April Cobham Open Day. Help to make this one our best ever. We do need help on this day, as mentioned elsewhere in this issue.
- Sunday 17 April Portsmouth Corporation/Southdown Running Day. With a swapmeet at the City Transport Museum.
- Sunday 30 April–Monday 2 May Beamish Museum Trip. Full details in this issue. Ring Geoff Singer on 0375- 192/0850- 515
- Sunday 8 May Barking Rally and RT Road Run. Details from Dawley Road, Hayes, Mddx UB3 1LT
- Sunday 5 June St Albans “Open All Day” Rally. Full details this issue.
- Sunday 12 June Southsea Spectacular. Details from Northern Parade, Hilsea, PO2 9PE

- Sunday 19 June New Romney Rally: ring 0679- 53
for details
- Sunday 26 June North Weald Rally. One of the biggest
rallies. Details from Moorfield,
Harlow, Essex CM4 0LN
Bromley Pageant of Motoring. The
world's biggest one-day transport
event. Contact Tracy McHanwell on
081- -3531
- Saturday 9 July–Sunday 10 July
Carlton Colville "London Event".
Always well attended by Cobham
members. Contact Win Wickens or
ring 0502- 459 for details
- Sunday 10 July 12th Southampton Royal Victoria
Rally. A well attended event in fine
surroundings. Ring 0703- 213
Woburn (provisional) Mini showbus
'94. No judging, just a nice informal
gathering! Ring 0494- 147
- Sunday 21 August Finsbury Park "London Buses Rally".
Supported by Cobham and the RT/RF
register. Full details next issue.
- Saturday 27 August "The Delaine" Running Day. See next
issue.
- Saturday 25 September "Showbus 400" at Duxford
Up to date details of events can be
found in "Buses" and "Classic Bus"
Mike Nash

IMPORTANT NEWS FOR COBHAM RESIDENTS

The differential rent scheme will start on 1 May 1994. If, in the course of a year, no work is done for the benefit of the Trust, a premium will be made of £360 per vehicle garaged at Cobham. To qualify for the reduced rent, at least 10 days of a minimum of 5 hours must be worked. This can be in the form of vehicle restoration or building and ground improvements. Work on projects at home will also be considered.

If you have a special skill or a project you would like to be involved with, then so much the better. However, if you turn up at short notice and are not interested in any specific project, there is always leaf cleaning to be done! Each work session will reduce the premium by 10% (£36 per vehicle).

At present, the premium is being loaded against each individual bus, so if more than one bus is garaged, the premium will be multiplied accordingly. The good news is that the value of each day worked will be multiplied by the same factor. Conversely, if a bus is shared, each part-owner can contribute to the 10 days.

Progress will be monitored by Bill Cottrell. If you wish to work on a week-day, contact him or leave a message.

The above system may be fine-tuned in the light of experience. Remember, even with the surcharge, our rent is still less than any similar accommodation.

RESIGNATION FROM THE COMMITTEE

A letter dated 15 February 1994 was received from Alan Cross tendering his resignation as a committee member of the Trust. He remains an ordinary member – also, we understand, retains his position as a Director of LBPG Limited and LBPG (Sales) Ltd – the trading company.

GREEN PIECE

As you are probably aware, alongside the threat to the ozone layer, there is also concern about the so-called "Greenhouse Effect". This is primarily caused by the activities of the industrial nations producing vast amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂). Coupled with the depletion of the rain forests, nature's ability to break down CO₂ and return oxygen to the atmosphere is also under threat.

NASA scientists are urgently attempting to measure the increase in carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. They can measure the existing levels, but they cannot measure past levels. At least, not without the help of the thousands of old vehicles in Britain. As the increase in CO₂ levels has been most severe in the last five years, they need a source of air that has remained uncontaminated during this time.

This is where you may be able to help. The chances are that, as the owner of a preserved bus, you have not totally replenished the air in your tyres in this period. If you are in this category, your assistance is needed. On Good Friday, a satellite containing super-sensitive monitoring apparatus will be making two passes over Southern England. Described as the CO₂ NASA Tracker for Research into Carbonic Knowledge ("CONTRICK"), the first orbit will be early in the morning when a series of "control" samples will be taken. The second orbit will be just before noon.

At this time, you are asked to co-operate by releasing all the air (if over five years old) from your tyres. The satellite can measure the minute reduction in CO₂, and calculations can be made to determine the time available to avert an ecological disaster. As an added bonus (to the environment, that is), the air that you replenish your tyres with will have a higher concentration of CO₂ than the air released, thus slightly easing the Greenhouse Effect.

Unfortunately, this experiment will only be valid if there is hardly any wind, less than 10 mph. As a back-up, the major petrol companies are making available, through their garage outlets, a device for collecting air directly from the valve on your tyres. Known as the Membrane for Atmospheric Testing and Environmental Study, or another acronym, MATES; this is simply attached to the

valve and air released into it. When filled, it is tied off. Be sure to seek advice with the garage forecourt representative on what to do with the sample, once collected. Your co-operation on Good Friday, when most of us will be off work anyway, will be much appreciated. Let us know how you get on.

Our 'green' correspondent.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

As mentioned in my editorial, there has been a big influx of new members since the last issue, bringing total membership to 175. Both the "Open Day" and the feature in "Buses" magazine will ensure that we gain many more members before next issue, so watch out for good news in due course. What a turnaround in just one year!

The following are warmly welcomed. We hope to see a few of you getting actively involved.

Mike Nash

| | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|-----------|----|
| Dennis Forrest | Bassett, Southampton | | TS |
| Ian Robertson | Hook, Hants | | |
| Lars Richter | Hamburg, Germany | | |
| Derek Stead | Ewell, Surrey | | MN |
| James Owen | Upper Norwood, London | | |
| Lydia Townsend | Gravesend, Kent | | GT |
| Andrew Steer | Hove, Sussex | SMA91 | |
| Hugh Harland | Brighton, Sussex | SMA91 | |
| Aidan Garvey | Reading, Berks | | MG |
| Roger Mayo | Woking, Surrey | | IB |
| Ian Hillson | Richmond, Surrey | | |
| Chris Knight | Badminton, Avon | RM1363 | RA |
| R Bole | Dover, Kent | RF255 | MN |
| | | TD118 | |
| | | RM999 | |
| Alan Low | Woking, Surrey | Tiger Cub | MN |

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Chris Hull | Dunton Green, Kent | | CW |
| Brian Blackburn | Newton Abbot, Devon | Matador | |
| John Cox | Wandsworth, London | | |
| Peter Rambaut | West Drayton, Mddx | RF525 | MC |
| | | RF539/643 | |
| Alan Prior | Hayes, Mddx | | MC |
| John Pinlott | Wallington, Surrey | | MN |
| Victor Drake | Otford, Kent | | |
| Ian Mayoh | Essex | | |
| R Huckle | Sutton Coldfield, W Mid | RF667 | MN |
| | | RM158 | |
| Christopher Dodds | Claygate, Surrey | | PM |
| Jim Andress | Chippenham, Wilts | RF366 | MN |
| Antony Hall | Cobham, Surrey | | |
| Geoff Singer | Romford, Essex | | DJ/IB |
| Michael Smith | Billericay, Essex | RM1001 | DJ |
| Albert Sparrow | Whitstable, Kent | | |
| George Langford | Chislehurst, Kent | | WW |
| Carol Langford | Chislehurst, Kent | | WW |

In the right-hand column are the initials of the members who have recruited these above. TS—Tony Sheldon; MN—Mike Nash; GT—George Townsend; MG—Martin Gibbons; IB—Ian Barrett; RA—Roy Adams; CW—Colin Wickens; MC—Mike Clarke; PM—Paul Morris, DJ—Dave Jones; WW—Win Wickens. Please notify Win Wickens when you recruit someone. Let's see a few more of your names in print!

RLH24

"COME AND SEE COBHAM BUS MUSEUM"

Marco Ghidorzi - Switzerland

In case someone asks you at the Open Day why the above bus has a Swiss registration number but carries Cobham advertisements, I thought I'd tell you the story.

RLH was standing around a lot, both in Britain and Switzerland, and she was in a poor state when I purchased her in 1986. She was not actually worn out, due to the low amount of running, but rust was to be seen everywhere because most of the time she had been outside "on display".

Having recently seen RLH76 outside Uttoxeter's yard, it was no shock to know what this amount of rust means to a bus - it weakens the whole construction. When we did the overhaul on 24, we had to be careful not to do too much at once, section by section only, otherwise the bus would have fallen to pieces! I will bring the pictures to the Open Day, which shows that we had to support the frame by first welding a stronger crossmember over it and then taking the rusted "U" profiles away, that upheld the construction. About 60% of all the framework was eventually replaced.

As soon as we took each post away, more and more Fe₂O₃ (rust!) appeared. Now, if you just brush and clean the metal and then paint it, you are not really preserving what's left, the rust is still working away under the paint unless you sandblast all the rust away. But then almost nothing would have been left on my bus! Only the chassis was up to being sandblasted, and now holds the full weight of rebuilt RLH24 which is now often fully loaded and good for another 40 years of service. Yes, I'm sure my bus will probably drive me to my own funeral! But for now, I am still alive, and Cobham is alive again and I'm glad. That's why I now want to bring my bus across to help add even more life to the Open Day. The "Come and see Cobham Bus Museum" adverts should be written all over the bus to turn people's attention to our museum.

By the way, it took us 2 years and 10 months full time work for two men to create what you will see. Indeed, Aldenham counted the overhauls in days only.

ROUTEMASTER RESCUE



RM2059 climbs towards Chesterfield on 2 September 1992



Mission accomplished:

In service at The Delaine Vintage Running Day, 28 August 1993

(Photo: Geoff Rixson)

RM2059 – A ROUTEMASTER RESCUE

Andrew Hayward

It all started in Summer 1991; when John Bedford and I were getting RM3 ready for a rally. Through idle chat it was, and somewhat hastily, decided that a standard Routemaster should be purchased. Investigation took place during that winter, and although many RMs were on the market and could have been likely candidates, we had set ourselves certain criteria about the bus: Leyland engine; offside illuminated advertisement; Permatread flooring. As you may or may not know, this combination is now quite rare as the majority of these vehicles were subject to the early hatchet of withdrawals and were either dispatched to foreign lands, or the great bus garage in the sky!

One evening during spring 1992, we received a phone call, telling us that RM2059 was for sale in Derbyshire. The next day was a rainy one, I believe, and whilst I was trying to control the 36 service at Peckham, two phone calls were made – firstly to directory enquiries – and then to the owner. This confirmed that, yes, he owned RM2059 and, yes, it was for sale. Anyway, when confronted with the asking price, my heart sank. It was like a telephone number. It turned out that this gentleman had actually owned six former Southampton Routemasters and had already exported four of them. This was obviously the reason, as these vehicles command quite a high price ticket abroad.

