

# COBHAM BUS MUSEUM

## MAGAZINE



# THE LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST

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TELEPHONE CALLS. The large number of telephone calls being received by some committee members is causing excessive disruption at home, especially during the late evening. For the future, telephone messages for committee members - except the magazine editor - should be channeled through Bill Cottrell (see number above), who will pass them on to the appropriate person. Your co-operation in this will be appreciated.

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Please send all magazine contributions and advertisements to the Editor. Views expressed in 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. All contributions are welcomed.

### FRONT COVER

Looking pleased with their purchase, Ian Barrett and Graham Ruddock are pictured with 'Scooter' LT1059

### REAR COVER

An immaculate RM254 is seen at North Weald in 1992

## EDITORIAL

One wonders what the future holds for our hobby? My concerns have recently been fuelled by the comments of two others who are obviously thinking along the same lines as me. On his last visit to Cobham, Stephen Morris (Editor of 'Buses'), predicted harder times ahead as both the bus and rail scenes become more anonymous. What if a new generation of enthusiasts fails to emerge? For the Ian Allen group, which remains the lynchpin in transport publishing, it must be quite worrying. Then, in the June/July issue of 'Classic Bus', Brian Dyes suggests that perhaps 90% of today's preserved buses will eventually be scrapped. Thus, only twelve of the estimated 120 RFs in preservation is destined to survive long term. Food for thought.

Of course, the reasons are obvious. In the heyday of the RT and RE, the bus played a vital role in the community, and such was the character of the vehicles, there was a strong feeling of pride and fondness displayed by operating staff and passengers alike, and this fostered the level of craving for nostalgia that has resulted in the current situation where more than 5000 buses are thought to be in preservation in Great Britain alone.

But what of the future? Where are those to replace the bulk of today's preservationists, many of whom are reaching an age where a hobby such as this becomes increasingly difficult to pursue. At 34, I am perhaps from the last generation to remember real buses. And despite the Trust's growth, I still seem to be one of the youngest members. Sadly, I don't think there will be a new generation. Let's face it, the bus of today is hardly regarded as a pillar of the community, more like that of poor man's transport. Years of uncertainty have created a public image of muddled services, dirty vehicles and general unreliability. And whilst we may at times admire the technical aspect of modern vehicles, who's going to want to preserve vehicles which are faceless and without character, not to mention being so sophisticated that even the operators can't keep them running, let alone preservationists!

Sorry if this makes for depressing reading, but there could be a positive effect from such a situation. We could find that increased demand for older, simpler vehicles occurs as something of a backlash. Who would have thought that there would now be more than 100 Bristol REs

in preservation? And I seriously believe that it won't be long before the last generation of real single deckers, the infamous Leyland National, enters preservation in numbers. Like most Leyland products of that era, it was perhaps rush-released and as such was slightly underdeveloped. But it is generally accepted that underneath, there was always a good vehicle fighting to get out, and time has proved the point. I saw an L-registered example the other day on the 218. With at least 21 years service under its belt, it still looked remarkably fresh. Yet how many believed that a LeyNat would be good for many more than a dozen years of service? I certainly didn't, and remember, they haven't been rebuilt at Aldenham every five years.

But I digress. We must all consider the future and do our utmost to ensure that our vehicles stand a good chance of survival for future generations to enjoy. It's a sad fact that many so-called preserved buses are actually dormant and deteriorating, no doubt rescued with all good intentions, but in reality a far bigger project than the owner anticipated. To quote the words of Brian Dyes: "Private preservation is only ever temporary preservation, dependent on the whim, good fortune and life expectancy of the owner. At best, a superb restoration is achieved, at worst, it is simply 'playing at buses'. In either case, all preservation projects will eventually be sold, for continued preservation or scrap." Sad, but true. If your bus is in the 'dormant but deteriorating' category, why not give it a real chance of survival by making it available to someone who can do something with it? Too many significant vehicles have already been lost due to lack of interest by once active owners who stubbornly refuse to sell. As Trust members, we each have a duty to the future success of the movement, a movement which, without our combined efforts, may become more precarious than we could believe possible.

I'll conclude on a bright note. We have enjoyed another significant period of progress which began with a highly successful Open Day. There has since been much attention paid to the grounds and interior of the building, and several vehicle projects are moving along nicely. On top of all this, membership is now at an all-time high, due largely to the substantial amount of publicity I have managed to gain for the Trust. Publicity is one of several aspects which I keep having to get involved with in the absence of initiative from others. We also need to make more progress with our sales shop at the museum and a publicity/sales stand at certain other venues, whilst our display cabinets should have been

freshened up long ago. I gather that Pam West and Jo Lister have decided to sort out the latter very soon.

With the new committee in position, we can look forward to even greater progress over the next twelve months and hopefully some very good news for members before much longer. As you will have noted by now, your editor is a man who likes to get results, but you will also have detected some of my frustrations about our current dilemma in certain comments within the last issue. I would remind committee members that the easy part was to stand for election. Now comes the hard work! The workload will increase as the Trust continues to grow and you must share the load equally and lead rather than be led. Initiative is the key word at this crucial stage in Cobham's history. To members, I appeal that some more of you come forward to assist with certain responsibilities, thereby taking some of the pressure off the committee, and particularly the Chairman. If you think you can help in some way, then let us know. But please don't get our hopes up and do a vanishing act, as has happened in certain cases recently.

I do hope you all enjoy this issue, especially the many members who have returned to the fold having previously long since 'given up' Cobham as a lost cause. I'm particularly pleased with the mix of material which I feel helps to make it the best one yet. So please keep on writing. I'm already looking forward to issue number six!

Mike Nash

## ARCHIVIST TO THE TRUST

It is with great pleasure, we announce that Mr Alan Bond has assumed this role. With Alan's great knowledge and extensive records, those wishing to seek further details about the history of their vehicle are invited to contact Alan on 0753-642497. RTs and RFs a speciality!

Alan has agreed to provide this service in return for small donations towards the Clubhouse fund. He can provide a print-out of history for most vehicles and is prepared to research into those which are not already on his records.

So please don't be afraid to contact him. Alan's enthusiasm, extensive knowledge and many anecdotes always make him enjoyable listening. More from him in the next issue!

Mike Nash

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Annual General Meeting held in London on 14th May was probably the most crucial and significant in the history of the Trust. For the first time, members were given a detailed explanation about the ownership of the principal assets and how the deadlock that has existed since 1987 is delaying their recovery.

Trust member David Morgan – who is also the Solicitor to the Trust, made a statement in which he highlighted the lack of response from the directors of the London Bus Preservation Group Ltd in answering even basic questions over a considerable period of time as being the reason for delays in reaching a settlement.

The new Memorandum and Articles drawn up by Mr Morgan were submitted to the Charity Commission on 29 January 1994. They had apparently been approved in principle (see AGM minutes included with this newsletter), subject to minor amendments in the wording. However, a long standing objection by the Directors of the LBPG Ltd in respect of other matters was resulting in further delays, although neither the Chairman or Committee of the Trust had been told of the nature of the objections. David Morgan also told members that at his suggestion, the Trust Chairman, Peter Plummer, had applied to three of the four directors of the LBPG Ltd for an application form to enable him to become a member of that company (which apparently held the assets). In this, your Chairman had received a negative response on all three occasions. David also read to the meeting letters he had received concerning spare parts and other materials which had been removed from the building. These letters reflected a lack of proper concern for the property of the Trust by directors of LBPG Ltd.

Finally, David delivered an unequivocal and final warning that the situation had reached crisis point. He said that unless he received a positive response from the Directors of LBPG Ltd very quickly, he would be advising the Trust committee to instigate legal proceedings. This could result in action through the criminal and civil courts against the Directors.

I would like to emphasise that not a single member at the meeting questioned the need for the action being taken by the Trust committee on the advice of the solicitor, to get the current dispute resolved.

Moving on from this, there was discussion on the letter which had been circulated by an ordinary member. This maligned the Chairman and Newsletter editor, amongst others. There appeared to be little support for the contradictory views expressed by the author, David Pring, and the view of the meeting was that the best course of action was to disregard it.

In retrospect, the AGM of 14 May will be remembered as a watershed meeting interjected with moments of humour, but the seriousness of the statements made by David Morgan reflected itself in the faces of those who listened from the floor.

On a different topic, another member highlighted the need for improved forward planning with published targets and regular monitoring being carried out to check that these targets were being met. Whilst I can appreciate the good intentions behind this, I can foresee dangers in trying to apply these principles to the running of a voluntary organisation if it is not approached in a sensitive manner. Whereas most 'resident' members recognise that they have a duty to support (and not hinder) the development of the Trust, this support may be given in a variety of ways, from the ultimate commitment of time and voluntary labour to the varying degrees of promotional type work. It is anyone's guess what percentage of members will contribute and in which fields. My own experience of preservation with organisations since 1967 is tempered by the knowledge that targets are rarely met, not because of the inability of the management committee to identify its priorities but because of the imponderables which arise. There is a danger that ultimately, the committee will feel chained like a 'mouse and wheel' to the published targets and will feel obliged to work even harder to ensure they are met.

Already, some members of your new committee have worked exceptionally long hours at home and at the museum to get Cobham's rebirth established. Since February 1993, this has resulted in a colossal disruption to their working day – and must be reconciled at some stage. Let's not forget that your committee members have their own buses to maintain and have to extract some fun from the association they have with the Trust.

We can, however, continue to use manpower and the monies available to our best advantage and the setting up of a management structure still needs to be fine-tuned.

On a less serious note, I am pleased to record that work has now commenced on the mechanical overhaul of STL2377 (with coachwork rectification to be undertaken later). RT2775 is receiving rear-riser renewal.

Lastly, it is praiseworthy that several members had their vehicles included in the 1994 HCVS London to Brighton run; these were RT3496, RTL1163, XF1 and the Albion coach belonging to A D Hurley.

Your chairman would be pleased to receive members views on the matters discussed in this report.

Peter Plummer

## PHOTO CAPTION COMPETITION

Can you put a caption to this photograph?

Pictured in the depths of Kingston Garage are members John Hinson and Jim Andress enjoying a special trip organised by SLUG, the Society for Lunatics and Unbalanced Gricers.



Please write in with a suitable caption to the Editor. The best replies will receive a bag of Cobham goodies. (no, not the Chairman's kippers!)

## A DAY AT THE AUCTIONS!

Mike Nash

Many members will have been aware of an auction held at Godwell Farm, Offham, Kent on 19th March in which, amongst other items, a selection of interesting buses were up for grabs, principally as a result of preservationist David Jenner's decision to reduce the size of his collection. The most notable lots were that of LT1059 and LT1076, the only known survivors of the once numerous, and very well liked class referred to as 'Scooters'.

And so it was that Graham Ruddock, Ian Barrett and myself headed off to Kent, Graham's mission being to come away the proud owner of one of the above, even though it was expected that there would be no shortage of bidders and that each LT might fetch up to £6000.

A cold, but bright day allowed ample opportunity to examine each entry in detail and made for some superb photographs. I must say that I was shocked to see what little was left of each Scooter; these were serious projects indeed! They were to be sold towards the end of the sale so we had to endure the sale (or non-sale!) of some ninety lots, mostly comprising bits of engines and obscure agricultural implements.

Now, I'm a veteran of car auctions and as such am used to auctioneers who give clear descriptions so as not to be subsequently accused of misdescription. Not so here! Once the sale got under way the auctioneer, who had previously displayed an educated and entirely comprehensible accent, lapsed into a barely decipherable series of grunts and groans, which greatly amused most present. This was true English eccentricity, I thought, and greatly added to the mystique of the occasion. But the confusion it caused may also have contributed to most items not selling!

