

# COBHAM BUS MUSEUM

## MAGAZINE



No. 6

AUTUMN 1994

# THE LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST

COBHAM BUS MUSEUM

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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 channelled 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.

Front cover: Visitors to Cobham will be aware that T31 has joined our fleet. More details about this immaculate vehicle will be in the next issue.

## EDITORIAL

With the ongoing 'dispute' between the Directors & the Trust continuing to occupy much of the committee's time, it is perhaps easy to overlook the more positive things which have steadily been occurring at Cobham during the past year, despite the considerable constraints and indeed blatant lack of co-operation imposed on all by the four Directors. What follows is by no means an exhaustive list of our forward progress, to which many of you have in some way contributed. But it does serve as a reminder to us all of what can be achieved, even in difficult times. And this work will no doubt provide the platform whereby 1995 can be a truly great year for Cobham.

- This year's Open Day was the most successful ever and other events have all been very well attended.
- Membership is at an all-time high and looks set for further growth.
- Progress with several vehicle projects has accelerated and nearly all Trust vehicles should be mobile during next season.
- Several Trust vehicles have been flying the flag at rallies recently.
- T31 will make a fine addition to Cobham's collection.
- There are more members visiting the museum and getting involved on a regular basis, and a refreshing air of optimism is now noticeable.
- More members are bringing their vehicles along at weekends to make use of our museum's facilities.
- The appearance of the interior and exterior of the building has been further improved.
- A contractor has been engaged and work has commenced on the construction of a new store for engines and heavy components currently kept inside the building.
- Plans have been drawn up for a new clubhouse/canteen and a fund established whereby a sizable amount of money has already been collected.
- Cobham's range of merchandise has been expanded, both the Guide Book and Poster selling well. More items are planned.
- The quarterly magazine has been very well received and ensures that for the first time in years, members get good value for their subscription.
- Considerable coverage and support has been received from the media and further national publicity is in the pipeline, and, most importantly

- Cobham's credibility within the preservation movement has improved immeasurably.

It's an impressive list, and one I'm sure will grow as more of you come forward with support and input.

I need only touch on our current legal situation as an update can be found elsewhere in this issue. But I must point out, that predictably, no response has been received from the Directors in answer to Simon Kaye's previous very succinct letter asking that they provide 'a statement of their intentions regarding the assets'. So you can draw your own conclusions! Meanwhile, it is encouraging to detect an increasing lack of unity between the Directors, indeed, certain individuals are known to be feeling decidedly uncomfortable about their involvement in an issue which has very serious legal implications.

Let's end on a positive note. Please mark in your diary that Cobham has a busy weekend coming up. Saturday 5th November sees a 'Clear-up Day' at our museum, culminating in our annual Bonfire Party which is an important fund-raiser for the Trust. So please try to spend the day with us. There will be a variety of tasks in hand, including a thorough clean for TD95 in readiness for a forthcoming photo-shoot by celebrated lensman Peter Durham, (more details and an important announcement next issue). The Bonfire Party will finish slightly earlier than in previous years due the need for an 8 am start the following morning for our trip to BaMMoT, the excellent Birmingham and Midlands Museum of Transport. Full details can be found in 'Diary Dates'. Please do try to support these events.

And whilst making requests, can I draw your attention to the article from Roger West, which concerns the payment of your annual subscription by Deed of Covenant, an option we hope to introduce before the end of the year, whereby your annual fee becomes worth more to the Trust, but at no extra cost to yourself. Please see page 37.

I plan to get the next issue to you just in time for Christmas and already have several features lined up, including a round up of the 1994 rally season. But I do need you to keep my postman busy with your letters, features and photographs, to reach me before the end of November.

Bye for now!

Mike Nash

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

**M**y report this quarter contains items of unparalleled progress on one hand and disappointment and frustration on the other. Disappointment relates to the ongoing legal situation which continues to waste an enormous amount of Trust time and resources. The primary object, to reunite the members of the Trust with the assets (the building, the land and the buses) after a separation of nearly nine years, has, since the last newsletter, moved little closer.

There was, however, a moment of optimism when I received a letter from Mr David Hurley which seemed to be a genuine attempt to resolve the deadlock. David's letter is reprinted in full below, except for his phone number, which I have omitted for obvious reasons.

Dear Peter

Further to our various telephone conversations and your letter of 1st June I hope the following is a constructive approach. I know that we all agree that the finalisation of Charitable Status for LBPG Ltd and its amalgamation with the already Charity LBP Trust is our highest priority.

You are aware that the Charity Commission has been exceedingly slow and recent correspondence really has made myself, ABX and Alan Brison exasperated – to ask 'if the Trust is still in existence' to my mind shows of gross incompetence – what have they done with the annual accounts each year!