Anyway, after discussions, it was agreed that this was far too expensive and we decided that we couldn't go through with the deal.

Time passed until the third week of August 1992, when one evening during "Coronation Street" the phone rang and a man, whose voice I recognised, said that 2059 was still for sale and if I was interested, he would be open to reasonable offers. The following Thursday, bags packed, Sierra in overdrive, JB in navigator's seat (complete with leather flying cap) we set off to Buxton to a little farm which, as we were about to discover, had two rather tatty RMs parked in one corner. Tatty may be a rash description, but 2059 was liberally covered in inch thick layer of farmyard dirt and the other, RM1969, was only about one-third complete due to fire damage. We had no choice but to look briefly at 2059 before the owner appeared and we then knew that 2059 was to be the bus.

We drove off that night with lots of thoughts buzzing through our minds. During the week to come, many phone calls to Buxton followed with the final one producing a sale for the owner and a purchase for us. The following Tuesday (2nd September 1992 – I know this as it was Julie's birthday!) was the day picked to collect 2059, but we had one more problem to overcome: where to park the bus?

During a social phone call to Anthony Delaine-Smith of Delaine Coaches came the following: AH—I'm buying a Routemaster next week, how would you like to look after it? A D-S, amazed—Why not! So this is how the Delaine connection started. The following Tuesday, JB, Jeff Stoute and I set off to Derbyshire for Routemaster Recovery, and hopefully, a safe delivery to Bourne.

After a few weeks of cosmetic cleaning and de-bugging (it seems that this bus must have been the local insect mortuary!) casual talk one evening and refreshment in the Burghley Arms in Bourne, Anthony and I decided that it would be nice to have a vintage running day and 2059 (adopted 113 in the Delaine fleet) should be the centre piece. As this was February and the running day was planned for the end of August, this didn't leave much time to get the bus repanelled, painted, mechanically fit and FFD, as well as get married, honeymoon (to a lovely narrow gauge railway in North Wales), Cobham open day, etc. Arrangements were made for the bus to live at Twickenham courtesy of Jeff Stoute and the Reading tow lorry (this was due to 2059 having a lack of brakes) and this gave us exactly three months to get the bus ready for the Delaine event. I am sure that on arrival at Twickenham, a few people doubted our ability to complete the three-month task, but nevertheless gave us their full support.

It was generally decided that the bus should be repanelled below the lower deck windows, stripped in the middle (ooh-er) and the roof cut back to give us a sound base for the Delaine livery.

Work started and progress was made. Fortunately, a friend of mine, Nigel Harper, also a work colleague, offered his assistance for bodywork and painting. Knowing Nigel and his skills, generally on Seaton Trams, we carried on with repainting and whilst this was happening other activities were being pursued. Wife Julie and niece Tanya paint-stripped most of the areas not to be repainted

and JB worked inside, painting Rexine, cleaning and sealing the floor and replacing Treadmaster. As Nigel is a driver at work his shifts were altered to suit and therefore work was able to continue throughout the week, nights, days, evenings and sometimes all three!

The date booked for FFD was 19 August, and, thanks to Paul Morris, the bus was mechanically ready to be presented, although at midnight on the previous evening, JB, Julie and I were still fitting seats and finishing off various jobs. The test was at Mitcham and we had no problems. The bus passed first time – phew – and so Sunday 21st was set for 2059 to be taken back to Bourne for their signwriter to carry out her part of the deal. Well, we got as far as Battersea and the lift pump expired, so along with a trusty header tank the bus was taken back to Twickenham. Arrangements were made for a new lift pump to be fitted on the Tuesday and a second attempt for Bourne made on the Wednesday evening – this time successfully. Now you may think this was the end of headaches, but because the bus was late getting to Bourne, the signwriting arrangements had been cancelled and re-booked for the Friday afternoon, but as Friday was the day before the event, beads of sweat were appearing – and not just on my brow!

At about 5 pm on the Friday afternoon, the signwriting lady appeared and a sigh of relief was heard from the one or two people present. But the advertisement boards which we had taken from a scrap RM at Fulwell seemed to be bigger than the ones we took out! Two hours later, advertisement boards were fitted and 14 hours before the start of the event, RM2059 was finally complete and ready to roll. The end result seemed to be, as it generally does, well worth the lack of sleep and weight lost to achieve it! To the Cobham members who were at Bourne on 28 August, I think you will agree that the event was worth a visit. It is to be repeated again this year, on Saturday 27 August. My thanks go to Ian Barrett, Bill Cottrell, Jeff Stoute, Paul Morris and everyone at Twickenham, and especially JB and Julie for their support. It proves a gallon will go into a pint pot!

VEHICLE NEWS FROM PETER PLUMMER

- T448 is receiving most of the available manpower currently. Colin Wickens and your chairman have installed three new window pans on the nearside, refitted all glass and visors and are well under way repanelling the nearside with new panels. Rear nearside wheel arch timber work is about to be undertaken, and Malcolm Lewis and Brian Hine have assisted in preparing steel framework ahead of the timber fitting by Colin and myself.
- 702B Alan Bond attempted to get the braking system operational and after bleeding the system noticed DOT 5 fluid running out of the front nearside wheel hub. Investigation revealed one brake shoe completely missing even though all had been reassembled and left as "complete" by a previous worker. One problem has been that many hours have been wasted looking round for parts which have turned out to be in the back of a van belonging to the previous worker, who hasn't attended Cobham for three years or more. Such is the problem of individuals removing parts from a vehicle without logging the fact anywhere and not attending for long periods.
- Dave Kriesler continues to "look" at the new electrics occasionally. I've watched the wiring myself but I keep falling asleep when nothing happens! A new cab rear window is on order to fit the different style of new window rubber obtained.
- Jeff Stoute is currently fitting the new exhaust system, and with a new battery due to be purchased soon, hopefully, engine run-ups will soon be commonplace.
- RT2775 Lack of manpower has meant that work has almost halted. Raja Kalsy continues to overhaul small parts and refit them.
- STL2377 This bus has been earmarked as the next major restoration project, subject to labour and availability of funds.
- T504 The new re-cast bottom radiator tank should be available soon. The fuel pump has been checked and tested and it

is hoped that this coach will be available early this year. Vic "Green Line" Chivers has prepared a superb new set of Green Line route boards for route 701 for use on this vehicle and T448.

- TD95 Bill Cottrell, Philip Millard and Colin Prince refitted the overhauled engine on Saturday 30 January. Bill, having performed this exercise only three years ago, now knows the job is easier with all the ancillary equipment left off until the basic "lump" is in situ. It is a big morale booster to see our "flagship" coming together again and made good viewing for visitors on the day of fitting.

OPEN DAY - VOLUNTEERS WANTED

We are expecting our 1994 Open Day to be the most successful ever, and as such, invite members old and new to assist with its running. The 'display team' at Apps Court requires additional help with parking and overseeing vehicle movements, nothing too difficult, but be prepared to get wet if it rains. Contact Peter Starks on 0403- 902.

If you can be available for other duties, the more, the merrier, so please contact Bill Cottrell on 081- 8240. What better way to start getting more involved with the Trust? - MN

WEEKEND TRIP TO BEAMISH MUSEUM

A welcome return to the fold is member Geoff Singer, who will be remembered by longer standing members for arranging some memorable outings in the past. Geoff is getting the ball rolling again by organising a trip to Beamish Open Air Museum in the North-East of England from Saturday 30th April to Monday 2nd May.

The trip includes two nights at a four star hotel complete with full leisure facilities in Hull, on the banks of the Humber, with Sunday spent at the museum which is set in 300 acres of countryside.

Beamish is famous for its representation of the history and

heritage of this unique region. It also has its own tram circuit and on this particular weekend, a vintage and classic vehicle rally.

The price is just £90 which includes an executive coach, bed and breakfast both nights and admission to the museum. A minimum of 36 people must attend, so if you are interested, contact Geoff immediately c/o [redacted] Patricia Drive, High Street, Fobbing, Essex, SS17 9HR, or ring 0375- [redacted] 192 or 0850- [redacted] 515.

MN

KINGSTON RF REUNION

Sunday 27 March 1994

Details have been finalised for the 1994 Kingston RF reunion which takes place on Sunday 27th March 1994. It will commemorate the withdrawal of the last of London's famous central area RF class vehicles, which made their final journey on the last weekend of March 1979, fifteen years ago. It is intended to be a day out for RF owners and their friends, and will not be generally publicised to the enthusiast world.

The day will retrace the last two routes operated, the 219 from Weybridge into Kingston, and the lengthy 218 from Kingston to Staines. We will start from Weybridge Station car park at 1200, as that is a nice roomy site for vehicles to assemble. On arrival at Kingston we take a short break. Some owners may wish to make some photographic "run pasts" outside Kingston Garage, which is soon to be closed and demolished. Then, at around 1400, we depart for Staines on the 218. The run will end at Staines West bus stand, a famous point where many a Kingston RF has been photographed.

There is no return journey – owners set off for home when ready. Some heading south may wish to retrace their steps along the 218, or join the Routemaster Heritage Trust gathering, or simply return to Cobham Bus Museum for a cuppa!

Remember that London Transport only operated RFs on routes where double-deck buses could not be utilised, usually where there were low bridges, so please do not bring your RT along! All RF owners are cordially invited to join the run. Detailed route instructions can be obtained from John Hinson, [redacted] Graham Road, Wealdstone, Middlesex HA3 5RE, telephone (before 9pm please) 081 [redacted] -1062 – John Hinson

ST ALBANS 'OPEN ALL DAY' BUS RALLY

Husband and wife team Dave and Pam Johnson (RT3496) are deeply involved with the project to save famous St Albans Garage from demolition, and have helped set up "St Albans Garage Heritage Trust". They are hoping that plenty of Cobham members can attend the above rally on Sunday 5th June to support a worthwhile project which involves the purchase of the garage from present owners Tarmac PLC. The day will include the running of traditional bus routes and a special service connecting local attractions, as well as a forecourt display and trade stands.

Contact Dave for more details on 0525- [redacted] 578, or you can join the "SA Project Supporters' Association" for just £5, or make a donation to the cause by writing to Pam Johnson, [redacted] Weston Avenue, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 8QZ.

MN

COMMEMORATIVE MODEL

To commemorate Open Day 1994, the Trust has authorised a limited edition run of models featuring the Trust's RM3 based on the EFE 4mm scale bus. Authentic blinds for our own service route 431 will be displayed, together with a nice balance of "period" adverts and sponsored displays by companies closely associated with us. This is a bus no member should miss. The price will be £10.95 plus postage. All profits go to the Trust.

Our thanks to member Les Duplock for his kind assistance in this promotion. Support the Trust, order now, write to Win Wickens without delay or purchase yours from our publicity stand at the Open Day. – Peter Plummer

AND ANOTHER COMING ALONG BEHIND?