I must admit that much of what did sell looked very good value and I was particularly taken by a '3-wheeled motorised garden barrow'! It fetched just £22 and with a bit of a tune-up could prove lethal in the wrong hands, ie Simon Douglas Lane! As we progressed towards the Scooters, Graham Ruddock was noted becoming increasingly agitated, pacing up and down and chewing his nails, biro, notepad and anything else which came to hand! Lot 96, a pretty little ex-Maidstone and District Albion Nimbus needing considerable renovation and the (non-fitted) engine rebuilt, reached a reasonable £675. Lot 97 was a better known vehicle, also ex-M and D, a 1946 Regal III open top (HKL 819), fully

restored but without glass, and as seen at several rallies last season. This fetched £4700.

And so to lot 98, the first Scooter, LT1059 (GO 5170), and reckoned by Ian to be the better buy due to the quantity of spares which it came with. Surprisingly, Graham found that he was only up against one other bidder, that of the LT Museum at Covent Garden, so when bidding stopped at £2000 he almost jumped for joy! And so ended the easy part of what is estimated to be at least a ten year project.

We had all feared that both Scooters might go to the same home, whereby one would be broken to save the other, which would have been illogical due to both being in a similar state. Happily, LT1076 (GO 5187) was secured by the LT Museum for just £1,200, which had already put £60,000 aside for the project. Thus, this will be the first to be completed, but careful liaison can of course benefit the progress with LT1059. Ultimately we can hope that both vehicles meet up on the road again, though probably in the next century.

Elsewhere, lots 100 and 101 comprised a very poorly CR16 (another mammoth project) and a CR rolling chassis. Neither sold on the day but have since passed to another Trust member. (more details please?)

John Bedford who was also present, was restrained from bidding on a 1949 AEC Regent III (HER 27) with attractive Weymann bodywork. This looked to be a fairly easy restoration project but failed to sell. It was subsequently spotted six weeks later going through ADT Blackbushe 'Bus and Coach' auction, where I gather it did find a home.

All in all, then, a most interesting day. In view of his technical abilities, Ian 'if it moves I'll buy it' Barrett became a partner in LT1059, and it is perhaps particularly fitting that two Trust members should buy this example as, way back in 1970, Bill Cottrell and Dave Hurley were amongst the team that exhumed LT1059 (as a runner) from darkest Teignmouth, where it had been used as a bicycle store for holidaying cyclists. But that's another story!

Graham and Ian will no doubt keep members posted as to their progress, needless to say that anyone who can in any way help with the project is invited to contact them, And before you ask, LT1059 was *not* driven to its new Dorking home on my trade plates!

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM MARK S BAKER

I was presumably one of a number of members who unexpectedly received a letter circulated by David Pring. Although I have replied personally to the gentleman, I am sufficiently concerned by his apparent misuse of the membership list, that I feel justified writing via the newsletter.

Due to overseas business commitments, I am a fairly infrequent visitor to the museum. However, with my last few visits I have noticed an acceleration in progress and a much friendlier atmosphere, which is pleasing. Like most intelligent members, it has not been difficult for me to realise that we have a chairman, committee and editor who are entirely devoted to returning the Trust to health, and as such they are performing their duties well.

I therefore take offence at Mr Pring's comments and object to receiving a letter which not only failed to make any reasonable sense, but which also dismissed the efforts of the officers concerned since the EGM. In my view, this letter deliberately abused the aims and objections of providing a membership list, and reflects the sort of attitude which I hoped we had all seen the last of. May I suggest that the committee take the necessary action with this member so as to prevent a future recurrence of this type.

At least it has given me the opportunity to voice my full support for our chairman and indeed the editor.

Editor's note: It had been my intention to circulate to members my reply to David Pring's letter, in which I refuted his allegations and requested an apology. However, Mr Baker's letter echoes the comments of many members who I have since spoken to, so I'll leave you to draw your own conclusions. Meanwhile, David and I have amicably agreed to differ. Suffice to say that I remain committed to the Trust and to providing you with a lively magazine – MN

FROM PETER STARKS

Having just read Ian Barrett's article 'Barretts Bus Buying Guide', I wonder if he took his own advice before getting involved with Graham Rud-dock and LT1059!

Anyway, best of luck with the project. I know that they will welcome every bit of help in restoring the bus to its rightful place on the roads of London. Target date: London Buses Rally, 2004.

Finally, did anyone see the front cover of March's issue of 'Vintage Commercial Vehicle', where RF518 was seen in full colour. Had I known, we could have gained some very useful publicity.

*Speedwell Way, Wimblesbury Park, Horsham, RH12 5WA*

Ed: I certainly did and had a letter printed in May's issue congratulating Alan M Townsin on his RF feature whilst also giving Cobham a plug. At least one additional member was gained as a result!

FROM SIMON KAYE

I have been following the fortunes of the Trust with interest and have noted the comments made by yourself, the Chairman and your correspondents in the newsletter. Perhaps I might be permitted to add something to the debate.

As a long standing member, I believe that the reason that the 'great divide' exists now is because it always has. Twenty years ago, the hierarchy on the Group committee ruled the roost at Cobham and had total control of the Group-owned vehicles. Non-resident members (and remember, we were all vehicle owners then) were allowed to pay their subscriptions, buy their spares and then go away. Only in recent times have I been made to feel welcome when visiting Cobham, a sure sign that things are changing for the better.

In his recent letter, Jeff Stoute draws a comparison with Crich and envisages a 'Disneyland of Buses' at Cobham. It occurs to me that Cobham is more akin to Eurodisney – run locally by a group of enthusiastic and optimistic people using assets 'owned' by a second group who are remote from the site and speak a different language.

On the subject of assets, it should be remembered that the building and vehicles were bought by the Group as a whole, for the Group as a whole, and not just for the benefit of those who were on the committee at the time. The legal changes to the constitution of the Group were made in order to safeguard the future of its assets, and the present situation whereby these assets are owned by a holding company (LPBG Ltd) is simply a side effect of the necessary legal process. The problem is that even after several years, the directors still appear unwilling to complete the process. I can see only two possible reasons for this, the

most likely being a severe case of 'sour grapes' by those who failed to be re-elected to the Trust committee. The other, more serious reason is that these people look to the assets as being their pensions, and are therefore unwilling to relinquish them. If I remember correctly, the chief aim of the LBPG was 'to bring together all owners of ex-LT vehicles for their mutual benefit'. As some of the directors were among the very people who drafted that aim, perhaps the time has come for them to consider whether their present custody of the asset is benefiting anybody but themselves.

While there has been much correspondence in recent newsletters about the Trust's aims and its assets, it is notable that we have yet to read anything from the directors, supporting their actions. I therefore ask that they prepare, jointly or severally, and submit to the newsletter editor, a statement of their intentions regarding the assets. Please tell us, the members, in plain English:-

- 1 *Whether you intend the assets to be transferred to the Trust,*
- 2 *If so, why, after so much time you are apparently delaying this, and*
- 3 *What efforts you are making to bring about a satisfactory conclusion to this matter.*

I hope that the directors will use this opportunity to reassure us that everything is above board. It would be a shame if failure to respond was misconstrued by the rank and file membership.

Best wishes.

*Queen Anne's Place, Bush Hill Park, Enfield, Mddx EN1 2PT*

FROM STEVE HEMMINGS

I was somewhat delighted that I attended the AGM on 14th May, because having paid my £10 to join the LBPT, I was somewhat confused to find that I had joined a society that was in the middle of great problems, to say the least. The newsletters were full of the problems rather than news on Cobham and buses, and I must confess to wondering just what I had joined and found myself involved in. Doubtless many new members feel the same as me.

However, having attended the AGM everything became clear, and the new committee has my 100% support, it is now obvious from the newsletters and the first class guide book that the new committee is getting its act together where others failed miserably for many years.

I was also impressed with 'our' solicitor who will certainly make things happen sooner rather than later for the good of the Trust and its future.

Good luck and keep going safe in the knowledge that 95% of us are giving full support and are right behind the committee and its decisions.

*Downside Gardens, Potton, Sandy, Beds SG19 2RE*

FROM JOHN A S HAMBLEY

I must write and say how nice it was to hear from you and to learn that Cobham Bus Museum is now 'under new management', so to speak.

Every year I visit the museum as a sales person on the PSV Circle stall, which thankfully, as we are regulars, is situated in the dry of the building. And it's always amazed me and many others I have spoken to, how each 12 months pass, yet the same vehicles were parked in the same spot, not having changed much except for a further layer of dust having accumulated, which is such a pity. When you compare Cobham to, say, Carlton Colville or nearly any other museum looking after buses, coaches, trolleybuses or trams, it seems such as shame.

I do hope sincerely that we shall see changes now. Over the past six months or so I have heard various rumours that something was happening down at Cobham and your letter confirms this. Congratulations on your 'get up and go attitude'. As a believer in this, I've decided to join. So good luck to everyone involved - let's see something move, with a rethink on all aspects of the museum.

I'm glad you enjoy my books. The next one is 1954, due out August/September, with a wartime one to follow. Do any members have prints available for the period 1933-1948, or 1954 onwards? I'd love to hear from you. And if preservationists can pass on a black and white print, relevant to the years to be covered, your bus or coach could soon be seen all over the world! I myself supply to enthusiasts and historians in ten overseas areas, goodness knows where they go from there.

I'm really pleased that at long last we are seeing Cobham on the move again. For me, it's always been the home of the London bus (mobile) as against the LT Museum (static) and I wish everyone involved the best of luck.

*Linden Road, Dunstable, Beds LU5 4NZ (0582 607587)*

NB Help John out and you'll get a credit for Cobham in his future books!

MN



FROM STUART ADDISON (owner of RT4138)

Having just completed my, perhaps, 20th Cobham Open Day, I feel I would like to pass on some observations in general. In the early Cobham Open Days we were encouraged to use our own vehicles for the bus service to and from Weybridge-Cobham Bus Museum as it was then. I found this quite rewarding (not from the financial side). The fact that the Group provided most of the buses created a sense of an active bus museum, rather than buses standing in rows or dumped outside to enable stallholders to sell their wares. Now I realise that with all the restrictions of MoT and insurance, etc, this has become more difficult to accomplish.

Being at the gate with Colin Wickens, as he and I have done for some years, I was asked that particular question: why aren't we using more London buses from Cobham? After all, it is a London Bus gathering. This year, the open staircase ST stood looking forlorn in the rain, with hordes of kids climbing all over it. Surely this vehicle could have been used, if only for a short time.

Another comment as regards manning the gate on Open Day: I approached a so-called member for his admission ticket, only to be given a sneering grin followed by a comment 'you should know me' and he walked on, making me feel a right pratt (for want of a better word). Are these so-called members exempt from paying – was he a member at all? Perhaps some identification could be used, a batch, or something?

Lastly, stall holders. I have verbal abuse from one or two about setting up, complaining about buses being in their way. I notice now that some set up the night before, leaving all their wares to be the responsibility of the two or three of us who sleep in the museum overnight. Is that right?

In my opinion, stall holders should not be allowed on site until the day of the gathering, and then not before a certain time, thus allowing the safe movement of buses parked overnight.

All in all, despite these grumblings, I still enjoy the Open Days, but it would be nice for helpers to get some time off to see what goes on at Apps Court, also to rest their feet for a couple of hours after a seven-hour stint.

*Rectory Court, Rectory Gardens, Swalecliffe, Whitstable, Kent*

Bill Cottrell replies: Thank you for the constructive points raised in your letter. As you know, we are unable to use the Trust designated buses on

Open Day due to the regulations (and our adherence to them) being tightened up in recent years. To comply, we now register the bus service and use only PSVs on it. We should therefore be grateful to those private individuals in the preservation movement who go to the trouble and expense of maintaining their buses to the appropriate standard, and allow their use on special services.