If the above model is a success, we may consider the issue of a commemorative model for the Finsbury Park event on 21st August, which the Trust is supporting. Peter Starks and I have considered the possibility of using Concept Models' Central Area RF with sixties style roof advertisements proclaiming Cobham Bus Museum. Watch this space. – MN

A PIPE DREAM OR IN THE PIPELINE?

I became a Cobham resident in August 1980 and my enthusiasm was fuelled by a vision of Cobham's immense potential. Within a few years, Bill Cottrell became chairman, and the pace of progress stepped up a gear with the construction of the service ramp installed at Cobham. I well remember that day when a small band of volunteers, Bill Cottrell, Alan Pearce (ex member with RLH 29), Graham Batten, George Townsend and myself took the towbus 332W over to Epsom Coaches to dismantle and bring back to Cobham an ex-military inspection ramp.

The day was very crisp, with a deep clear blue sky and "chocolate box" style snow scene. On returning to Cobham in the fading light of that February afternoon, the immensely heavy sections were unloaded and our thoughts then turned to our frozen fingers and toes. To our disappointment, the whole water system at Cobham was frozen solid, so, with the aid of a Calor Gas stove and a bucket full of snow, we waited for what appear to be an eternity while the snow slowly melted to enable us to produce water for a cup of tea and water to flush the toilet. The effort put in that day in the form of the acquisition of our ramp is still available for members' use today. At last, my visions were coming to fruition.

In February 1993, I became the fourth person to be elected Chairman since the tragic loss of Alan Allmey in 1978. One of the tasks I set myself was to produce a guide book, and whilst compiling the information, one aspect suddenly hit me and put the whole scene into perspective. Investigations into histories of the building and Trust vehicles made me realise that if, today in 1993, Alan Allmey could walk through the door at Cobham, the *only* thing he would not recognise would be our inspection ramp.

How blind could I be? In that short time from 1972 to 1978, Alan Allmey had assembled what we know as Cobham Museum. Since then, virtually nothing has changed. Our TD has been rebuilt under the dual leadership of Bill Cottrell and myself, but when added to the inspection ramp, this equals fifteen years' progress. When compared to Alan Allmey's six years, I felt nothing but admiration for him and also how inadequate we have been since. What have we been doing? Have we been so badly managed that the best of

our younger years have been largely wasted? I fear so!

My visions in those early days have not changed in the slightest. So now I serve you as Chairman and I'll now tell you of my aspirations for Cobham.

FIRSTLY, obtain and maintain a friendly club spirit for members in larger numbers than ever before – WE'RE GETTING THERE.

SECONDLY, communicate and socialise to ease the struggle members have to preserve their buses – WE'RE GETTING THERE.

THIRDLY, clean up Cobham to present an acceptable image for visitors and the public, for which I need *your* help – WE'RE GETTING THERE, very slowly.

FOURTHLY, publicise and promote our efforts to generate income to speed up progress in acquiring the assets of the Trust, with the infectious enthusiasm of our magazine editor – WE'RE GETTING THERE.

Last year, I overheard member Colin Wickens say "Well, I've resigned myself to the fact that I'll never see one of those two STLs on the road in my lifetime!" Such was the apathy of one of our most regular volunteers! Surely we can do better than that. We can, and we are, getting there. Only if everyone does a little bit can it work. There is no other way.

I foresee a road all the way around the building within the perimeter fence. Buses which have undergone running unit repairs can be tried and brake-tested in our own grounds, with visitors temporarily restricted from access for safety. At other times, parties of visitors could choose a Trust bus for rides around the grounds without the need to road-tax each bus. Bus stops, shelters and various other roadside furniture could add to the scene around the site.

Inside the building, I would like to see a purpose-built workshop with buses being out-shopped, three years maximum. On the balcony, a club house, three times larger than our own "canteen" at present. Brick built and modern lighting, properly insulated and heated, meetings, club parties and socials could be a commonplace activity after a fun day's work.

Better toilet facilities, changing rooms and a purpose-built room on top of part of the new club house inside the building would house

the "bus simulator" for training bus drivers, once used at Chiswick (now stored at Brooklands). This would be a money spinner when visitors call. A great deal of this cannot be proceeded with until the assets, the building and the Trust buses are back in the ownership of the Trust, but all that aside, I need your help to turn "A PIPE DREAM INTO JOBS IN THE PIPELINE!"

Peter Plummer
Chairman

ROUTEMASTER OPERATORS AND OWNERS ASSOCIATION

NOW AVAILABLE

New solvent fix gold underlined **LONDON TRANSPORT** fleetnames

Price £20.00 (£15.00 to members)

Please note that this set is not available by post except by special arrangement.

Contact: RMOOA, PO Box [redacted], Harrow, Middlesex HA1 4BG

VARNISH FIX TRANSFERS FOR BUSES

It is with regret that we announce the unauthorised removal from the museum of the museum's stock of transfers for buses. We are therefore currently unable to assist members.

The matter is being dealt with and progress on this issue will be relayed to you as soon as possible. The following item may be of interest.

Peter Plummer

KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE. COLIN WICKENS



Hello, it's "Know your Committee" time again. The spot is on me, Colin Wickens, this time.

Well, I was born and did my schooling in Dartford, a town in north Kent, on the edge of south-east London. Growing up where I did and having an interest in buses from a very early age, my main interest was London Transport country area buses. That was mainly STLs and a few STs, and the usual country area single deckers of the time, so STLs became my favourite which had some effect later in my life.

Getting back to myself, I left school at Christmas 1953, and started an apprenticeship at J & E Hall Ltd in Dartford, a company that used to produce lorry and bus chassis up to the mid-twenties, long before my time. Work was still done on vehicles and containers until the seventies.

During my time at Hall's, my two years National Service was done in the RAF. After Hall's, I worked for a few years for Kent County Council, then moved to where I really wanted to work, on the buses. I joined London Country as a coachmaker at Swanley (SJ). I am still on the buses in the same area but it is now Kentish Bus, and I am at the new Dartford Garage (DT).

I got married to Win in March 1967, and fortunately for me, Win

joined me in my interests. I have been a member of the HCVS since the early sixties, and not too long after getting married there was a meeting at the old AH (Nunhead) garage. It was from that day that we both started hands on, in the preservation movement. I met Bill Cottrell and David Bosher. David was looking for others to join him and make up a team to look after and preserve TD95. I took up the offer, I know it wasn't an STL, but I was into preservation and it was a London bus.

I joined the London Bus Preservation Group in March 1968, as I could by then, being a part owner of a London bus. During this time some of us from the team bought 738J. That made two vehicles to look after. The "J" was more interesting as it was a part of an STL, and it's nice to know it is still around in the safe hands of Ian Barrett. Also, the "J" was the first preserved vehicle to be left in Cobham when the Group acquired the building.

After a time, three of us decided to get our own vehicle, then STL2692 came up for sale and was duly purchased in February 1973, an STL at last, but its operating area was the other end of the system from where I used to live. After a few years, one partner emigrated to Canada, then, by the late seventies, the other partner went back to preserving other vehicles he preferred. That is when Win became a partner, so the two of us have owned the STL for about 13 years now.

The STL was completed to as near original as possible by 1976, so I had some time to spare. At that time, T504 arrived at Cobham, so I spent years rebuilding the body on that vehicle. After that, I have spent 10 years working with the owner of the tree lopper STL. The main project I am involved with at the moment at Cobham is T448. Mind you, over the years, I have done work on most of the Trust owned vehicles and I would really like to see one of the STLs, 2093 or 2377 completed and on the road before I get too old.

In February this year I was elected to the committee of our organisation, which I have been a member of for 25 years. Let's hope we can all press on and work together in preserving London buses for ever more.

Colin Wickens

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Jeff Stoute

UNDERSTANDING THE DIVIDE

After reading Dave Pring's letter, "A member's view", and the excellent replies from Bill Cottrell and David Jones, I feel that a large number of members still do not understand the root cause of the problem which creates the "Membership Divide". I will now try to explain it and make some suggestions on how it might be addressed.

Every member needs to ask themselves once again, what do they really want out of the museum, and how their own thoughts compare with those of other members.

For many years, there have been three distinct groups of members with different views about the function of Cobham and its membership – hence the divide. For the purpose of this discussion, they can be classified as, The Shed Group, The Commercial User and The Showman Group. (Not included here are the non bus owning "Friends of the Museum" because they are not considered as potential beneficiaries.)

The Shed Group see the building principally as providing cheap and convenient garage accommodation. They pay a low basic rent and / or have use of facilities for cleaning and maintaining their vehicle. They consider they have no other commitment.

The Commercial User is similar to the Shed Group member in respect of rents and is highlighted here, only because approximately 25% of the floor space is occupied by these business users. Their activities are, at the moment, outside the control of the Trust committee, but their presence should not be overlooked.

The Showman Group have a broader outlook. They are aware of the longer term objectives of the Trust, and towards the development of Cobham as a working museum – probably on the lines of Crich (but not exactly). They know that the Trust is dependent on voluntary support to achieve its ambitions and their time is divided between assisting with Trust projects and maintaining their own vehicle if they have one.

To analyse this in detail, the "Shed Group" members are all individual or part bus owners who have no inspiration to promote

a Crich type museum. Their sole interest is their own vehicle and its upkeep, with the support of very economic facilities at the shed. In varying degrees, their vehicles are used from this base to earn their owners and the museum some income from various offers of work. Unfortunately, when the bottom line is read, none of the museum's assets benefit at all from this activity.

Some of the founder members would say that was the main idea in the first place and that's how it should be. Well, nothing wrong with that, I suppose, but there has been no formal statement over the years to support that idea. In using the name "Museum" throughout, and the earlier purchase of Group/Trust vehicles, brings that theory into question.

The "Showman Group", on the other hand, is partly made up of non bus owners, something the "Shed Group" would not allow until recently because they did not want non bus owners having any influence on the proceedings. The "Showman Group", who on most weekends averages about eight members, works on the group's assets.

Even if the shed principle was accepted and there were no Trust vehicles, who would maintain the building, keep it tidy, clean the toilet, clean the kitchen, fix the lights, unblock the drains, clear the grounds of weeds and scrap, keep the material stores in order, etc. On a voluntary basis, the answer would be no-one. And taking Bill's reply (to David Pring's letter) they would have to pay for the work to be done. Or more likely operate in decay and filth.

"You cannot bully people or use a Brownie points system to make us work", the shed members tell me, "who do they think they are, we are not children". Point taken, but meanwhile, there are some 13 Trust owned (or in the care of at the moment) vehicles to look after and a building to maintain and many new projects to get started. But not enough members are turning up for work, and still the toilet needs cleaning, every week!. In other words, the decay continues everywhere relentlessly. In trying to run up a down escalator, we find ourselves constantly on the ground floor.

If the "Showman" principle is accepted, then how are these tasks to be carried out? If 170 members turned up for work every weekend throughout the year, we could have a Disneyland of buses by the year 2000. If more realistically, each of the 120 bus owning members

turned up for just 10 days work per year at 6 hours per day, on a Saturday or Sunday, then the manpower would be 7,200 hours per year or 1,200 work days. Planned work could also be carried out on a weekday where members are unable to attend because of shift work, etc.

If that is the minimum standard of attendance to get the museum moving, then what should happen if these figures are not achieved? Simply, either we all pay extra for outside labour to do the tasks, or the members who do not turn up should pay a set fine to help fund the outside labour. Remember, the toilet still needs to be cleaned every week! By definition, a membership group must work equally to support its existence or proportionally pay the difference, or yet again, take advantage of a willing minority group, which ends up causing resentment and the classic "Divide".

Heavy unpalatable stuff maybe, but what other options are there? How do other clubs and associations manage? I have recently spoken to the chairman of six clubs for their views: three cricket clubs, a rugby club, a rowing club and a yachting club. All the cricket clubs and the rugby club have difficulty in getting volunteers to perform general maintenance, from rolling the wicket to cleaning the changing rooms and, you guessed it, the toilets. They pay for outside labour to do the work, which is reflected in increased membership fees.

The rowing and yachting clubs are different. If members do not turn up for work, they are fined by their committees. If they continue not to perform, then the committee has the power to expel them. Duxford also has a similar enforcement system.

There are 4 options for us to consider:

- 1 Leave the museum as an owners' parking shed complete with decaying assets.
- 2 Develop an owners' parking shed and perhaps part time operating base and sell Trust buses.
- 3 Pay for outside labour to improve and maintain assets through increased parking and membership feeds, with a resultant major loss of membership.

Management Structure 1972 to 1993

LONDON BUS PRESERVATION GROUP LTD

1986
PRIOR TO
FORMATION
OF THE LONDON BUS
PRESERVATION TRUST



LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST

24/1/86
REGISTERED AS A
CHARITY TRUST
ESTABLISHED
COMMITTEE ELECTED
4/7/87



COMMITTEE ELECTED
27/2/93
(MEMBERSHIP THEN 90)



LONDON BUS PRESERVATION GROUP LTD
(COMPANY HOLDING ASSETS)



LONDON BUS PRESERVATION
GROUP (SALES) LTD
(TRADING) Established 1990



(Principle assets remain in
ownership of Directors
as at Feb 1994



(Continues to operate from
Cobham Bus Museum as at
Feb 1994

4 Somehow enforce a minimum work attendance level with the use of fines to help improve and maintain assets over a planned period.

Finally, this large galleon shed we call Cobham museum has a potential of 170 rowers to make it sail fairly swiftly into the future. The chief rower leading the pace and moving a lot of water is the Chairman, Peter Plummer. But there will be a limit to how long he can keep this pace up, he cannot move this ship on his own, an extra 120 rowers *now* will make all the difference. If this happens, Peter and the committee will have to quickly stand back and put their supervisors' hats on or appoint these skills from other members, because it will have turned into an industrial work force that requires planning, delegation and leadership.

Each member will need sticking power until their particular unit of work is completed. The working facilities at the moment are poor, and will only improve with many hours of effort. It is these poor facilities that probably lie behind the real reason for some members to say they have more important priorities. They are unable to see how on their own they can really effect change, and they are right. For those who really do have too many priorities in front of Cobham, should they perhaps reconsider why they are members?

No one misunderstands what is involved for many members who have a family, house and bus to look after, it certainly is not easy. But if you became an Assistant Scout Leader, a Special Police Constable, a Community Group Helper, a Samaritan or attended night school, the same question would be asked of you if your attendance was poor. *If you cannot commit even a little time, why did you join?*

All that is required is a pair of overalls, boots and gloves. Then grab Peter Plummer and march him around the premises. He will enthuse, nay, explode, many times about different projects he has in mind. Just take your pick.

Once the Stores, Engineering and Body areas have been modernised by all of us, the remaining projects will then become more pleasant to deal with. The mind numbing job of rubbing down 40 seat frames, or painting a chassis, can be light work with a gang of five, and a lot more fun. It would be tough going for all of us, including me, but worth the end result. I really cannot see any other

way. Nothing comes for free in this world.

A six year plan starting *now* would create a Crich or similar for the year 2000. Just six years of minimum attendance to establish a museum worthy of the name. After the sixth year, the pace could slow down to just four days per year, just two weekends. The remaining members can then arrive on weekends wearing their best clothes and sit in the new canteen discussing the delights of RM rear domes, or perhaps cabby round the block in their favourite vehicle, posing for photographs in the knowledge that the hard foundation work has been done.

Talking of Crich, they tell me that they have 40 volunteer workers every weekend of the year, whatever the weather. Crich members say the difference is that the group owns all the vehicles, with no individual owners allowed. I suppose to some extent that is self-imposing; it would be difficult if not expensive to do your own thing and take your tram for a spin outside the main gates. But it does bring the problem of the "Cobham Divide" back into sharp focus, exposing the main factors of Self Interest v Group Interest, and where on a moving scale each of our member's commitments lie.

The decisions are yours. Yet another twenty years of a boring scruffy old shed, or just six years to create a museum to be proud of.

Jubilee Avenue Whitton Mddx TW2 6JB

From Mike Clarke

Pray tell me my ears do deceive me, forsooth I hear a rumour that one or two of our brethren are complaining about our new guide. Perhaps if they would be happier, we could stay with "the good old days". We could leave tablets of stone by the front door giving our visitors their commandments, but then perhaps we should not have visitors, for it is said they bring disease and flatulence, sorry, I mean pestilence, or is that what we might give them. Of course, they also bring that useful commodity "MONEY" but that's an obscene word, at least it would appear to be if we actually have to work at producing something that is *decent value for money* in order to extract said money from said visitor.

Let's face it, as some soothsayer once said, "you can't please . . ."

So go to it, Peter and well done those members of the committee who have the foresight to look to a progressive future for Cobham and its members. We have a damn sight more information coming our way now than there appears to have been up to twelve months ago. And while I'm on my soapbox I'll say congratulations to Mike Nash for editing this magazine, to some it might not be perfect but there is always room to strive for improvement in anything.

We all lead busy lives, but may I suggest that if the rumours of dissent against the content of the guide or magazine are true, those concerned extract their pens and contribute constructively towards Cobham's future both in word and deed.

■ *Lillbrook Crescent Woodlands Park Maidenhead Berks SL6 3XQ*

From P Doggett

(owner NS144; NS524; 1279LD)

Having seen Mr Nash's invitation to members to comment, here is my contribution.

I am an ordinary member, unable to work at Cobham due to commitments to my job and my own vehicles. I have been a member for six years, and have attended all AGMs. (incidentally, by my calculations, we are two AGMs adrift. Perhaps the Secretary can shed some light on this?)

It is a shame to see an organisation whose aims are the preservation of vehicles degenerating into a power struggle more reminiscent of a company boardroom. I find the use of words such as "revolution" vaguely distasteful in the context of a group of enthusiasts with supposedly common aims.

It is also unfortunate that the Trust is apparently glad to see the back of people who, between them, have a wealth of experience of preservation stretching back well before that of many present members, committee included. If it were not for the actions of some of these people, we would not *have* a museum building and vehicles to argue over!

On the subject of ownership of vehicles, it is a shame that Bill Cottrell managed to confuse the issue further by including in the neglected list a vehicle whose ownership is not in question.

I refer, of course, to STL2377, which was purchased by the Trust

using our own funds. (I have confirmed this with Mr Moore, 2377's previous owner). Perhaps the committee can report to us on the progress on this vehicle during their term of office. It is perhaps the ultimate irony that 2377 was originally saved by Tim Nicholson, one of the old committee members with whom the committee feels able to dispense.

■ *Purley Bury Avenue, Purley, Surrey CR8 1JF*

Editor's comment:

There will follow a full reply to this letter by our Chairman in the next issue of this magazine. Meanwhile, I would like to comment briefly.

Firstly, the word "revolution" was used in a letter by member David Pring, not by a committee member or myself.

Secondly, sir, you fail to grasp the fact that we would not have had a museum building or vehicles left to argue over for much longer as certain individuals wanted all for themselves!

Let me reaffirm my previous comments. There is nothing I would like to see more than for all of us to be united in our hobby. But when I joined the Trust, I saw a stagnating body with an appalling reputation within the movement, a movement so very vital to Cobham's own future. Given the constraints which have subsequently emerged, I am truly proud to have played a part in the progress made so far: the doubling of membership, our fast improving image, the renewed enthusiasm so clearly visible within our membership. Proof alone that we are on the right track.

So I will ask yet again that members properly digest the information in each issue of the magazine. It takes many hours of my time to compile, indeed, I am often guilty of neglecting my own business, such is my enthusiasm for progress – if only work was so rewarding! So please return the favour by having the courtesy to read *your* magazine properly before commenting in a negative or blinkered fashion, because, like nearly all the committee, I am fully committed to a safe future for Cobham and a better deal for all its members.

On a point of detail, you mention an old committee member by name. It is not accurate to say that the present committee has chosen to dispense with Mr Tim Nicholson. To date, nobody has been

expelled from the Trust. Tim failed to be re-elected to the committee by the members in a postal vote and he chose to leave the Trust of his own free will.

MN

From David Jones

First, congratulations on another excellent Newsletter (disregarding my own contribution, of course). The slack period at work just prior to Christmas allowed time to ponder on a number of items and, wearing my "agent provocateur's" hat, some of these thoughts are set out below. I have my flak jacket to hand for the responses!

I can foresee a time in the not too distant future when it will not be possible to take our treasured vehicles on the public highway due to increased European legislation, such as that which has forced me to produce a huge notice to tell me how high the RF is. I know that the HCVS and other bodies work wonders for us, but there are limits. Also, London's bus history did not stop when RML2760 was delivered, and with my earlier point in mind and the fact that the Trust collection will grow, due either to purchases or bequests, is the present site big enough?

Now, I realise that Cobham is much loved by many people, but it is already too small for the vehicles and the scope for expansion is limited by the site itself and the red tape of planning legislation. The link-up with Brooklands Museum would have given more storage space and some runway room to exercise the buses, but this now seems to be only a remote possibility, despite the talks already held. Maybe a bold solution is needed before a great deal of time and effort and money is spent at Cobham - Wisley Airfield.

I'll admit that I know very little about the facilities there, whether there are any buildings, the condition of the runway, which is about two kilometres long, or anything, other than that the site is large, appears to have a direct entrance from the Ockham turn off from the A3 and would solve our space and running problems easily. Yes, it would no doubt cost a fortune, and I doubt if we could buy it. But maybe if the owner (Guildford Council?) were approached in the right manner, a suitable, secure, long-term peppercorn rental could be sorted. I cannot see the land being used for housing or industrial purposes and the establishment of the London Bus Heritage Centre could attract grants from all kinds of

places.