Many of the vehicles at Cobham could pass a class VI (PSV) test with very little extra effort. However, the cost of tax for a double decker would be £300 as against £100, but, more particularly, the cost of insurance would be prohibitive. One day, we may get to a situation where all the buses are restored and money is available to subsidise them to reach this goal. It may not be unreasonable to strive for this for a small number of the buses. Perhaps the members would like to respond to this possibility?

I am sorry that a member was rude to you while you were doing your duty at the gate. If the member involved reads this, perhaps he would consider volunteering to do a few hours next year on the gate to enable stalwarts such as yourself to enjoy the other aspects of Open Day, or even put your feet up for a couple of hours. Members do not have an automatic right to free access on Open Day, unless they are helping or have helped the previous day. In either case, they should be furnished with a complimentary ticket to avoid confrontation.

On the subject of stallholders: it does lessen congestion on Sunday morning to allow, especially the larger stalls, to be set up on Saturday evening. The fact that we are still moving buses around when they arrive, and worse, that buses are being moved on Sunday morning as the stallholders are trying to set up, is yet another area requiring improvement next year. Stalls left unattended on Saturday night are not your responsibility. I am sure the gates are locked in the short time you retire to your sleeping bag, so there is minimal risk to any unattended property.

FROM P R MUNDY

I thought I would send a brief note to thank Mssrs Bedford, Cottrell and Plummer for their courtesy and time in making the brief visit by my wife and myself to the Museum on 27 April so enjoyable. Although it will not be possible to give much time to the project in physical terms, I will do all I can to support it in other ways.

*Anton Way, Aylesbury, Bucks*

## END OF THE (SCRAP) LINE

Bill Cottrell

The news that Wombwell Diesels wound up during March, due to the ill health of the proprietor, brought to mind a few memories gained in the early days of the LBPG. Frequently, after a day's work, we would make the overnight trek north to Wombwell. Initially, the trip would be by van, but the best memories come from the times we used the Towbus 332W, to the graveyard of so many RTs, RFs and a few RLHs. It was not uncommon to find RTs being scrapped with brand new overhauled parts on them. Garages were doing re-certs at the time, and the system was to start at the front, renewing radiator, engine and springs, and work back replacing most of the mechanical components, then, when all the mechanical work was complete, it would be inspected and then not uncommonly condemned due to riser rot. The bus would then be sent to Stonebridge garage, for collection by the scrap man. Sometimes the bus would just languish in the corner of the garage until the day of judgement. When the scrap man arrived, inevitably the batteries would be flat and a new set requisitioned just to get the bus to the scrapyards! When we arrived early on a Saturday morning we would check the date plates affixed to every unit and choose the new parts, all at scrap prices.

To a soft southerner such as myself, to see men working out in all weathers, perched precariously as they hacked aluminium panels off the carcasses of RTs was an eye-opener. The yard worked like a production line in reverse. A complete bus would arrive and most of the fuel would be drained out. Then the external panels would be removed. Then the bus would be started for the last time and the batteries removed. It was driven down to its final resting place. A crane then tipped the shell of the bus over. The chassis was cut from the body and dragged clear. When three or four bodies were piled together, they would be cremated, along with any surplus seats. The twisted remains were then loaded onto trucks and despatched to the Welsh steel works. The chassis were cut up, with some units scrapped and some kept for resale.

I remember they found scrapping RF bodies very labour intensive, as in their words, 'they were too well built'.

The best deals were struck after midday, when the foreman had retired to the pub. Spares could be bartered for old LT uniforms and jumpers at a very favourable exchange rate.



A 'lightweight' RT3096 makes its last ever journey at Wombwell



RT3096 later in the day receives attention from the crane



One of the yard's 'pets' contemplates dinner, whilst a forlorn RF149 is amongst those awaiting their fate in the background



No fewer than five ex-country area RFs await the scrapman's torch. All would have been driven up to the Yorkshire site. RFs 631 and 682 are amongst those identifiable

Going to the office was a test of nerve with guard dogs tethered to their kennels on long chains on either side of the walkway. The chains were just short enough to leave a three foot path between the snarling muzzles. One dog in particular had the unnerving habit of laying in wait by his kennel and then running at you at taking a mighty lunge – I am certain the kennel moved a fraction every time, gradually closing the gap. In the 60s and 70s, 'Wombwells' was part of the enthusiasts' vocabulary, not many of them realising this was the name of a Yorkshire village, and not making the pilgrimage north to visit there. For those who never went, the following photographs show the desolation of the place.

## FOR SALE

RT54 (FXT 229): Pre-war 2RT2 body (1939) in wartime livery. Mechanically good but no MOT. Body needs attention. £3500 ono.

Chris Nadin 0904 198

RF515 (MLL 933) 1952 OMO Central Area version. Full class 6 ticket to 7/94. Ready for work or preservation. £3500 ono.

John Beagley 0252 358 (Hants)

## WANTED

Green RT/RTL radiator badges. Pre-decimal fare chart – route 250. 'NS' garage stencils. 'Max speed 30 mph' transfer.

Colin Elsdon 05242 81 (Lancs)

1990 Cobham Bus Museum 'EFE' model red RT. Two required.

Derek Stead 081 394 92

## THE BRISTOL BUS: PART I

Alan Bond

No, your editor is not trying to turn your magazine into a pornographic publication. In point of fact he has asked me to write about some of the types of vehicle I have driven down the years and, as I have more experience of the above make than any other, I thought that would be the type to start with.

London Transport is well known for not patronising the Bristol/ECW combination. Their reasons for so doing always appeared to be sound, and with hindsight, they were very sensible not to do so. Having started out driving RTs at Edgware, I, in my naivety, thought that there might be a better way of doing things, but, in the fullness of time, I was proved wrong. It is true to say that London busmen for the most part did not appreciate how well off they were as regards the vehicles they had to operate, and, by the same token, provincial busmen, not knowing any better, thought that their Bristols were the last word in modern transport. Many a driver who transferred from one regime to the other would have had his eyes opened very quickly.

After cutting my teeth with LT, I gravitated to Bletchley in Buckinghamshire, now part of the city of Milton Keynes. In 1967, the United Counties depot there was situated in Tavistock Street, a minor thoroughfare at the back of the town centre. The garage had a capacity of eight vehicles under cover, with a small parking area at the rear which could take a further six if needed. The allocation at the time was normally Bristol FS6G, FS6B, FLF6B, LD6B, and LS5G. From time to time, as the need arose, we operated KS5G, KS6B, KSW6B, LWL5G, LWL6B, LL6B and LS6B and the occasional LD5G from Luton. Later on we had a permanent allocation of more modern Bristols of MW6G, RELL6LX, LH6L and VRTSL6LX types, of which more later.

### K, KS and KSW TYPES

All the earlier double deck types had four speed constant mesh gearboxes and my first acquaintance with this was on the training vehicle, a K5G numbered 810 (ERP620). After the RT, this came as a big shock. In the first place I had become used to the capability of the RT to idle with a gear engaged and one of my first actions was to stall the bus because I forgot to depress the clutch pedal when stopping. This vehicle most defi-

nately had hidden power, because I couldn't find it and I don't think anyone else could either. The top speed was 32 mph downhill with a following wind. With this we travelled to Northampton each day and after five days of this Chinese torture the examiner upgraded my licence and I was deemed proficient to drive this wondrous steed. The noise and vibration from the 5LW engine when flat out had to be experienced to be believed, and, if that were not enough, it seemed that every window around the cab was vibrating at a different frequency. Performance downhill could be described as steady rather than meteoric, but that didn't stop my instructors, a veteran of 22 summers, from complaining that I was going TOO FAST. Bad enough this may have been, but in the direction of up, the performance could only be described as pedestrian and always led to a progressive and rapid series of downward gear changes. That said, the gearbox was not too much trouble to master, the straightforward H-configuration making the gears easy to find. With a little patience, the gears could be mastered in no time at all and, provided the road was fairly level, could make for quite a pleasant drive. For myself, I would have preferred a Gardner 6LXB with pump set to 1800 rpm and I have often wondered if one of these would fit into a Bristol K. Certainly the 5LW, with its 7 litre capacity and maximum power of 85 bhp at 1700 rpm was inadequate even by the standards of 1950. It was acceptable as a wartime substitute in times of shortage and its continued use in 1967 was fairly modern buses was a disgrace.

UCOC did not at any time possess even one K with the 6LW engine, whose 8.4 litre capacity and 112 bhp would have been much more appropriate. In point of fact very few K6Gs were produced and they were confined to just two municipal operators, namely Merthyr Tydfil and Pontypridd, so the company busmen had to manage with the next best thing in the form of the 6 cylinder Bristol engine. This was an 8.1 litre unit of 100 bhp at 1800 rpm and it certainly perked up the performance of the K type; a good K6B is quite a lively machine for its time, though still much inferior to the RT. The best of the Ks was undoubtedly the K6A with the 7.7 AEC engine and I had the opportunity to drive one of these when I used to do part time work for a friend who ran a number of contracts from a yard at Towcester station. The vehicle in question was one of the ex Maidstone and District Weymann bodied examples and the performance was as different as chalk and cheese when compared with the K5G. The power output from the AEC engine was nominally the same as the 5LW but there the resemblance ended. The AEC was much more

lively, but the revs died down much quicker, which made for faster gear changes, and the general rate of progress along the road was much faster. The difference in hill climbing was most marked and the AEC was able to hang on in a higher gear where a change down would have been necessary with a 5LW. Best of all, the K6A was smoother and quieter and seemed to make much less fuss in going about its business.

Later KS and KSW types were fitted with either the 6LW or Bristol AVW but with the extra weight of the larger vehicle the gain was negligible and the performance was far from being the improvement that was really needed. Even then, there were a large number of KS and KSW types which were fitted with the 5LW engine and the performance suffered correspondingly.

I have to say that my overall impression of the Bristol/ECW vehicle was one of cheapness and lack of thought on the part of manufacturer and operator. No K types were ever fitted with cab heater except as a very late afterthought in the twilight years of their service lives and, despite the proximity of the exhaust pipe next to the driver's site, the cabs were very cold. The driver's seat on the eight-footers was set to the right of the line of the steering column in order for the driver to be able to reach the signalling window and it was necessary to sit slightly askew in the seat, which made the day's work that much more tiring than it need have been. Very few K types were ever fitted with the much needed direction indicators which are now standard and this used to lead to problems on roads where the street lighting was inadequate or non-existent. All in all, the Bristol K was not a driver's bus in the sense that you felt a part of it. It always seemed that you were engaged in a constant battle of wits which you only won by being smarter than the vehicle. All in all I think that LT were lucky that they only had to put up with 29 of their own and a limited number on loan during the bus shortages of 1949. Any more would have led to mutiny.

A good few years later I had the pleasure of driving RT4680 on a number of rallies over a period of about three years. One of our regular trips was the Bournemouth - Bath run and it was at Bath that we met up with a maniacal Bristol enthusiast whose contempt for all things not Bristol had to be experienced to be believed. This worthy was in charge of a five-speed Bristol K5G and his first line of attack was that his fuel consumption was far better as he could do 15 mpg. When we told him we averaged about 14 mpg on a run he changed tack and insisted that

this was because we could not do more than 35 mph flat out. In point of fact we had on a few occasions had the speedometer around to the 50 mph mark and when this was made known to him he skulked off to console himself with a quick fix of Gardner exhaust fumes.

On the way home along the A4 we caught up with him quite by chance at Bathford and his fifth gear didn't seem to be helping him too much. I kept behind him at a respectful distance for a while but by the village of Box he was retarding our progress rather too much for comfort so I plonked the old girl down a gear and rubbed salt into his wounds by passing him going up Box hill. It was our habit to stop at Marlborough for refreshment at one of the excellent local hostleries and one of our non-drinking complement would then take over for the last leg back to Slough. We were busily engaged in sampling the local ales and had been thus occupied for something like 40 minutes when our friend hove into sight and, needless to say, we toasted him heartily as he passed, thus further adding to his discomfiture.