Other museum projects have been started and almost finished in the time which it has taken the Trust to reach our present situation. I recognise that many individuals have put a great deal of time and money into Cobham in the past, and I am not denigrating their efforts. I also know that the new committee has a lot to sort out right now, but once that is done, there is a need for a long, hard look at our future. Wisley Airfield may not be attainable, but some thought ought to be given to a way in which the opportunities such a site would offer, could be taken advantage of.

And if the Eurocrats leave us alone and my daughter is eventually able to drive RF672 on the road when I'm past it, and if we have moved to a bigger, better site, it would still have been worth the efforts made now rather than when it's too late.

Finally, has the committee any plans to obtain one of the archetypal Q-type tubular shelters which were once so common in London? There are very few left and I would be willing to help by making contact with those responsible.

Having set the cat amongst the pigeons and thrown myself into the lion's den, I'll wish everyone a happy and successful 1994.

Epping Close, Romford, Essex RM7 8BH

From Malcolm Lewis

Well done Mike for the excellent newsletter and Peter Plummer's hard work has been rewarded with a superb Cobham Guide.

I would like to add to the debate about the variable rent system, speaking as a member without a vehicle. I agree with the principle of the scheme. However, in reality, I think it will be difficult to record work done on Trust projects. Also, as David Jones suggested, a "big brother" environment may be created which could spoil the enjoyment of our hobby. At the end of the day, perhaps we should be satisfied that a member pays x pounds per year subscription and rent for storage of a vehicle (if owned), which all contribute.

After all, many members have other commitments (especially family) who we could frighten away. Perhaps we could have two

levels of membership:

- I Members who are prepared to help on Trust projects
- II Associate members who do not have the time to help on Trust projects

The associate members would then pay a higher subscription because they would not be helping on Trust projects.

Crockford Park Road, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 2LU

From Vic Chivers

I really did enjoy issue 3 of the magazine, especially the picture of the Tower Wagon 89Q.

So here is a bit more history for members, from when I started on LTE at Enfield Garage, September 1956. They had a daily runout of 120 RTs on service, routes 102, 107, 107A, 121, 128, 135, 135A, 191, 205, 217, 217A, 231 and 242. It was a busy garage and in those days it was all hand-washing for the night-men who started at 10pm/ No vehicle would ever go on the road with a panel or mudguard in undercoat because all garages had three or four extra vehicles to compensate for buses needing mechanical or body repairs, and for the "dock car" which would get the full stripdown service and would come off the pit looking brand new, following a polish inside and out. Every bit of ally was so treated and you could see your reflection on the radiator surround and hub-caps!

Some of the RTs were already approaching nine years old, but because they were so well looked after, they only ever seemed to need the odd call-out for a puncture or wiper blade replacement. Mind you, at Christmas and New Year, when the pubs turned out, the occasional person would leave his dinner all over the seat or the floor, or, if he was a good shot, into the ticket box. Nice one, Cyril! A handful of soggy tickets, some orange peel and an apple core were regular finds for the night cleaners, of which I was one a few years later.

But I did like all those lovely RTs, some with top boxes and some without. And in those days when trolleybuses were still in service, Enfield's service rota covered the repairs of trolleybus tenders 89Q, 135A and 206C. 135A was an Albion and 206C a Leyland, and they were both fitted with Leyland and AEC spare wheels, for road calls.

Usually, they were outstationed at either Edmonton or Walthamstow Garages.

When I moved to Harlow Garage, they still did cleaning in the way that LTE had done for years, the "stud" system. The fleet of vehicles at Harlow was split four ways, three sets of 13 vehicles and one set of 14. Sweep them all out, clean every bit of glass inside and outside of the cab, mirrors and back windows. In those days, you got a ten minute tea break and thirty minutes for dinner, you clocked in and out, and if you were seen clocking a mate's card, you were in the foreman's office double quick and the door was closed whilst you were told your fortune – and at night you did not have a union many to stand by you, though you did have the next day if the guv'nor thought fit to call on him.

They were hard old days with strict orders – you did or you were sacked. But the job got better in time. They got rid of all night foremen and made the fitters up to working chargehands, which was a lot better and we did a good job. Until, that is, the OMO vehicles started to come in all over the fleet. But I will tell you about that another time!

ANSWERS TO VIC'S QUIZ NUMBER 1

I was truly underwhelmed by the number of entries! Only three members put pen to paper, so special thanks to John Hinson, David Jones and Peter Mundy, whose scores were within a point of each other. However, John just sneaked it and therefore wins a year's free membership, but his answer to question 17 means that I now want Gill to send the tenner instead! In fact, I was considering docking all three a point for not using the correct 'HRH' prefix for their answers to that particular question! But at least they all helped to edumacate your editor.

John's cheeky answers are provided below, together with the correct ones for questions 9 and 20 (see issue 3 for the questions). Look out for another "Vic's Quiz" in the summer issue. – MN

VIC'S QUIZ - ANSWERS

- 1 Leyland FEC (Front Engined Cub).
- 2 4,825
- 3 Well, it was just like any other Routemaster until a certain wag in Coulsdon decided to have a wind-up and convert it into a so-called break-down tender which, with a fully automatic gearbox, couldn't even tow a cart of horse manure.
- 4 Three, curiously enough numbered RW1, RW2 and RW3.
- 5 "Old Bill". Named, of course, after the LBPT's treasurer. (Or was he named after B43?).
- 6 RT97.
- 7 RF26.
- 8 Too bloody many. If they hadn't built so many, we would have a bit more variety on the rally field. Real answer: 2760 in varieties of ordinary ones, 65 for British European Airways and 50 for Northern General, plus one they built back to front by mistake (FRM1) - total 2876.
- 9 I know this one. It was the *only* GS to carry the registration MXX332. Apart from that, there is no difference. I have never seen such a boring model of a bus that all look the same.
- 10 FRM1 It also carries KGY4D whilst old.
- 11 London Coaches, a totally dis-owned subsidiary of the London Transport Board.
- 12 RF4.
- 13 Two. RT1431 and RT1499.
- 14 No RMs towed trailers. RMF1254 did, as did the BEA variety. Rumour has it that Cliff Blackwell's is full of beer.
- 15 Er, em, er. Well, it's a bit before my time. Try 1952.
- 16 RT113, plus RT77, whose headlamp has probably fallen off with corrosion.
- 17 Some pratt called "Nash". You may have heard of him.
- 18 Some funny trolleybus that had a half-cab and bonnet fitted just in case somebody wanted to put an engine in it.
- 19 Colin Curtis himself.
- 20 Hmmmm . . . Trick question? Well, here's a trick answer. They both had bus stops at which no buses ever called and no passenger ever queued. Or, another answer, RF453 is the only RF to have been to both places. (it spent seven years at the bus stop at Hendon, somebody told the driver to wait as somebody was just coming). Both were driving schools with a skid pan.

BARRETT'S BUS BUYING GUIDE PART ONE: RTs

Just recently I have had several enquiries for advice about buying a bus and which type is best to purchase, so I have decided to write a series of articles offering some help for those people considering taking the "plunge". I shall deal mainly with bodywork as that is usually the most time consuming job. Mechanical parts, though possibly expensive, can generally be swapped more easily.

Once you tell someone you intend to buy a bus, the first thing most people say is, "why do you want to do that - what good is it to you?" or something similar, whilst looking at you as if you were on a day release from some kind of mental institution. It hasn't occurred to them that owning a bus may be something that you have wanted to do for years, since you were a school boy or girl. No, it's not a spelling mistake, I did write girl. Ladies do own buses, such as Cobham's very own Galloping Gourmet - Win Wickens, and the other half of that well known his 'n her's combination, Gill Hinson. Whilst our very own magazine editor, Mike Nash, only realised his ambition of owning an ex-Kingston RF in 1992, just fourteen years after his first yearning. Or it may be that you and possibly your friends fancy a more unusual hobby. Quite often it becomes like a cancer, and you just keep on buying. I now own three vehicles and have half shares in a fourth!

The first thing to decide is what type of bus you want. This is to be considered very carefully, as what looks nice is not always practical (don't I know it). Bearing in mind this is the London Bus Preservation Trust, I am only going to consider the more common London buses -RT, RF and RM.

The Regent III is nearly everyone's idea of the archetypal London bus. Indeed, they are very attractive and a lot of people see them as the perfect bus to preserve as a hobby.

Let's take a closer look at the body structure, which is usually the most time-consuming factor that you must take into consideration when making a purchase. I won't dwell on pre-war RTs as there are but a handful and it is unlikely that one will be available for sale. But even if it is, a post war example is still best

unless you like lots of work and your bank manager is a personal friend of the family.

The post-war RTs owe a lot of their body structure design to aircraft construction techniques learnt during the Second World War. This meant that for nearly the first time in coach building, major parts became interchangeable between vehicles. This is good for local repairs to the structure, which are inevitable, given the age of even the newest vehicles and the presence of wooden inserts in the steel framework. The effect is that when water penetrates the gaps between the panelling, it is soaked up by the wood, which eventually becomes rotten. Look around the body beadings and panel joints to see how many are loose or have missing screws. This is a good indication of the condition of the wooden inserts.

Undoubtedly, the major consideration to bear in mind when going to inspect an RT with a view to purchase is the platform riser. This is the main cross-member, that traverses the body in front of the platform that you step up and over into the lower saloon. It is a fabricated box section that is riveted and welded to the lower saloon rear bulkhead, and bolted to the chassis using two large brass inserts set up from its base. Unfortunately, this corrodes in a very similar manner to car sills. If replacement is necessary, it is a major undertaking, which involves stripping the surrounding bodywork and lifting it from the chassis. Repairs can be made, but only if corrosion is not too serious, otherwise replacement is the only option.

Providing the rear riser is in sound condition, have a look around the platform and lower stair area. The platform supports may need replacing, but this isn't a job in the same league as riser replacement and can, in fact, be done without disturbing the platform surface. Fortunately, both risers and platform supports can be obtained. Bottom steps also rot away where they join the platform, but this is a relatively easy repair. The back rail also suffers from the dreaded tinworm. To effect repairs here is not so easy, but still very minor in comparison to a body riser. Replacing platform timber is fairly straightforward – so don't let a shabby platform put you off buying.

Another area for inspection is the stub pillars just in front of the rear wheel arches. Quite often this has rotted away, or the bracket

that holds it is corroded. If this is the case, the guard rail and panel in front of the wheel arch are usually loose and flap about; again, this is not too difficult to rectify. Whilst inspecting this area, it is also a good idea to check the small panel at the rear of the wheel arch. The wood and steel supporting this disintegrate and this causes the panel to become loose – not drastic, but if the front stub pillar and the arch are a bit suspect, it may pay to rebuild it all at one "sitting".

The next area to pay careful attention to should be the front riser. This crosses the body at the rear of the engine bay. Rust is less of a problem here, generally because of the oily deposits from the engine and associated parts. You should, however, check both mountings; the nearside can suffer from "pot holing" due to kerb drains and road damage. This can cause the area immediately around it to crack and may lead to the joint between body and chassis becoming loose.

Panel work is usually fairly straightforward and relatively easy to replace, although window pans are becoming harder to get hold of and some wood may need replacing if it is disturbed.

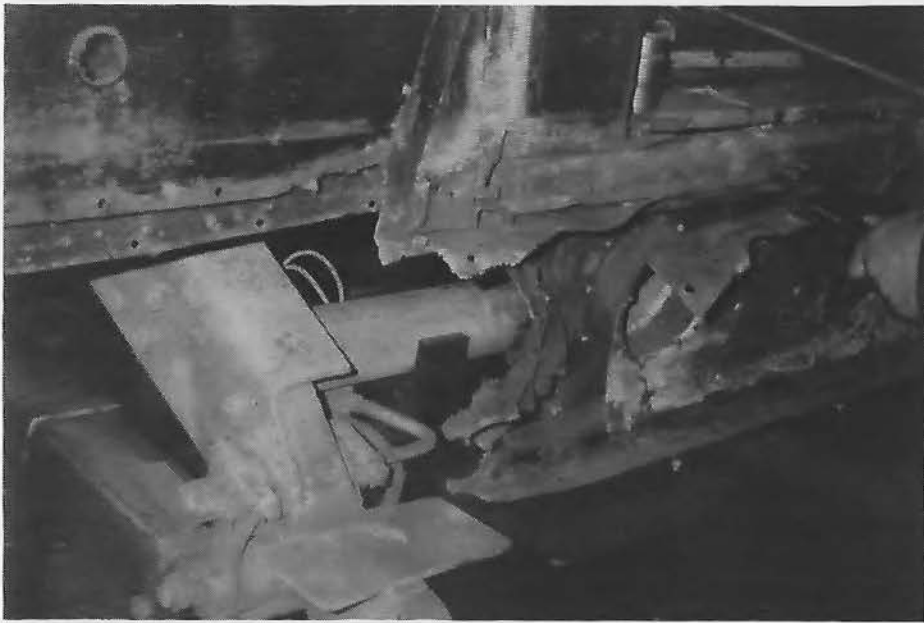
Try to buy an example that is in as close to withdrawn condition as possible rather than a play bus, etc.

Sourcing seat frames and other trim items is becoming increasingly difficult, as less vehicles are being scrapped because of their rare nature. Mechanically, as for all vehicles, it is very robust and providing that the main running units are in good condition (no cracked blocks, knocking noises, slipping gearbox or excessive backlash in differential), problems should be few and far between.

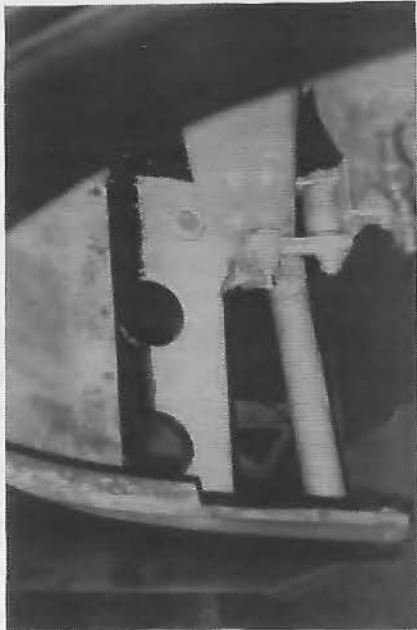
Some parts can still be obtained from main dealers as they are similar to more modern vehicles; fellow owners or the Trust are other sources of parts. So, if you treat your bus well, service it properly and drive it correctly, it should be with you for years.

In the next issue I shall cover the RF class of bus and what to look for before you part with your hard earned wedge.

Ian Barrett



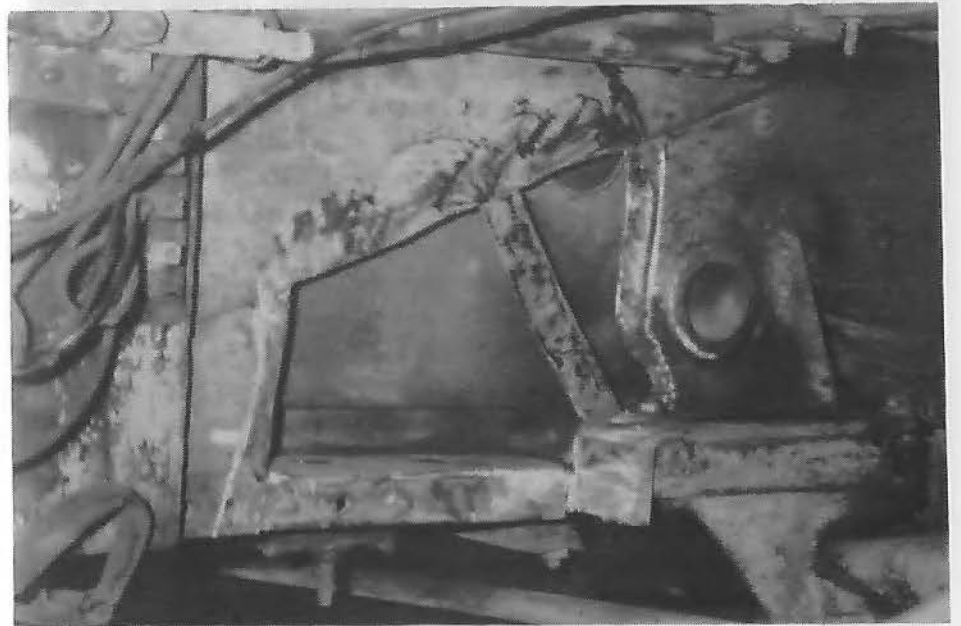
Rear nearside of RT3491's rear riser before repair. Note the four corrosion holes at the bottom which led to its collapse.



The repair section let into the front offside of the rear riser.



The badly rusted back rail had been previously repaired using an incorrect section.



Front offside corrosion was cut out. Look carefully here, the mounting is behind the wheelarch panel !

RFs RETURN TO KINGSTON (IN STYLE)

It all began back in late '92 when, with many RFs approaching their 40th birthday, the owners of RF518 (Graham Ruddock and myself) decided to celebrate in style and take RF518 on a tour of Kingston routes. Taxed specially for the event, on 8th November 1992 we commenced from Ripley (215) after champagne had been served to the guests, continuing over the 215A, 218 (three-course luncheon in Staines!), 216 and 219. Arrangements were made to visit Kingston Garage, where to our delight an empty forecourt permitted photographs to be taken without a modern bus in sight.

This subsequently led to a memorable day for everyone who came along on 31st October 1993. Prompted by a story that Kingston Garage is to be sold, a visit to see the Operations Manager at Westlink resulted in authorisation to use the forecourt on the above date at 2pm.

The next bit was much harder than it seems. Although there are plenty of RFs around, how many would still be taxed in October? Phone calls were made to those RF owners likely to be interested, of whom some were unable to attend. Eventually, several RFs were shortlisted (also 738J), but the day's schedule was not to be decided until two weeks before the event.

That's when Mike Nash got in on the act, seeing the potential for some free publicity for Cobham Bus Museum and Westlink by involving the local press (five newspapers), LT News and Buses magazine. Then the plan was formed – simply meet at the museum at noon for a photo session in the paddock, then at 1pm depart for Kingston via route 219 with Mike “convoy” Nash leading in RF534 on a Bus Inspector's Nightmare! Not one, but eight RFs, plus Q83 and 738J followed in convoy away from Cobham. On the Hershams by-pass a stop to regroup saw local residents scurrying out with cameras. Meanwhile, Q83 was dispatched with photographers to find a suitable photographic location (the Scilly Isles seemed appropriate!). A further stop on the Portsmouth Road near to Kingston allowed Q83 to pass and the main group split so as to arrive in two sections at Kingston Garage, where John and Gill Hinson were waiting with RF45.

Full co-operation from Westlink allowed us wall-to-wall RFs

across the forecourt for some memorable photographs. Once the press had taken their snaps, the vehicles were moved around to allow Westlink room for their service Hoppas. The RFs were positioned and blinds set accordingly to suit everyone, including the German bus crank who had been sent from Twickenham Garage. The many interested passing motorists and pedestrians included one gentleman who asked if Westlink had some “new” buses! He was most surprised to hear that the RFs were all 40 years old. We eventually returned to Cobham via route 215.

My thanks go to Mr. J. Haffey, Operations Manager and his staff at Kingston Westlink for making the day so memorable, and to the owners of the vehicles involved, some of whom had travelled many miles to be there. They were:

| | |
|-------|------------------------------|
| RF10 | Dave Kriesler |
| RF319 | Mark Winston, Ian Barrett |
| RF366 | Jim Andress |
| RF453 | John and Gill Hinson |
| RF486 | Roger West |
| RF518 | Peter Starks, Graham Ruddock |
| RF534 | Mike Nash |
| RF643 | Mike Clarke, Peter Rambaut |
| RF672 | Dave Jones, Paul Morris |
| Q83 | Bill Cottrell |
| 738J | Ian Barrett |

What next? March '94 is fifteen years since RFs finished regular service with London Transport and another Kingston tour is planned for Sunday 27th March. If you are interested, let John Hinson know. (081. 1000-1062)

After that, make a date for the “London Bus Rally” at Finsbury Park, 21st August 1994, which will include free service and demonstration runs and a large display in the park on Carriage Road.

Peter Starks

LONDON BY NIGHT

John A Gray

Saturday 18th December's weather was very wet and windy and generally foul – but it didn't deter Dave Pring taking quite a few Cobham people on his Routemaster to take part in the RT/RF Register's annual pre-Christmas London Lights Tour.

Dave made it a first with the RM in joining the other buses taking part (8 RFs, 2RTs); it's the first time in the ten or so years the Tour has been run that on has taken part.

The long stretch of railway overbridge at Bermondsey Street was the chosen spot for stragglers to rejoin the convoy. After much camaraderie in the "tunnel", leader John Hinson blew his referee's whistle for all to rejoin the vehicles, and away – recreating momentarily a London pea-souper as the exhausts of the eleven buses, moving off as one, emitted enough pollution to make pigeons cough.

After criss-crossing the Thames by six bridges between the Tower and Lambeth, progress become slower through the West End, with spirits high on reaching the St Pancras terminus at around 8.30 pm.

How about coming yourself next year?



SOCIAL EVENING – WATERLOO

5 February 1994

Our regular haunt at the Red Lion was the venue for the "Slide and Film" evening, and was further proof of the renewed enthusiasm for the Trust that is being generated. No fewer than 52 people attended, including a fair proportion of ladies, and everyone was out to enjoy themselves. In fact, this was a record attendance, much to the committee's delight.