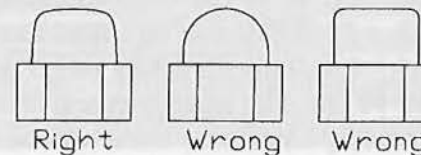
I have to say that I have the occasional hankering to have a stab at driving a Bristol K again, but I don't get any offers these days. One thing is for certain: I would hate to see them back in regular service on our local routes for, without a doubt, they are most definitely not a suitable mount for urban bus work.

Having dealt with the K and its variants, next time around we shall take a look at the single deck equivalent in the form of the Bristol L.

## HELP WANTED

TD95 requires  $6 \times \frac{1}{4}$  inch BSF Chromed Domed nuts to secure handrails. The correct pattern is shown below, together with modern patterns which are not correct. It may be possible that parts from a scrapped coach or bus sitting in your garage are just what we need.

If you think you can help, please drop a line to Peter Plummer, whose address is inside the front cover of this newsletter.





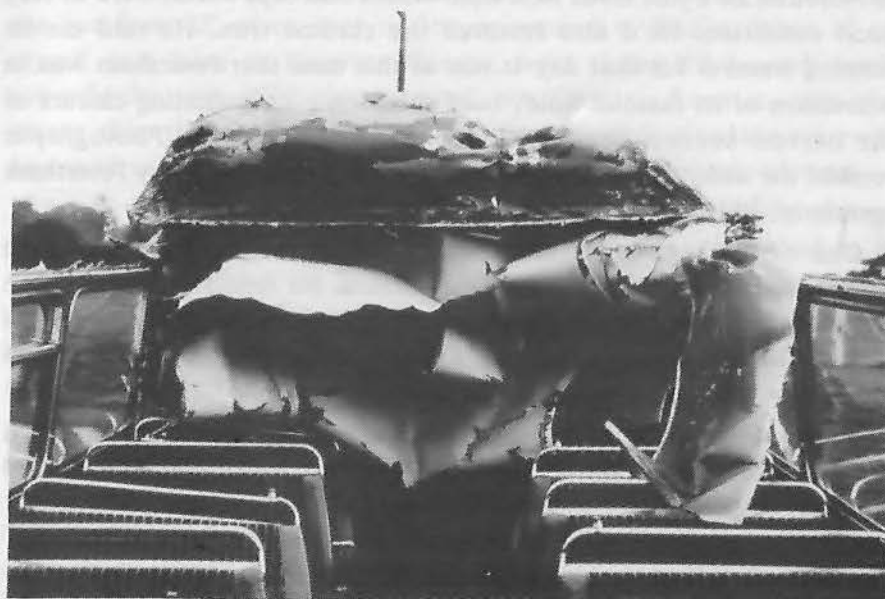
A Thames Valley LWL5G at Maidenhead bus station somewhere in the mid-fifties. Most LWLs were identical to this when new and the UCOC ones only varied in having Tilling green livery as opposed to the Tilling red of Thames Valley. Unlike the K type, all Tillings group Is had five-speed gearboxes as standard, though axle ratios and therefore maximum speed varied enormously. I know of at least seventeen different axle ratios used by Bristol Commercial Vehicles, ranging from 4.25:1 to 6.0:1. There are rumours of a 4.0:1 ratio but I have never come across one. It would probably give a 90+ top speed but not with vacuum brakes thank you very much!



A thoroughbred and two carhorses at North's yard in Leeds in 1965. From left to right, they are, an ex-Eastern National Bristol K5G taken over by UCOC in 1952, a 1948 K5G new to UCOC and a slightly earlier type to the one on which I took my Class One test. The thoroughbred is a Sheffield AEC Regent 9613A. The security guard strolls across the picture in search of marauding Lancashire mice who were stealing buses from the yard in large numbers. I am grateful to the fairies at the bottom of my garden for this last piece of information.



Boxing Day 1983, and the new engine is fitted at Kingston



Tin opener! The low bridge incident resulted in this alarming sight.

## THE ROUTEMASTER 254 STORY

Geoff Rixon

**A**s a very keen photographer, since 1947 of the steam train era and of buses, and with a spell coach fitting at Weymann's of Addlestone in the 1950s, my interests were deeply set in the transport scene. With the demise of steam from service in 1968, I put the cameras away in disgust.

In the late 70s, while meeting my two sons from school each day, my interest in the local bus scene was rekindled. I began to take an interest in the RT vehicles on the 71, from Kingston Garage and RMs on the 65, from Norbiton. The RMs seemed to me to be in extraordinarily good condition, some of them even sporting chrome wheel trims. One in particular, RM254, had been at NB since 1977.

Visiting Norbiton Garage one day I began chatting to a young mechanic who was very keen, telling me he had a preserved Country Area RF. This 'young mechanic' turned out to be Paul Morris. His enthusiasm was partly responsible for the fine condition of the Routemaster fleet at Norbiton.

One lunchtime in August 1980, Paul rang to tell me that RM254 had just emerged from Aldenham after an intermediate repaint. On its return to Norbiton he'd just fitted AEC front-wheel hub caps which were in very good condition. He'd also restored the chrome trim. He told me its running number for that day. It was at this time that Petersham was in possession of its famous 'hole', road subsidence necessitating closure of the narrow section between Kingston and Richmond. Photographs seemed the order of the day and I took them at the temporary Petersham 'terminus'. RM254 was looking immaculate!

One of my regular haunts became Fulwell Garage and I became friendly with the Day Foreman, Geoff Stoute. He regularly looked more like a medical surgeon, in his smart white smock coat. Geoff seemed a very interesting person to talk to, I even had a few trips with him – to places like Lambeth Bus Rally, on M1.

In May 1981, Fulwell Garage was planning a big Open Day, for which Geoff was mainly responsible. It was that event which first saw RM254 in full 1960s condition, with brake cooling grilles, offside route number box, cream band and gold transfers. Paul, with help from many other members of staff at Norbiton, had spent many hours getting the vehicle

ready. This was the beginning of the 'Showbus' era, when many garages gave a favourite vehicle this special treatment. At this stage I was still not 'involved' with RM254 but I travelled with it to the Southsea and Purfleet rallies that year.

The bus stayed at Norbiton until August 1982, when it was due for a full overhaul at Aldenham. Norbiton, at this time, was due to lose its RM allocation. How could 254 be returned to the area, after overhaul? The ever helpful Geoff stepped in at this point and by buttering-up the powers that be, at Aldenham, not only managed to get it transferred back to Kingston Garage, but it was outshopped with cream bands and gold transfers. It even retained the body it had carried when it left Norbiton. Once back at Kingston, with some 'older' members of LT staff who took a pride in the vehicles, the engine compartment fittings were buffed up and the fuel pipes converted from plastic to brass.

My real involvement began in May 1983, when 254 was being prepared for the North Weald rally. This was the start of an obsession. I would visit Kingston, almost daily, to give the vehicle tender loving care. In that year we took it to a number of rallies at which we were successful.

By the end of the year rumours were around of plans to withdraw the RMs from the area within twelve months. Rather than see RM254 withdrawn for scrap, a group of us began to think of trying to purchase the bus from LT, when they no longer wanted it. Half a dozen of us, myself and those at Kingston Garage, were saving £2 a week, each, towards the cost. With this in mind, the Kingston foreman, who was aware that the engine might be heading towards needing renewal, managed to locate a completely overhauled unit in Hounslow stores.

Local management at Kingston was happy that the engine change could take place during the Christmas break, but the vehicle had to be ready for service after the holiday. This meant many hours preparing for the 'event', involving the removal of the specially burnished fittings. The new engine block was cleaned and silvered as well. The change took place on Boxing Day!

January 1984 saw the imminent closure of Kingston Garage. Norbiton, having been refurbished at around £4 million, was ready for the vehicles to return, 254 included. News also reached us that the vehicle could come up for sale in August that year. It was urgent that funds be realised and I began to attend rallies, selling transport photographs and railway memorabilia, which I had gathered in the loft over a number of years.

However, one evening, Paul Morris came to me with some bad news. LT wanted the vehicle to stay in service for another 12 months. So, the rumours of RMs leaving the area were deferred as well! Fund raising continued.

With the prospect of another year in service, the engine needed to be looked after. Unlike some of the other RM vehicles, 254 'managed' to be, sometimes, allocated to spreadover duties, often just a few hours as opposed to the more normal 17 that many others suffered. This was due to a little surreptitious swapping of running number plates when the allocation staff weren't looking, with much help from the running shift. Spreadover also meant that it was more likely to be available for shows and rallies, being free at weekends.

Sometime in early 1985, the running shed foreman handed me a letter from one Michael Dryhurst. He had spotted the vehicle in service, in pristine condition, and was wondering if any plans were afoot to save the vehicle. Subsequently he joined the group which was aiming to do just that.

On a lunchtime visit to Norbiton in June 1985, I was told that the man in charge of bus sales was about and his name was Maurice Hillier. I approached him and asked when it might be possible for us to have the vehicle. Following a 2 minute phone call to the licensing department he gave us the good news that we could purchase RM254 on Friday August 3rd that year, when the 71 route was to go OPO. This came as an amazing relief. There were just four of us left in the group at this stage and funds had reached about £3000. This comfortably covered the asking price of £2150.

August 3rd saw RM254 end 25 years of service life when it entered Norbiton Garage with running number NB171, on route 71 at 6.25 pm and the blinds were removed! The following Sunday it was taken, by a member of the running shift, to Turnham Green, where the radio and other special fitments were removed. Then, on the following Wednesday, it was taken to Bus Sales at the old AEC works in Southall, where it was 'officially' purchased and then driven back to Norbiton Garage. With kind permission of John Butler, Engineering Manager of NB, K and FW, we were allowed to keep the vehicle in the back of the now empty Kingston Garage.

Now we were in the 'preservation' business work began on replacing body panels, the worst being the eight panels which carried

advertisements on the sides of the vehicle. These were available from Aldenham works at £141. To fix these panels, it was suggested that we visited Chiswick where a company called 'Allscrews' was likely to be able to obtain the stainless steel body screws to hold the body strips and panels in place. On our way to Aldenham to collect the panels, we took the bus to Chiswick, only to find no suitable screws in stock. Onwards to Aldenham, via Old Oak Lane, heading for the Edgware Road, my 14 year old son and I were the only passengers in the lower saloon, sitting on the long rear seats. My son was about to go upstairs when there was an almighty bang and tearing noise! We stepped off the bus to find the roof piled up on the back seat. Disaster!!! The driver jumped out of the cab in a state of shock and said, 'sorry!'.

There was a great feeling of panic. 'What do we do now?' We quickly had a large audience of local office staff hanging out of windows, a traffic jam behind us and tears rolling down faces. We couldn't take it back to Kingston as the roof was piled too high to get it back in the garage. We had no alternative but to go on to Aldenham, the best place to be in these circumstances, where we now needed more than just 8 new body panels! A similar audience greeted us at Aldenham, where the office staff were hanging out of windows.

The first assessment, from the expert, suggested that things weren't as bad as they looked. A repair could be effected fairly easily as none of the window uprights was damaged and only one pane of glass was broken. It was a clean 'tin opener' job just above the window frames. As luck would have it, LT had just removed the roof from RM581, along with some others, as it was being sold to a newspaper company as an open-topper. Geoff Stoute once again helped us out as he visited Aldenham to check out the condition of the available roofs. Fund raising had to start again in earnest as the cost was going to be high. A phone call to Michael Dryhurst in Spain provided some of the funds and an enthusiast with a soft spot for the RM, who lived locally in Kingston, was keen to help out. Finally, the bus received new front and rear domes and the whole operation took around two weeks to complete at a cost of £2691. It was driven very carefully back to Kingston, via a different route! Back 'home', the interior roof skin had to be replaced by us.

Preservation now began in earnest! Every evening and most weekends were spent in the back of Kingston Garage, cold, damp, and in the dark, where every panel and strip was removed and stripped of several layers



of paint, back to bare metal. Then in January 1986, in temperatures of -12C, RM254 was driven to LPC Coachworks, Green Lane, Hounslow Heath, for a quote to be given to repaint it. The work was carried out, superbly, by Peter Barton, who had worked at Park Royal Vehicles - painting Routemasters when new.

While at LPC it became clear that it couldn't return to Kingston and a home was found in Clapham Garage, previously the home of the British Transport Museum. After a couple of months all the vehicles from Clapham were moved to Norwood Garage, a shock to me as I arrived one Saturday morning to find our vehicle missing! Roof problems at Stockwell meant that Clapham was used to store some of the SW allocation. Preserved vehicles had to move out!

Through Michael Dryhurst we learned of a new film storage warehouse, close to the AEC site in Southall. When RM254 moved in, the building became known as 'The Bus Hotel', as it was environmentally controlled, with polished composition floors and good lighting. Only the bellboy was missing! The warm building proved a great blessing as we could spend the winter months restoring all of the interior of the bus, replacing all the Treadmaster flooring and rexine. Routemaster moquette from Chiswick, and matching Routemaster leather, from Connolly's of Wimbledon, was purchased at this time ready for the seats. We were at Southall for about eight months, when the 'hotel' was getting full of film and we had to move back to Norwood, where we stayed for three years.

Michael Dryhurst had been in bus preservation for some time and was keen to bring RT1 back from California, to save it being turned into a Burger Bar! In order to do this, in 1986, he sold half his share of RM254. Incidentally, in 1989, we received two serious offers to buy RM254, both in the region of £30,000. No sale!

In 1990, LT raised the prices for vehicles being stored in Norwood, exorbitantly, in my view, and 254 spent 18 months at Fulwell. The reason for leaving FW was given as Norbiton closing and the displace vehicles moving in there. So, on September 4th 1991, we moved into the old Twickenham (AB) Garage, after contact with the Routemaster Owners and Operators Association. A coachpainter had taken over the premises and had space for nine preserved vehicles. What a stroke of luck that space should be found so close to Fulwell. The coachpainting business was short-lived and the Routemaster Heritage Trust, which was formed in April 1992, leased AB from the LT Properties Board and hoped it might

provide a permanent home for a growing collection of vehicles belonging to a number of preservation groups and individuals.

Work continues to complete and maintain restoration to 1960s condition. It is rallied extensively and admired by many. Thanks to folk at Cobham we have recently obtained a Routemaster *metal* nearside front wing. Paul Morris still gives attention to the vehicle mechanics and does a fantastic job. Michael Dryhurst is living permanently in California and the cost of running and maintaining the vehicle is far from covered by sales at rallies and group subscriptions. In the past few years almost the whole of the expenses have been covered by myself, bank manager permitting!

Ironically, LT has recently sold the Twickenham site and it looks as though, temporarily, RM254 will return to Norbiton Garage for a spell. It all began in 1977 and has gone full circle!

## THE BEA ROUTEMASTER

### A SHORT HISTORY

With particular reference to BEA56/RMA13 (NMY656E)

The Routemaster first appeared in 1954, but after 12 years, and having demonstrated the model in several parts of the world, only one order outside LTE had been won (Northern General Transport). Then, in 1966, production of 65 Routemasters for British European Airways commenced. The vehicles were to replace their ageing fleet of 4RF4 1½ deck coaches on the Gloucester Road-Heathrow service, and were built to the forward entrance design first seen on the experimental RMF1254 (which was used by BEA alongside the 4RF4s for a trial period), although to the standard shorter length of 27 ft 6½ in. (By contrast, the British Overseas Airways Corporation, renewing its Victoria-Heathrow fleet at the same time, chose Leyland Atlanteans.)

The BEA Routemasters were built to a high specification, being equipped with AEC AV690 11.3 litre engines developing 175 bhp at 2,200 rpm and a high-ratio differential permitting speeds up to 65 mph along the newly opened M4. Air suspension was fitted at the rear, and interior refinements were coach heating, fluorescent lighting, luggage racks and pre-heating. Livery was blue and white with black relief, and illuminated panels carrying the BEA logo and a winged motif were carried each side.

Special dispensation was granted by the Traffic Commissioners for these vehicles to tow luggage trailers, of which 80 were built by Marshalls of Cambridge. The fleet was operated and maintained by LTE on behalf of BEA from the former tram depot in Chiswick High Road, coded CB.

The Routemasters ran uneventfully for eight years, apart from a change in the BEA corporate livery to orange and white in 1969, and associated removal of the illuminated panels. The Marshall trailers were, however, replaced in 1972 by a further 80 trailers to a slightly different design, built by Locomotors of Andover at a small factory in Mitcham. Then, following the abandonment of customs check-in facilities at Gloucester Road, the coach service was rationalised and the requirement reduced to 52 vehicles. The 13 surplus coaches, which had not received an overhaul, were acquired by LTE and pressed into service in October 1975 from North Street Garage, Romford on route 175, covering for a shortage of RTs. They were numbered RMA1-13 in order of registration, and modified for stage service by the removal of the luggage racks and provision of bell cords downstairs and buzzers upstairs. Route details were carried on a slip board in the front window and stencil holders each side. Initially, the orange and white livery was retained, with BEA motifs painted out and replaced by white LT roundels on the body sides, but gradually, the RMAs were repainted red with white relief and a canopy route-number blind box was fitted.

However, the lack of grab rails (which had previously been attached to the luggage racks) led to complaints by staff and the RMAs were withdrawn from pay service in September 1976. Three were converted for use as driving trainers by the removal of the staircase, but the remaining ten were used as staff buses.

A further reduction in the Airport service during 1976 led to the withdrawal of an additional 14 Routemasters, and in November of that year they were acquired by LTE and numbered RMA14-27.

By now, BEA had amalgamated with BOAC to become British Airways and the 52 coaches still in service at the time of the merger had been repainted in the new BA livery of blue and white, albeit to a simpler design than the original BEA livery. Completion of the Piccadilly Line extension to Heathrow eventually led to the ex-BEA service being abandoned on 31 March 1979 (the ex-BOAC service continued), and by June of that year all 65 BEA Routemasters had passed to LTE and been renumbered RMA1-65. Several were subsequently fitted with the

standard smaller AV590 9.6 litre engine and/or low ratio differential, potentially improving acceleration but reducing top speed to 40 mph. A further seven were converted to driving trainers but most found use as staff buses, of which RMA13 was by coincidence allocated to the former Chiswick BEA garage, by now transformed into LTE's Stamford Brook garage, coded V.

The majority of RMA staff buses were absorbed by the newly created LRT Bus Engineering Ltd in September 1985 and reallocated to Aldenham. During the summer of 1986 a few RMAs were repainted into the BEL dark grey livery, but RMA13 was withdrawn from staff bus duties in March 1986 and stored at Aldenham until closure of the works in November of that year. Meanwhile, in October, it had been secured for preservation and was finally purchased in December and towed to Croydon. Despite not having been used for almost a year, it started as soon as the batteries were charged.

During its year of disuse, RMA13 had been cannibalised, and mechanical restoration was carried out in the open during the hard winter. It passed its MoT at the first attempt in March 1987, and after two season's intensive use on the rally circuit and charity work, was given a very heavy mechanical overhaul by LBL at its Croydon garage. Some vandalism occurred in 1989 which effectively put the vehicle off the road for a year while the relevant parts were located. In 1991, an RM front blind box was fitted and a repaint was later carried out by JVB coachbuilders at the former Twickenham garage.

In 1992, RMA13 was one of the first residents at Twickenham when the garage was taken over by Routemaster Heritage Trust and attention has turned to refurbishment of the interior which is largely original. The owners also have a Locomotors trailer which is undergoing long term restoration.

At the time of writing it is estimated that some 20 RMAs have been recertified as PSVs with various operators, 12 are in preservation and a further 7 are in miscellaneous use as courtesy vehicles, etc. The remaining 26 have been scrapped.

John Roberts and Cliff Spooner  
Croydon, Surrey

## GETTING HOOKED

David Thrower

Attending, and very much enjoying, the 1994 Cobham Open Day brought back memories of my earliest involvement in bus preservation, particularly when prompted by the sight of G351 and STL2692, the buses that I first encountered in the vintage vehicle world. Back in 1968, I had just moved from the North-East to Norwood Junction, and my train journey to school took me past Crystal Palace station. Dotted around the spacious goods yard there, were, if I recall correctly, two pre-war RTs (one was the turnover bus from Stonebridge), a green Craven, perhaps a couple of RTs/RTWs, the freshly repainted and renovated Guy Arab G351 and a blue 'decker of unknown origins. Investigation one Spring Saturday confirmed these vehicles to be preserved – my first encounter with bus preservation by private individuals.

The blue vehicle turned out to be an ex-Grimsby-Cleethorpes Regent which, I was assured, was really a London bus (I wasn't wholly convinced – after all, hadn't London standardised on RTs since 1939? But the owners of this and the Guy made me welcome, and (a vital point, still 100% valid today), invited me to get involved, there and then, perhaps helping in cleaning and polishing the buses and joining them on the following day's trip. What trip? To Brighton! This was May 1968 and the HCVS London to Brighton run was the very next day. I'd never even heard of it, but this was an offer too good to be true, and at 7.00 sharp (or it might have been even earlier) there I was, at Crystal Palace, boarding this blue London bus that wasn't, with my lemonade, sandwiches and Brownie 44A. I was hooked!

A later move in 1969 to Richmond introduced me to Continental Pioneer, RT3496 and one of its part-time drivers, Philip ????, who was to purchase and restore it shortly afterwards. This gave a fresh chance of getting involved, albeit at a very unskilled level at first, and by 1971 we were at the much missed London Bus of Yesteryear Rally at Waterloo with our shiny RT. Further moves of house resulted in a loss of contact for a few years, but by 1977 I had bought my first own bus, a Manchester PD2/3, and have been continuously involved ever since, latterly with RT2794 and RTL1050, a bus well-known to me from the Pioneer era in the 'sixties.

If there is a moral from the above piece of minor personal nostalgia, it is from the kindness of the (then) owners of G351/STL2692, who were

friendly to a shy and unskilled teenage enthusiast and, by offering a trip on the next day's rally, ensured a new recruit to the movement – and it's new recruits in plenty that we need today if, to judge from recent newsletters from Cobham and elsewhere, we are to move forward without 'the few' becoming overworked. Today's spotty teenager is tomorrow's preservationist!

## HINSON'S ENTERPRISING OUTING

Series of daffodils heralded both Spring and the first RF event of the year, marking 15 years since the final withdrawal of the marque from K (Kingston), Sunday 27 March. Seven RFs stood in Weybridge Station's spacious car park, south side, in time for the mid-day off on the old route 219 to Kingston: four red, two green and one Green Line. The gentle jaunt through Weybridge, Hersham, Esher and Long Ditton brought us to a much-changed Kingston town, where we passed the rumoured soon-to-be-closed (again) K, heading northwards then turning right to stand alongside the old Wood Street (bus) graveyard – still used as such. Speculation followed that the site may be K's replacement.