Trivia King Alan Bond provided the first set of slides, his snippets of knowledge exactly complementing a varied selection of shots. Dave Johnson's evening was made perfect when his RT3496 popped up on screen in its early days of preservation, pictured on Brighton front. Coincidentally, 3496 will be heading to Brighton again this year on the HCVS run! Alan has a soft spot for Bristols (no, no, not that type, Bill C!) but the biggest groans of the evening were reserved for the shots of VRs, closely followed by REs. Like Alan, I have a big soft spot for the latter, particularly when ECW-bodied with dual purpose interiors – such as the Trent example that was at Duxford last year.

Next in the spotlight was Geoff Morant, esteemed editor of "Buses Worldwide" magazine. Geoff's slides depicted a fascinating selection of machinery spotted during his recent trip to Uruguay. AEC and Leyland fans were literally salivating at some of Geoff's discoveries, but there was truly something for everyone to enjoy and it was a pleasure to listen to Geoff's gentle, informative commentary on a country that is clearly full of transport treasures. To say that Uruguay does not have the strictest MoT regulations is putting it mildly, many of the buses being notably decrepit, especially the school ones! I think they must be subject to Class 0.6 MoTs instead of our Class 6! Good stuff to watch.

We adjourned for the comprehensive buffet provided, after which member Colin Sheppard treated us to a real cross section of transport snaps ranging from Hong Kong trams to Hovercraft. A large number of lorry shots proved popular, indeed, that "closet gricer" Jeff Stoute got a bit over-excited and had to be restrained from doing impressions from a selection of orifices! Some questionable shots of yours truly emerged, as did several snaps of RFs, which proved popular, especially to "Gricer Ruddock", who kept

sprinting up to the screen to "cop" the fleetnumbers. By this time, audience participation had reached fever pitch!

We moved to a selection of slides from Geoff Rixon, who for those who don't know, is a noted transport photographer. Such was the quality of the shots and the condition of the vehicles captured on film, that Mike Clarke enquired how Geoff managed to polish the slides.

Next up was a welcome video from our long distance traveller, Marco Ghidorzi from Switzerland, who we were all delighted to see at the event. Marco had brought the tape showing RT196's journey to become a disco-bus, the story which you will have read in the last issue. Crystal clear film quality made the best of the Swiss scenery, but also captured 196 boiling on its way up the mountain. The purists present seemed most upset to see the body being craned into position within the disco building, especially as it was sporting white roundels to boot!

By this time, eyes were getting tired, but the final video woke everyone up again when our own media star, Philip Millard, appeared on screen in the BBC programme "Auction", which concerned the discovery of a remarkable old railway carriage and the new owners' attempt to auction it through Sotheby's and make a financial killing. On this occasion, they failed, but I would imagine that the exposure on television may yield a successful sale in due course. It was certainly fun to see Philip in "historian" mode on television, railways being his first love.

All in all, then, a great evening. Our guest, Geoff Morant clearly enjoyed himself and commented that it was a pleasure to attend an enthusiasts' function which was so light-hearted and informal rather than the stuffy, heavy-going affairs that he usually had to endure. So thanks to all who attended, especially those who supplied material. Hope it was worth the trip, Marco! I know Alan Allmey would have approved.

In due course we will be able to hold such events as "home fixtures" in the proposed enlarged clubhouse. Until then, the Red Lion will do just fine. See you at the next one!

Mike Nash

RLH44 (ALIAS 581J)

Dave Pring

"But what are you going to do with it?" First heard from my wife Jenny and son Ewen when I purchased the bus. Answer at the end of the article!

My first recorded acquaintance with RLH44 was in April 1962, working from Amersham on the 336. I noted at the time that the sliding windows were chromed outside and the interior handrails were plastic coated. In later years the chrome was painted green (if it moves or not, paint it). Surprisingly, the original handrails were never changed, usually the steel rails rusted, cracking the plastic. When this happened, they were replaced by aluminium poles on overhaul at Chiswick (former tram depot).

The bus was transferred to its new owner, London Country Bus Services on 1st January 1970, whilst at Addlestone Garage, where it had been since 1964. It continued to lead an uneventful life on the 436/461/463 group of routes until that fateful day, 31st July 1970. I had made arrangements for a lift to WY that evening, after I finished work. As I was a train driver then and was "delayed by the failure of a preceding service", this meant a late arrival at Addlestone. Too late now to catch the outward journey to Guildford (or overtake it) meant that I would miss the very last country area scheduled RLH back to WY. This was, of course, a disaster on the scale of the Titanic.

Nearly all the RLHs were already out of service being prepared for their journey to Garston and storage prior to sale, the plan being to change RLHs to others, RFs if necessary, after the evening peak, to enable them to reach destination before midnight, thereby saving a further month's road tax.

As you can imagine, I was by now in deep depression, the only remedy seemed to be to adjourn to the pub adjacent to the garage. This done, and whilst supping our record pint a familiar sound drifted through an open window. (at this point, I must boast that from age 10 I could distinguish the sound of an RLH from an RT at a mile distant, this from my bedroom window at Belmont, where the famed 230 route could be heard at Kenton Library. Strangely,

this qualification has never brought me success and wealth.) No doubt then that an RLH had passed, eastwards towards Weybridge—not the line of route to Garston.

My friend insisted on finishing his pint (no consideration, some people) before we set off in the car. But where to head? I decided to play safe and waited a few stops along past Addlestone Station, the logic being that it must surely return on that road, wherever it had gone. Return it did, as a 461A Addlestone Garage. I boarded, purchased the last ticket and was the only passenger on arrival at WY, 2317 hours. The official last RLH (35) was already home with the crowds surrounding it, bunting and decorations still in place. How so? Simple, really. After their meal break the crew should have taken an RF for their last stint on the 461/461A but they said, "booked an RLH – then we have an RLH". So an RLH they, and I, did have.

Twenty years later, I have it again, never having made its fateful journey to Garston it was converted to a mobile uniform issuing store and renumbered 581J. I saw it many times in its new role, doing the rounds from its Chelsham base, until replaced by LNB57 in 1982.

For those who do not know it, externally it is easily recognisable as an RLH at heart, although most window areas are panelled, as is the former platform. The entrance is now by door mid-way along the nearside. Internal changes are more radical, the seating is gone as are the original stairs. This is replaced by a full-width enclosed platform (used for the old uniforms), with a new flight further forward from the lower saloon (itself fitted with cupboards and worktop). Behind the first bulkhead is a doored changing room. Upstairs, the ceiling is cluttered by numerous rails for hanging new uniforms, lit by four transparent panels in the centre of the roof.

So far, except for reinstatement of the upper deck front windows, I have concentrated work on the underneath, which was showing definite signs of neglect (the grease had fossilised!). This has involved rust removal, hand chassis painting (anti-corrosive paint followed by silver), floorboard treatment and some mechanical work. The bodywork is in better condition, but much more work on it is likely to be delayed until my retirement!

ANSWER

As restoration to original condition is beyond my capabilities, even if the parts were available, we have decided that RLH44 will be our holiday/day out home. Luxury items such as carpets, generator and a loo are planned! Will this make us Old Age Travellers?

The promised photographs for the above feature, along with an update report on the Clubhouse Fund from David never materialized, so below is pictured another well known RLH, 24, which is Marco Ghidorzis' pride and joy. It will ofcourse have travelled from Switzerland to be at the Open Day.



The following feature was one of several recently handed to me which had been on hold for the Cobham newsletter previous to my becoming editor. Written by Michael Dryhurst, I'm sure members will find it enjoyable as Michael always writes entertaining material and he has been particularly active of late within the pages of 'Buses' and 'Classic Bus' magazines. Although not at present a member of the Trust, I feel sure that he will be very pleased that his contribution has finally made print, and also to learn of recent progress at Cobham. Perhaps someone who knows him could appraise him of the situation.

ANNIVERSARIES

By Michael Dryhurst

Well, there were a number of anniversaries last year, all significant to the lover of the London bus. 1993 saw the 60th anniversary of London Transport, although one is led immediately to the question "with what will there be left to celebrate?". And 1993 marked the 25th year since RTLs were withdrawn from public service in the capital, and the 40th since the GS class entered service.

And 1993 was also the 25th year of operation of operations by ASUCD Unitrans, that thriving western outpost of RT and RTL operation in distant California. Concerned at the growing vehicular traffic on the campus, particularly of students' cars, the Association of Students of the University of California at Davis felt something had to be done, to induce students to forgo their cars, thereby cutting down on congestion, pollution and the inevitable parking problem. And this was in 1967! A campus bus service seemed to be the answer, running between the University and the various halls of residence scattered about the town of Davis, but the ASUCD was not naive enough to think that because a bus service was provided, students would forgo their cars in their thousands. To make the service attractive it was felt that the actual buses themselves had to be interesting, and so, in late 1967 were purchased two RTLs from PVS, these being 1014 and 1194, both Park Royal bodied.

The buses were shipped directly to Davis, and after being fitted with various items to comply with California law, particularly with regard to marker lights, the two Leylands entered service on 28th February 1968. Although the service was not a resounding success, it was successful enough, because it soon became necessary to add further stock, both standard US built single-deckers and more ex-London double-deckers. Initially, the service was solely for students, but by 1971 it became open to the general public and now Unitrans provides public transport for the whole city of Davis, as well as the University, and a charter (private hire) service is available, the RTs being very popular for use at weddings.

Two RTs (1235/3123) arrived in 1970, 742 in 1972, 3889/4735 in 1974, and 2819 in 1975; RT 3572 was "bought-in" from an operator in the neighbouring state of Oregon, in 1979, and also purchased

were two lowbridge buses, RLH 21/34. Over the years some of these buses have been disposed of and the current operational ex-London fleet consists of RTL 1014, which has so far served Davis for seven more years than it did London, and RT 742, which is the only bus to retain its AEC A204 engine, 1235 (Leyland 0600), 2819 (Cummins-B + Allison four-speed automatic transmission), 3123 (being fitted currently with the Cummings/Allison combination) and 4735 (Leyland 0600, from a Routemaster). Additionally, RT 1523 is owned, but this is engine-less, the plan being to fit it with a Hercules CNG-powered unit, as soon as funding and workshop space permit.

There was due ceremony at 26th February last, to mark the 25th anniversary, at which event the "official" bus was RT 742, which had just emerged from a repaint – in its original 1948 livery. Now, I wonder who's idea that was? And yes, we know it does not carry its original body, but the Saunders one fitted currently has sat on 742's chassis longer than did the Park Royal body with which it entered service.

Two other double-deckers are operated, these being a brace of CRG6 Daimler Fleetlines with Roe low height bodywork by West Riding, although the Gardner 6LXB engine in one has just failed and will be replaced with a second-hand Leyland 0680 unit.