After a meal break, blinds were turned to show 218 STAINES VIA LALEHAM or whatever permutation was available (several buses used their RF40 blinds from 1989!) and off we went on hearing organiser John's whistle. Retracing back to Hersham, we then convoluted away through Walton, Shepperton and Laleham to terminate at the much photographed Staines Old West Station terminus, still much the same save for a waist-high brick wall having been built, perhaps to prevent LeyNats from entering the stream there. Except that so far as I can make out, buses no longer regularly terminate here any more. A relic without current use was found inside a cupboard attached to the old station building. The cupboard door revealed a water supply for the use of thirsty buses; a notice still warns drivers to replace the hose.

Perhaps one day we can re-run a Scooter from there.

John A Gray

Syndicated to RT/RF Register and LBPT Cobham

## BARRETT'S BUS BUYING GUIDE PART TWO: RFs

**Y**es, it's that time of year again. When all those nicely painted and polished rows of buses at rallies start tugging at your wallet and your bank manager thinks you are nuts. Bus nuts, to be exact. As stated previously, the bug continues to bite. Our editor who said 'one bus is enough for me' has just purchased his second, RF600. Myself, I now own more. A 1976 AEC Mammoth Major recovery vehicle and a share with a long term friend, Graham Ruddock, in LT1059, as I'm sure most people will know by now.

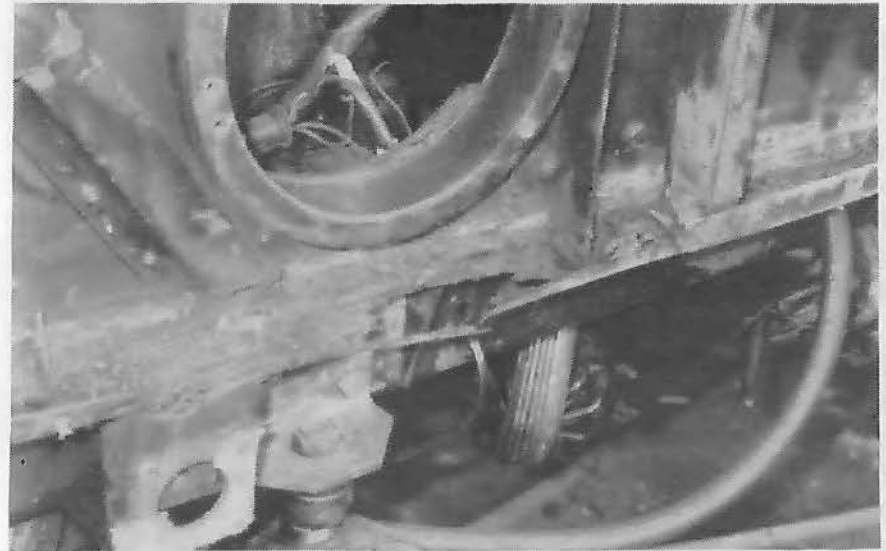
Anyway, to business. This issue's chosen topic is the AEC Regal IV London's most successful single deck vehicle, available in many different varieties such as Private Hire, Green Line coach (standard and modified), Central and Country Bus, all with many different minor modifications.

The more difficult vehicles to find are Private Hire and unmodified Green Line coaches, because of the numbers produced and early withdrawal from service; a large proportion of the original Green Line batch were modified.

Corrosion does not affect these vehicles in the same way as RTs because of their heavyweight construction. They actually weigh more!

The inner saloon skin is a permanently placed structural panel unlike on the RT which are only three-ply. (OK George – Ho Ho – will you ever forget?) Around the periphery of the body is a piece of 3 inch by 1/4 inch angle structure – so you can see why it is heavy. The advantage is that body distortion is minimal as age takes its toll.

So you've found your gleaming example for sale and decide to take a closer look. Try pushing firmly, but gently, on the beading round the wheel arch. Look for movement and listen for falling particles inside the panel. RFs are notorious for rotten woodwork around the wheel arches that hold the wings on. Whilst in this area, feel around the wheel arch inner lip as the edge rusts away and the rubber seal becomes ineffective, thus promoting rotting woodwork. These parts can be made, but it is easier to get Geoff Rixon make them to the correct pattern. As this wood rots, it usually corrodes the steel box section stubs between inner and outer skins. These have to be repaired in order to have something to secure the wood to. The same goes for a steel angle supporting the wood holding that rubber seal against the outer wheel arch edge. Check inside



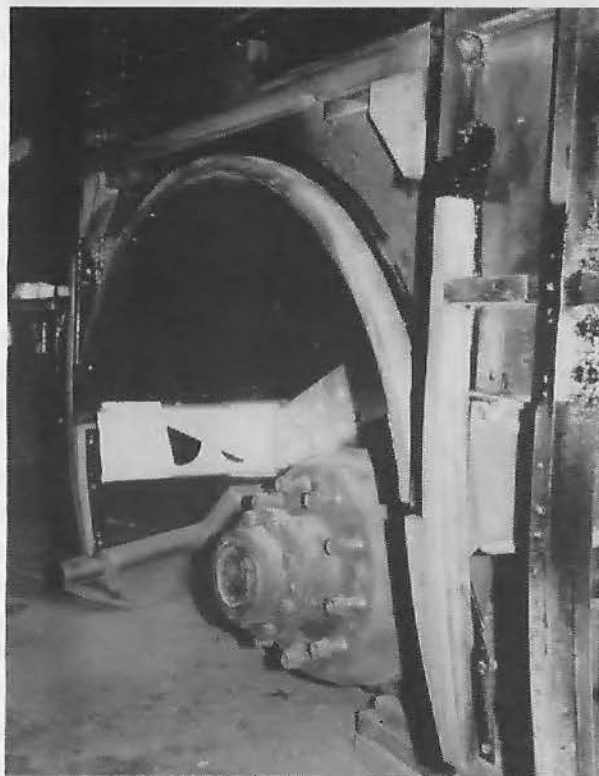
The front crossmember of RF534 had rusted away below the headlamp fittings



At the side, the steel box section stub was almost totally replaced. The small piece protruding over the bottom of the stub area was all that remained of the wheelarch hoop!



The front step area displays substantial corrosion. Note the holes by the door pivot



34ii With new woodwork in place (courtesy Geoff Rixon), the offside wheelarch begins to take shape

the arch on the lower steel detachable sections as they rust in line when fastened to the wooden edge and across their tops when bolted in place. This enables them to flap about a bit.

LT was persistent in adding in wood, supposedly to make repairs easier and cheaper. To this end, there is wood behind the panel joint half way up the side and all round the bus. As per usual it acts as a sponge and helps to encourage corrosion in the channel where panels attach. The channel is rivetted to the inner skin, but can be bolted back in place if you have to repair it.

Moving to another area for close scrutiny, we find ourselves at the back. RFs can suffer particularly badly here, as all the road dirt and salt has to stop somewhere – usually by the back panel and above. Those three little back panels are supported by wood at their bases and, you've guessed it, combined with water and salt, corrode the inner panel away. It can all be plated, but quite often it is better to cut and replace all the rot with a new panel. Whilst you are 'at it', inspect the rear pillars, which will probably also have rusted badly.

Usually it is only the lower stub panels, carrying detachable panels, that suffer. This is due to the brackets that hold these panels in place, as they corrode between the mating faces.

Having looked at the back, let's see what the front has to offer. Again, the crossmember channel above the detachable panel is usually filled with wood fillets. Corrosion in this area is easy to find, as the bottom of the channel is exposed and can be seen through any gap above the detachable panel. Failing this, remove the panel to have a better look. Sometimes, overfilling the header tank will ensure that water gets between inner and outer skins, thus accelerating any corrosion.

Whilst at the front, check the entrance step as this can weaken in time. As soon as you go through a puddle, water sprays all over it. The platform edges are made of sheet steel and angle iron, and the first step support from a wide, flat channel into which the bottom door pivots are attached by special brackets. On top of all this is the wood and slatting that you step on to. Unfortunately, water sits in all available spaces and also passes between the wood and channel, usually rotting around the door pivot brackets. This obviously weakens their operation, but is not too difficult to repair.

General panel work is straightforward enough, so there is no need to worry about a few knocks or bangs. The comments in the last few

paragraphs of my previous article apply also to the RFs as they have much in common with the RTs.

That's all I have to write on this class of bus. Any other problems should be fairly minor or unique to the vehicle you are looking at.

RMs are next on the agenda – till then, enjoy the new rally season and remember: you could get more than you bargain for if you buy a bus!

## SWIFT AND SURE

Hugh Harland and partner Andrew Steel jointly won the 'furthest travelled' prize at the Gateshead Rally on 8th May, by making a round trip of 965 miles from their base at Brighton in their AEC Swift, formerly SMD91. To prove sceptics wrong on the reliability of SMs, 'Swiftly' also made a round journey of 400 miles on 23rd May to Worcester and a further marathon trip to Plymouth at the end of May.

Hugh wishes to put on record his gratitude to Brighton Blue Bus, who feed and water 'Swiftly' between rallies, particularly Derick Beck and Peter Salvage of the aforementioned company. Good rallying, and if my experience of Swifts is anything to go by, change your 'Brillo Pad' filter on your unloader valve regularly.

Bill Cottrell

## SWIFT AND SURE (ONE DAY)

Another member bitten by the Swift bug is Kevin McGowan who has recently added SMS369 to Routemaster RM291 which he has been restoring over the past year. RM291 should be back on the road very soon, at which point Kevin hopes to turn his attention to the Swift, which although scruffy, is still in 'as withdrawn' condition, even down to the automatic ticket equipment and turnstile!

The collection of SMS369 from Milton Keynes was not without incident and Kevin will be reporting in full next issue. Meanwhile, SMS369 is safely in its new home at Dorking, adding a bit of variety to the ten RFs which are also resident there.

Mike Nash

## ST ALBANS GARAGE PROJECT

The committee and editor wish to congratulate the organisers of the above project on the success of their 'Open All Day Rally' on June 5th which was enjoyed by many Trust members.

We hope that the project is a success and that Cobham and St Albans can maintain strong links in the future. Members are reminded that more information about the St Albans project can be gained by ringing Dave Johnson on 0525 370578

Mike Nash

## ROUTEMASTER HERITAGE TRUST – Now they're at Norbiton

Following the sale of the old Twickenham (AB) garage, the Routemaster Heritage Trust has relocated itself at the former Norbiton (NB) garage, albeit temporarily and at the discretion of friendly landlords.

They will still be holding their Open Day on Sunday September 11th but hopefully the event will be much bigger due to the larger size of Norbiton's accommodation. It is anticipated that Cobham will assist with the event and being so close to Kingston, there are all manner of exciting possibilities for special services and photographic runs. No doubt the RF boys will be active, perhaps with a run along the 218 to Esher and back, indeed, it would be nice if the RT/RF register could get involved on the organisational front.

Full details will emerge in due course but those wishing to help can always phone Geoff Rixon on 081 0765.

This should be a great event, so please mark those diaries now!

MN

## DIARY DATES

### **Saturday 9 July–Sunday 10 July**

Carlton Colville 'London Event'. The home of East Anglia Transport Museum will play host to London trams, trolleybuses, buses and coaches. Also some commercial vehicles. Contact Win Wickens or ring 0502 459 for more details of this popular event.

### **Sunday 10 July**

12th Southampton Royal Victoria Rally. A friendly, well attended event set adjacent to Southampton Water. Ring 0703 213

Woburn 'Abbeybus'. A mini 'Showbus'. Just turn up, no judging, no nonsense. More details on 0494 147

### **Saturday 16 July–Sunday 17 July**

Richmond Park. Gill and John Hinson will be running RFs 433 and 453 on circular tours around this famous park.

### **Sunday 24 July**

Busfest '94. Fulwell Garage, near Twickenham. This will be a major event and will be the last at this famous location before it is privatised. Lots of buses, lots of stands, including Cobham's. Ring 081 9072. Please try to support what should be a very good day.

### **Sunday 7 August**

Trans-Pennine Run. Contact Paul Morris for information.

### **Saturday 13 August**

Cobham Bus Museum Bus-b-Que. Need I say more! 4 pm onwards. See you all there. The Bus-b-que will be preceded by an Open Day de-briefing meeting at 12 noon.

### **Sunday 14 August**

Bus of Yesteryear Rally at Staines. Known as 'Boshers Bash', this well organised event has moved forward from October and is on a new and improved site. Just down the road from Cobham, so our members should

be there in force. Contact David Boshier, 72, Hyde Park Road, Egham, Surrey, TW20 8DA (0784-455955)

### **Sunday 21 August**

Finsbury Park 'London Buses Rally'. A major event at this ideal location. Organised by the RT/RF Register, Cobham will have a stand present. Free vintage bus services to Muswell Hill, Ally Pally and Carter's Steam Fair. Please make every effort to attend. Help also required, so ring Jim Andress on 0249-657750 NOW!

### **Saturday 27 August**

'The Delaine' Running Day. Bourne, near Peterborough. A big success last season, this year's is expected to be even better. Watch 'Buses' magazine for more details or ring Andrew Hayward on 081-402-1488.

### **Sunday 4 September.**

Thames Valley Bus and Classic Car Rally. Paul's Mill, Wallingford. Organised by the BBPG. Adjacent to the Cholsey and Wallingford Steam Railway. Vintage bus service to Didcot Steam Centre. A nice informal event.

### **Sunday 11 September.**

Routemaster Heritage Trust. Norbiton Garage Open Day. See details elsewhere in this issue. Not one to miss!

### **Sunday 18 September**

Amberley Chalk Pits Museum near Worthing. Bus Rally set in fascinating surroundings. Watch press for details.

### **Sunday 25 September**

'Showbus 4000' at Duxford. Without doubt the biggest event of the season. Too much to see in one day. Surely it will be good weather this year! Ring 0494-558147 for entry form.

### **Sunday 2 October**

(provisional) Trip from Cobham to Birmingham and Midlands Museum of Transport. Vehicle choice will be subject to attendance. Confirmation of event next issue but sign the sheet in the canteen if you definitely want to attend.

## Sunday 9 October

'Buses on Parade' at Canvey Island. This traditional close to the season is always well attended and usually enjoys good weather. Full details next issue.

## VEHICLE NEWS FROM PETER PLUMMER

- TD95** With the rebuilt engine installed and ancillary equipment fitted, this vehicle ran for the first time since July 1991 on Saturday 2nd April this year. The Trust owes Bill Cottrell and his small team of assistants, Philip Millard, Geoff Stoute, Martin Gibbons, Alan Bond and Steve Jackson, a huge vote of thanks for returning our 'flagship' to running order. It should be noted, to the surprise of all present on the day, how quiet and smooth the engine sounded. Well done, team!
- 702B** This vehicle has received most of the available labour this quarter due to its 'nearing completion' stage. Colin Wickens and your chairman assisted by Brian Hine fitted front wings and rear mudguards late in April and Dave Kriesler fitted and wired in the new side lights to working condition. Your chairman has fitted new steps, making it less tiring to get in and out of the cab up to a couple of dozen times a day whilst working on the vehicle. Alan Bond has cured most of the petrol leaks and vehicle starting is easier. Alan claims that since the rebuild, it has been difficult to locate two gears, so the gearbox needs some attention.
- Alan Goodsey and George Langford fitted the nearside windshield, but the correct type of window rubber has yet to be purchased to enable this to be fitted permanently. A new driver's opening windscreen was fitted by Malcolm Lewis and myself. Several new parts are now awaited and our scout, John Bedford, is actively seeking them out.
- T448** Work has slowed down with only body frame cleaning and painting taking place in the last three months to enable manpower to be deployed on 702B and building repaint. I am continuing to re-work some complicated lower panels to obtain correct profile.
- RT2775** Bill Cottrell and Jeff Stoute raised the vehicle on 2nd May in readiness for the body lift and riser replacement. Anyone in-

terested and wishing to give assistance and learn how to 'do-it-yourself' will be most welcome.

- T504** Bill Cottrell collected the new radiator bottom tank casting and a fine piece of engineering it is. The bad news that the top tank is not likely to see much active service coincided with the discovery of a new one in stock, requiring a little modification. New member Andrew Baxter gave the vehicle a check over in late April, in readiness for the vehicle's return to the 'active' list once the precise work of radiator assembly has taken place.
- STL2377** With TD95 now 'active', the engineering team has been detailed to get this vehicle into running order. It's the moment we have all been waiting for, so the bus will be positioned in the building to enable easy access and work is due to commence on Saturday, 7th May.





## OPEN DAY 1994

Peter Plummer

A weekend of contrasts indeed! Saturday 9th April started fairly bright and a good number of volunteers assisted moving vehicles around to the rear of the site for temporary overnight storage, so the opportunity was seized to reposition vehicles in their 'standings' for projected future work, the riser replacement on RT2775, for example. RF600 was moved out into a running lane after a mysteriously missing starter motor was replaced by Ian Barrett. STL2093 was manhandled into a new slot due to its long term wait for reframing. It was remarkable how many parts have 'dropped off' this vehicle after such a long stand and most of them mechanical parts like the brake servo. G351 was run up and moved to a more accessible slot in anticipation of our Cobham video later in the year.

As the day rolled on a small team, led by John Clarke, swept the floor from one end of the building to the other – a very exhausting job. The opportunity was taken to tidy up parts and spares around the periphery of the building. With most of the vehicle movements complete, the drizzle that had been falling for a couple of hours turned to sleet, finally clearing up at about 8 pm.

Next morning, those of us who live to the east of London woke up to a shock, anything between 1½ and 3 inches of snow, which was still falling at 5 am. (8 am at Dorking! – MN) Fearing the worst, my fifty mile journey to Cobham saw the snow fizzle out around Godstone and my arrival was heartened by just a cold grey day! After ferrying RT593 to Apps Court, it was noted the wind freshened, cloud cover broke up and sunshine brightened up the scene.

In the yard to the south of the museum, a fine array of service vehicles had assembled: 738J, 739J, 833J, 1279LD, 1428B, the Trust's ST922 in respect of its time spent as 693J and the Trust's RL sweeper.

Approximately 20 vehicles worked the bus service with the Birmingham Crossley a firm favourite. Disappointingly, W Gash and Sons Daimler DD10 did not appear due to mechanical problems and the RLH was withdrawn without notice. However, London and Country's newly acquired RM ex Southend Transport, recently painted into their two-tone green livery and bearing fleet number 4109, worked a few 'specials' and

looked very smart indeed. RM2059 in The Delaine blue/cream livery looked very attractive, as do all Delaine vehicles.

Another very nice touch was new volunteer member George Langford's effort when performing his duties as conductor on RT3491. Impeccably smart in his uniform, tending his passengers, who, on production of their boarding passes were given a free ticket from his Gibson ticket machine. George was of course reliving his earlier days when he conducted RT3491 when it was allocated to London Transport's Walworth garage. A full list of buses on the service will be found at the end of this report.

A windswept Dave Hurley was enjoying his first cup of tea of the day at 2 pm during a short break in ticket sales and car park organising. Our very own sales stands this year, one at Apps Court and one at Cobham, made a valuable contribution to the turnover. Bubbly Pam West and Joanne Lister assisted by Colin Sheppard, John Pimlott and Mike Nash, performed at the bus gathering, using RFs 486 and 534 as windbreaks, whilst Win and Melanie Wickens, assisted by Tim Hunt, represented the Trust at the museum. the Trust's specially commissioned EFE model of RM3 was very popular, so if you have yet to obtain your example, do so now by contacting Win Wickens urgently.

As the day rolled on, a few areas of concern came to light. Between 11 am and 12.30 pm, the bus service at Apps Court was struggling to cope. Caterers at both Cobham and Apps Court had really underestimated the popularity of the day and the toilet facility at Cobham had a queue for a while, all items to be put right for next year.

Geoff Stoute, Peter Starks and Graham Ruddock had assembled a really superb collection of visiting buses at Apps Court, while Paul Morris gave a display on how to retrieve a recovery vehicle which was bogged down on grass, by winching itself out with the aid of an oak tree, an unscheduled item on the agenda!

As the day came to a close, the laborious task of clearing up and getting all 'resident' vehicles from their various locations back to Cobham and put away went into full swing. Our 'self-imposed' target for bettering last year's completion time looked good, 7.55 pm, ten minutes earlier than 1993. All round, it was a good day for the Trust, but a few hard lessons were learnt. However, I would like to express extreme thanks to all members and friends who assisted over the weekend. Without you, it would not have been a positive success.

Vehicles on the Open Day service:

Aldershot and District: Dennis Loline III (AAA503C)

Birmingham City Transport: Crossley

Brighton Hove and District: Bristol KSW

Delaine of Bourne: RM2059 and PD3 (KTL780)

East London Buses: RML2760 and RMC1485

Ipswich Corporation Transport: AEC Regent V

Leisurelink: ex London DMS

Simon Douglas Lane/John Greene: RT3491

London and Country: RM1183

Metrobus of Orpington: RF255 and ex London DMS

Reading Transport: AEC Regent IIIs nos 3 and 4

Southampton Citybus: Atlantean

South London Transport: RM6

During peak times, additional LT vehicles also performed duties.

NB The 1995 Open Day will be on Sunday 9 April

## MUSEUM BUILDING NEWS

A new heading from now on due to the fact that labour is occasionally taken from bus restoration work to maintain the building, especially during the warmer months of the year. The building has been sadly neglected since the late 1970s. However, during 1993, the first work to remedy this produced a smart facelift at the north end of the building. Volunteers George Langford, Carol Langford and George's parents, Brian and Alan Hine, Malcolm Lewis, Raja Kalsy, George Townsend and myself have all contributed to probably the most vital restoration project of them all. During late April, Jeff Stoute, Brian Hine and myself cleaned the racks and removed them from the position just inside the north entrance to the building. The following week, Roger West, Simon Douglas Lane and I painted the walls and a 'taster' of what our museum will eventually look like was gained. So, if you are a new member and would like to contribute in a positive and important way with only decorating skills necessary, come and say hello.

Peter Plummer

## COBHAM CLEAR-UP WEEKEND

Peter Plummer

**B**elieve it or not, words almost fail me. The turn-out for the clear-up weekend held on 5th and 6th March could be described as staggering, with 19 present on Saturday and 29 on Sunday, many of them from Twickenham.

The opportunity was taken to sort and clear out the area inside the building known as the Bermuda Triangle – nobody ever went there – well, nobody who did ever came back! The mass of stackable bins, palletised road springs, gearboxes, wheels, bus seats, frames and unrecognisable components by the bin full were moved out, sorted and neatly replaced, making available a great deal more floor and shelf space.

By the end of play on Saturday, with half the buses outside and the floor space covered by stackable bins, guess what? The fork lift went mechanical! It's a good time to join the gardening team, I thought.

Although Bill Cottrell worked very hard during the day, he really did feel ill and we thought that a couple of clean shirts could well see him out. A little prayer overnight resulted in Bill and our fork lift truck feeling much better the next morning and both were able to lift considerable weights. Ian Barrett performed admirably by cutting up a 2 foot diameter tree with an axe, the very last of the fallen trees after the chain saw hired in our October '93 clear up went blunt.