That these buses continue to run in daily public service is due entirely to the enthusiasm of the Maintenance Supervisor, Wally Mellor, and his team at Davis, who are all very proud of their ex-London buses, which are between 39 and 45 years young! And if spares were more readily available, all of the RTs would be AEC-engined still, although it is the intention to keep as long as possible the AEC A204 unit in RT 742, which, with its roof number box is felt to be the quintessential RT, hence its repaint into 1948 livery.

The double-deckers run only in term time, i.e. mid-January to Easter, early May to mid-July and mid-September to Christmas; they do not normally operate at weekends.



This is RT 2819, which is fitted with a Cummins B-series turbocharged engine and Allison four-speed auto transmission. The bus has been clocked at 65mph on the Interstate 80 Freeway, with power in reserve! (MN – I want one!)



Given the vehicles present here, it is difficult to realise that this is not Britain but California, perhaps the palm trees giving away the game! Anyway, there is mass departure at 12.35 pm from the Memorial Union Terminal, which is always a good time to see the double-deckers. Lead bus is RT 1235, behind which is an ex-West Riding Daimler Fleetline.

TURNING BACK THE CLOCK

Henry Law

One warm evening in May 1945 just before my fourth birthday found me standing in the sunshine outside Kilburn High Road station, accompanied by my grandmother. We had just arrived from Scotland, on a journey that had begun before dawn. I remember just fragments of that journey: arriving under the vast, black, cavernous roof at St. Enoch's Station in Glasgow; seeing for the first time a new type of train with large windows, very different from the trains with compartment doors that I was familiar with; standing in an immense crush waiting for the London train at Glasgow Central. In the immediate aftermath of the war, this was, of course, a time when people were on the move all over the world. Of the trip from Glasgow to London, I recall only spilling a cup of milk on the floor, and an incident at the end of the journey when the train travelled backwards for a short distance. Then we were onto another, familiar type of train with compartment doors and bars on the windows, for the brief stretch from Euston to Kilburn High Road.

And there, I was confronted with more new sights, my grandmother patiently trying to explain unfamiliar objects like traffic lights. She couldn't, however, tell me why there were two sorts of buses (this was my first sight of a double-decker bus), one kind with an irregular profile with projecting bits, the other, a simpler boxy shape.

In the few months before I started school, I quickly became familiar with these buses, and later on, others too. One of my playgrounds was at West End Green, which was then the terminus of the 53. I liked to go there because that was where I could admire the intricate shapes of what, later on, I learned were called the LTs, the six-wheeled AEC Renowns. Features of the LTs which have stuck firmest in my memory are the projecting driver's cab and roof peak, both nicely curved, the twin wheels at the back, the windows with curved upper corners and the single destination indicator over the rear window. I was especially fascinated by the ritual of winding the route blinds. A ride on an LT was usually for a visit to Regent's Park or the cartoon cinema in Regent Street; my main memory of the LTs is the straight flight of steps to the upper deck, nice and

easy for a toddler, and the throaty sound of the engine.

The other buses I would see would be on the 28; these were nearly always STLs, but a few were buses which I did not distinguish from LTs but were presumably STs. Features of the STLs which I recall most are the rounded off outer corners of the upper deck windows, which gave the vehicles a characteristic "facial expression", and the unusual Y-shaped division of the rear windows. There was also a type of bus, quite rare, which looked like a cross between an LT and an STL; I recall one on the 53, and another at Richmond on the 73 – these were presumably the Bluebird LTs.

In 1945, London's buses were in a beaten-up state. Some still had a window or two boarded-up. The opening drops of most bus windows were at all sorts of crazy angles. I was puzzled about the squarish boxes on the roofs of some buses, because these were out of use and I wondered what they were for.

Of my first visit to London Zoo I remember as much about the bus that took us there as I do of the animals inside. Although it sounded like an ordinary bus, it looked completely different from all the other buses I had seen up till then. What caught my eye about it were the rounded windows, the concertina-shaped blind at the front behind the driver; the fact that the driver's cab had a door, and the plain rear window with another one of those useless square boxes above. This was, of course, one of the pre-war RTs on the 74.

As I grew past the toddler stage, I was taken further afield. Hampstead Heath meant a ride on the 210 from Golders Green to Jack Straw's Castle; the single deck LTs laboured on the climb up North End Road. Visits to relatives introduced me to the 113 and STDs, very different from all other London buses, with their squared-off windows and rumbling engine note. I also recall a journey on the 645 trolleybus to High Barnet; humming along smoothly, these vehicles were, for me, unmemorable, though I admired the attractive gold "T" logo.

Trips into town brought sights of other unfamiliar types of bus: the ugly, angular utility Gs and Ds on the 77 and 88, Green Line coaches with an empty space instead of a bonnet, and once, a brief sight of a bus with an open staircase on the 38.

Soon after that – it must have been about 1947 – I observed from my vantage point on a swing in the playground in Fortune Green

that all was starting to change. Buses like the one I had ridden on to the zoo started to appear on the 28; by this time, I was aware of registration numbers, and took note of the FXTs, HLWs, HLXs and KGKs as they replaced the CXXs and DLU's. The West End Green terminus, now the end of route 159, saw the last of the LTs being replaced by STLs. On reflection, it is a great pity that only one double-deck LT was preserved; there were several distinct varieties: the original open-staircase series, two or three variants on the standard batch and, of course, the Bluebirds.

The new RTs quickly became part of the scenery, all crisp and new and smelling of fresh paint. I was intrigued by such novel features as window winders instead of the old stiff fasteners which had to be pressed together, the bell cord, the route numbers on a plate on the off side, and the way the engines sang on the climb up Fortune Green Road. I didn't really like them at first; they were strange and altogether too smooth looking.

The 28 saw a variety of RTs in the years up to 1949. There were a few of the original ones, two of which I noticed had been fitted with shallow hopper-style ventilators to the front windows and quarter-drops at the sides, in the style which was later adopted for the RFs and RMs. The HLWs and HLXs were distinguished by funny little route numbers, with the figures placed one above the other on the lower deck, beside the kerb, and, again, those useless roof boxes, at the front only this time. The 28 also saw some of that peculiar looking variation on the RT, the Craven-bodied series.

The Hampstead Heath buses changed too, about this time, the single deck LTs having been replaced by buses which must have been TDs. The summer of (I think) 1948 brought a different (non-London) buses to Golders Green, of a type which I had seen in Brighton and Southend: these were Bristols which had been drafted in to cover a temporary shortage. The LTs, which had been kept far longer than they were ever intended to last, must have given up the ghost before replacements were ready.

At the end of 1949, we moved from West Hampstead to Gospel Oak and hunting grounds new.

PHOTOGALLERY



An impressive row of RFs assemble outside the museum, ready for the run to Kingston on 31/10/93.



It's just like the old days at Kingston Bus Station thanks to the help of Westlink. There will be similar scenes on March 27th.



Pam West, wife of Roger (RF486), will be manning (womanning?) the publicity stand on Open Day. She is seen here in green-fingered mode at last years clear-up weekend.



Pictured at work on your editors RF is Bill Cottrell. 'Hmm. I seem to have a few pieces left over!'



'Don't mess with me 'cause I'm the judge'. Stalwart member, pull-over collector and marshall extraordinaire Jeff Stoute will be lining 'em up with his team at Apps Court on Open Day. Seen here with his judging hat on at Egham Rally.



John Bedford and Bill Cottrell are seen reassembling TD95s new engine. The Cobham flagship will be back on the road very soon.

LONDON TRANSPORT BUSES FOR SALE

MODERN AND OLD

4mm scale models

The following models are to exhibition standard built from white metal kits such as Pirate Models, ABS Streetscene, Garrick Leisure Consultants, etc.

They are solder assembled, primed, have precision detail on the liveries and finally finished in lacquer for crisp detail as well as protection for the transfers applied.

The models for sale are as follows:-

MCW METROBUS MKS I AND II; LEYLAND TITAN; DMS; OLYMPIANS; LEYLAND NATIONALS; LEYLAND LYNX; VOLVO CITYBUS (Alexander R type)

Leaside; London Northern; Centrewest; Harrow Buses; Capital Citybus; Grey Green; etc

Prices between £49 and £84 each

AEC ROUTEMASTERS

RM; RML; RMC; RCL types between £52 and £87 each

TROLLEYBUSES PRE WAR AND Q TYPES

London Transport £76 each

VARIOUS LONDON RTs

Including roofbox and Green Line versions £62 to £84 each

LONDON RLHs and RFs

Central and Country versions
£58 each

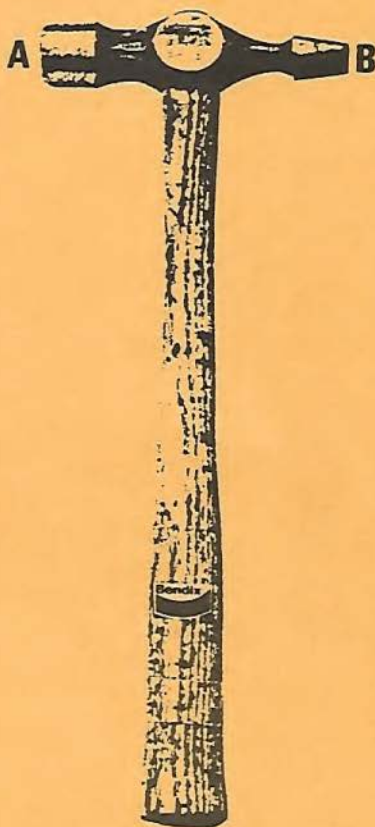
In addition, there are built kits of London Underground 1938 surface and tube stock in red livery with brown or grey roof - £40-£65. I also make models assembled in finished in primer

Models can also be made to special order.

For further details, please enquire to:-

Raja Kalsy ■ Boleyn Way New Barnet Herts EN5 5LH
or at Cobham Bus Museum (preferably Sundays)

Universal Service Tool for Air Brake Equipment



INTRODUCTION

Recent legislation has made air brake systems more and more complicated. Pipe work is constantly referred to as a "plumber's nightmare" and in our experience, maintenance personnel are often unaware of the function of many air valves. Diagnosis of faults in air brake systems has been covered by our publication "An Introduction to Air Brakes", but on reflection, we feel that the actual maintenance and repair of air valves has been neglected. To overcome this, Bendix Limited is proud to introduce the Universal Service Tool.

CONSTRUCTION

The Tool consists of two elements: a special grip fashioned from carefully selected hickory, and the dual-purpose working surfaces, forged from best English steel.

OPERATION

The tool works on the long-established principle of vibratory and percussive persuasion. The large surface area (A) is designed for major overhauls, and the smaller surface area (B) for routine maintenance. The selected surface is applied with a rapid downward movement to the offending valve. The resultant impact is directly proportional to the force exerted. With practice, the operative can quickly learn the required amount of effort, but instructional literature will be made available if required.

ISSUED BY BENDIX LIMITED SALES PROMOTION DIVISION

Note: the above equipment is apparently recommended by Holloway Garage !