The target set for the weekend was achieved and we had a little labour available to work on the grounds and gardens. Well done, and thanks to those who assisted. They were, with days worked:

Bill Ackroyd 1; Ian Barrett 1; John Bedford 2; Mike Clarke 2; Bill Cottrell 2; Martin Gibbons 1; John Green 2; Andrew Hayward 2; Julie Hayward 1; Brian Hine 1; Tim Hunt 1; Dave Jones 1; Raja Kalsy 2; Dave Kriesler 1; Peter Kriesler 1; Simon Douglas Lane 2; Malcolm Lewis 1; Rod Lucas 1; Kevin McGowan 1; Philip Millard 1; Paul Morris 2; Mike Nash 2; John Pinlott 1; Peter Plummer 2; Colin Prince 1; Geoff Rixon 1; Colin Sheppard 2; Jeff Stoute 2; George Townsend 1; Roger West 2; Colin Wickens 2; Melanie Wickens 1; Win Wickens 2

Your chairman wishes to extend his gratitude to all those who attended for what was a most satisfying contribution. 13 resident members made a contribution, 8 other residents did not attend on either day.

## PHOTOGALLERY



Both LT1059 and LT1077 can be seen in this view. Hopefully, next time the two are united they will both be fully restored, target date 2004.



The sales stand at Apps Court was a great success. Pictured here are members Colin Shepperd, Jo Lister and Pam West with RFs 534 and 486 acting as windbreaks!



A rare shot of RMA13 in service on route 175.



One of the scenes outside the former Staines West (GWR) Station.

## REPORT FROM THE GROUNDS DEPARTMENT

Like a large part of our activities, any major initiatives in the grounds need to wait for the completion of the assets transfer to the Trust. Meantime, we mark time; I hope, however, that members will note the tidier state of the grounds, the removal of much of the excess rubbish, both horticultural and mechanical, and the beautiful bulb display, just in time for Open Day. My thanks to Pam and Roger West for the bulbs so generously given. The wallflowers did not survive the attention of the rabbits – our fight with the wildlife does limit our horizons; we have, however, discussed plans at the committee for making the grounds as beautiful as possible, and more importantly, less labour intensive. The larger numbers now turning up at weekends to not want to slave in the grounds as if working on an Albanian collective farm! The vehicles need the work! So I hope that we can purchase equipment which will allow us to collect and dispose of leaves quickly and efficiently; then it would be helpful if we could deal with our boundaries so that they are tidied up, and look environmentally suitable for our rural surrounds. What with the extension at the back and plans for a perimeter road within the grounds we would be well on the way to transforming the external appearance; together with our plans for the building itself, I hope that members will see what we as a committee want to achieve for you all. My phone number is on the inside cover, and if anybody has any ideas for the grounds I would love to hear from you.

Simon Douglas Lane

(as from 3rd July The Revd Simon Douglas Lane)

## COBHAM POSTERS

Copies of the Cobham Bus Museum poster are available at £2.00 each plus postage. This poster features Dennis D142 and T504 in a style reminiscent of London Transport posters of the 1930s.

Contact Colin Wickens for details.

## VISIT TO OXFORD BUS MUSEUM

Peter Plummer

This visit, on Sunday 20th February 1994, was organised by the volunteers at Cobham by member Martin Gibbons. It was the first in what we hope will be a series of visits to establishments similar to our own. Thirty persons, which included wives and girlfriends, participated in what was a most enlightening and enjoyable day out.

The 9.30 am start was delayed a little while Mike Nash brushed his teeth and hopped around on one foot trying to put his socks on over his head, only to find that his car wouldn't start and so missed our trip. However, the wait in our own transport for the day, Martin Gibbons' 'Grey Cars' AEC Reliance with Willowbrook body, registration 890ADV, did give us the chance to warm the coach up – with our collective body heat! The coach ran well and the day was bright and sunny, albeit with a chilly breeze.

On arrival, we were greeted by Mr Martin Shaw, chairman of the Oxford Museum, and our party split up into small groups, although I stayed with Martin throughout my visit to observe their working practices.

The building is a modern construction, approximately 50 feet wide by about 300 feet long, situated alongside a single track railway station at Long Hanborough, about ten miles north west of Oxford. The collection is, not surprisingly, predominantly Oxford orientated. No guide book or list of vehicles was available on the day of our own visit so it was almost essential to have a museum representative within earshot.

Vehicles that took my eye were a pre-war AEC Regent I with petrol engine and open top double deck body by Park Royal, wearing full Oxford livery, an AEC Regal IV with stylish centre entrance Willowbrook coach body, which stood intact but in need of framework replacement, an identical coach which stood outside, being kept for spares, a right-hand drive ex-Hong Kong AEC Regent V which was an unusual sight, as was an AEC Regent III left hand drive, ex-Lisbon, Portugal. Two immaculate AEC Regal IIIs were present; one, in the dual purpose cream with brown roof livery, was brought out for the benefit of the cameras. Another 'gem' suitably photographed was a rare pre-war Vauxhall/Bedford light van complete with Oxford livery. A very sad RT3911 stood outside awaiting a buyer. Keeping it company was a full-front Regent V ex East Kent in

nice condition, and a 'sectionalised' Dennis Loline which puzzled most of us by its location outside the building. In all, about 40 buses adorn the site and although there are some well-restored examples, the majority require extensive restoration and I must confess to an impression of an uphill struggle about the site, and the feeling that many of the buses will never get the attention they deserve. That statement may be slightly unfair, but its justification could be that the museum is open on Sundays only and according to the chairman, a work force of three is the average attendance. One of the possible reasons for this is the uncertainty that British Rail may not renew the leasehold to the museum and the building would be part of any sale.

The garaging arrangements for privately owned vehicles are unusual. The rent premiums are £28 per month per vehicle. Owners who perform voluntary Trust work have their vehicles inside the building; owners who do not contribute any voluntary labour have their buses parked outside for the same premium. There are a lot of buses parked outside. However, the opportunity has been taken to space out the vehicles inside the building with 1 metre wide wooden walkways around the buses that stand on a shingle floor which extends over half the building area, the remainder being concrete.

An ingenious and well furnished shop and tea room constructed out of lorry containers cut and welded together made a welcome break and a fair sized meeting place. Finally, our party was treated to a ride around the rural countryside under white fluffy clouds with a chilly blue sky in an Oxford AEC Regent V with exposed radiator, registration number 956AJO. Back on the coach, David Kriesler was chained to the steering wheel for the return journey, while the rest of us chatted or slept.

We owe a vote of thanks to member Martin Gibbons, who, after taking a very modest contribution from the collection made for diesel, donated £60 to our clubhouse fund.

NB: I should like to arrange a similar such trip on Sunday 2 October to BaMMoT (Birmingham and Midlands Museum of Transport) at Wythall, 10 miles south of Birmingham. They have an astonishing collection of more than 80 buses plus other transport curios. There is plenty of London metal to view and they will be having an 'operating day' on this date. It's an easy trip, being only ten minutes from the end of the M40. Please mark your diaries now and put your name on the list at Cobham's canteen, or contact me. This will be a good day out!

Mike Nash

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Membership has taken a huge jump since the last issue, from 175 to 229. Many of our new recruits joined on, or as a result of visiting the Open Day, so we must look into having a recruitment stand at other key events. I am still waiting for a volunteer to handle publicity, which is so important to our continued growth. Meanwhile, we now have more members than ever before in Cobham's history. Well done to those who have signed people up.

The following are welcomed to the Trust. I hope that some of you can become key players in our revival!

Mike Nash

Frank Langford	Bromley, Kent		GL
Richard Garbutt	Brighton	RF626/XF1/RT	IB
Grahame Berridge	Kingswood, Surrey		
John Sayer	Ashford, Kent		MN
Brian Vaughan	Hook, Hants	Bristol MW	
Peter Harris	Norwich		
Tom Townson	Romford, Essex		
Peter Harris	Woking, Surrey		
David Foster	Horley, Surrey		
Richard Coppard	Woking, Surrey		MN
David Priddle	Farnham, Surrey		
Derek Robinson	West London		
Kevin Cooper	Plumstead, London SE		DJ
Martin Gardener	Sandhurst, Surrey		
Melvyn Mannings	Gravesend, Kent		
S John Champion	Chatham, Kent		
Paul McLoughlic	Rainham, Essex		
Kenrick Dance	Maidenhead, Berks		
John Hambley	Dunstable, Beds		MN
David Thrower	Warrington, Cheshire	RT2794/RTL1050	RA
Keith Wilson	Colchester, Essex		
Richard Daniell	Plumstead, London SE		
Malcolm Cluney	Barking, Essex		MN
Barry Lloyd	Dartford, Kent		CW
Tim Gaskell	Slough, Bucks		
James Jordan	Bookham, Surrey		WW
Peter Staveley	Croydon, Surrey	Southdown PD3	MN

Tony Quince	Hitchin, Herts		MN
David Fry	Surbiton, Surrey		
Andrew Baxter	Mitcham, Surrey		MN
D Blackall	Ashford, Kent		
Chas Stevens	Horley, Surrey		MN
Colin Elsdon	Carnforth, Lancs	RF530/226/RT 3143	MN
John Knox	Carnforth, Lancs	RT1798/3228	CE
Malcolm Smart	Enfield, Mddx		
Colin Ranson	Milton Keynes		MN
Geoffrey Heasman	Banstead, Surrey		
Ronald Lee	Kingston, Surrey		MN
David Jones	Blandford, Dorset	RT1206	
David Brown	Sanderstead, Surrey		
Brian Finch	Caterham, Surrey		
Mervyn Stedman	Brighton		MN
Kevin Austin	Sidcup, Kent	RF444	MN
Nigel Baynes	Old Coulsdon, Surrey		
Mr Edwards	Worcester Park, Surrey		
Ian Chidlaw	Ashstead, Surrey		
Melanie Wickens	Chatham, Kent		CW
Robert Spencer	West Sussex		
C Griffiths	Bognor Regis, Sussex		MN
James Stirling	Hemel Hempstead, Herts	RT1/1499/3148	
		RF48/113/RM140/CR16	
Christopher Hurley	Worthing, Sussex		DH
Debbie Morris	Carshalton, Surrey	RF672	PM
Philip Jelly	Keynsham, Bristol		MN
Gordon Eldridge	Ashstead, Surrey		IC

Information supplied by Win Wickens (21 May 1994) In the right-hand column are the initials of the members who have recruited these above. CE—Colin Elsdon; CW—Colin Wickens; DH—David Hurley; DJ—Dave Jones; GL—George Langford; IB—Ian Barrett; IC—Ian Chidlaw; MN—Mike Nash; PM—Paul Morris; RA—Roy Adams; WW—Win Wickens.

Please let Win Wickens know when you recruit someone. Spread the word about Cobham!

## VIC'S QUIZ NO 2

For lovers of old LT vehicles

Set by Vic Chivers. Answers to Mike Nash. Score the most points and win a year's free membership. Answers next issue. Good luck!

- Where did all new LTE vehicles have the 'tilt test' done in the late 1950s?
- Did LTE ever have green RTLs in service?
- Who owns T219 Green Line coach?
- Can you name four companies who built bus bodies for LT?
- Did RMs ever have numbers painted on the roof?
- Which LT vehicles had 'CS' plates fitted?
- What is the number of the oldest RM in service?
- Which pre-war ex-London bus ran on route 100 for a while?
- For what reason was Fulwell garage famous some thirty years ago?
- Who made the chassis for the special vehicles made for the Dartford Tunnel in 1963?
- What size are RF engines?
- Did LT ever run double-deck Qs in service?
- To which garages to the following codes refer? RG; AW; HN; AE; WY; E
- What type of bus was 971J and for what purpose was it used in later days?
- What is the fleet number of DLU 92 and where is it kept?
- What was different about GS47 and why?
- What was the code for Chsiwick Works, but was never actually used?
- Which was the pilot overhaul vehicle for London's single deck bus of the 1950s?
- Why is Addlestone Garage code 'WY'?
- How many buses attended the St Albans 'Open All Day' Rally on June 5? (to the nearest ten)

Editor's note: The correct answer to question 9 of Vic's Quiz No 1 was that GS32 was the only one of its class not to be delivered with trafficators.