David Morgan at the AGM accepted that substitution of the memorandum articles has protracted the issue – it also confused the Charity Commission (it doesn't need much). I can assure you that Alan Brison and Ed Hollingsworth et al are also anxious that criticism is being directed at us rather than the true culprit. No doubt this was behind David Morgan's suggestion at the AGM that Trust members should join the LBPG Ltd in order to protect the position.

Subsequent to the meeting I consulted Ed Hollingsworth and he was adamant that at the June meeting all parties had agreed a status quo position and that Trust members would join as soon as Charitable status went through. Like me, he could see that the

6 month delay in re-vamping the mem and arts and then further bad handling by the Charity Commission must be winding everyone up.

Therefore we are suggesting that yourself and Bill be immediately appointed directors to allay any fears which the membership of the Trust may have. In accordance with the agreed requirements of the Charity Commission, Tony Peters will resign.

I enclose a copy of the latest letter from the Charity Commission and I am at present agreeing a reply with Ed Hollingsworth, Alan Brison which I will pass to you for your thoughts – I am suggesting we jointly sign it.

I have spoken to Michael Hebard and in no way was his correspondence with the Charity Commission an 'objection'. He is willing to write to them to say so – if that is the objection they are referring to? I know that Michael has also spoken with you and you have seen the correspondence.

There are other items which need constructive discussion. Ed Hollingsworth is more than happy for you, Bill, Tony and myself to get together. I have already mentioned this to Bill – perhaps you could let me have your thoughts for an agenda.

One item that can be cleared here and now. There is not and never has been any problem re the use of vehicles. I have always maintained that it is essential for these vehicles to be seen out and about – mainly as to encourage those who work on them. Bill has always endorsed this and he can't see why this nonsense has arisen?

I suggest you and I reply jointly to the few people who have applied for membership (only seven at last count) immediately after you and the committee have considered the above proposals.

If we get any more problems with the Charity Commission I suggest you, me and Alan Brison go in and throttle them!

All of us want this matter settled quickly so that we can move on to more positive and constructive matters.

Best wishes

Dave Hurley

PS. I had organised myself to come up on Saturday but got a bad migraine on Friday night and my head didn't leave the pillow much over the week-end.

cc EH, ABC, TP, MH, AB, WTC.

EXPLANATORY NOTE: Alan Brison is the LBPG Ltd's current accountant, who has been handling the charitable status issue on instruction from the directors. Ed Hollingsworth is the solicitor currently acting on behalf of the LBPG directors. ABX is co-director, Mr Alan Cross.

Due to being unable to reply myself urgently to Mr Hurley's letter, Bill Cottrell replied on behalf of the Trust committee, accepting the proposals made in Dave Hurley's letter. Imagine my surprise when I then received a letter from Mr Tony Peters discounting David Hurley's letter, claiming it 'unofficial', therefore vetoing David's proposals. On 18th August, the much postponed informal meeting actually took place in London. Bill Cottrell and myself represented the Trust. For the directors of the LBPG Ltd, Mr Julian Bowden replaced Mr David Hurley, supported by Mr Tony Peters.

The meeting lasted for three hours and I regret to report that no positive progress for the Trust was forthcoming. During the meeting, the directors stated they objected to the comments referring to them in recent newsletters.

I offered their directors an opportunity to make a statement of explanation that must be a full and factual record of correspondence and events in chronological order from the commencement of discussions with the Charity Commission in 1986 to enable us to obtain a comprehensive picture of the background. Mr Julian Bowden submitted the following statement on 17 September and this is reprinted in full below:

#### THE LONDON BUS PRESERVATION GROUP LTD & CHARITABLE STATUS

The history of Cobham Bus Museum seeking charitable status now goes back some 10 years to 1984 when the original application was made on a similar basis to another bus preservation group who had then recently obtained such status. At this time, advice

was obtained from two sources, one of which was followed which gives us the situation that we currently have. The other advice which unfortunately was not followed now turns out to have been the course that we should have followed.

In brief, once charitable status had been obtained for the 'new' organisation (in 1986) known as the London Bus Preservation Trust it was recognised that there was a potential problem in transferring the assets owned and accumulated by the London Bus Preservation Group Ltd into the new charity. This arose because London Bus Preservation Group Ltd was registered and recognised as a taxable body in its own right paying Corporation Tax and Value Added Tax on a regular basis. It was therefore likely that if it disposed of its assets to a charity various potential tax liabilities would arise. These were potentially of the size that the only way to meet them would be by disposing of some of the most vital assets the Group had acquired over the previous 21 years. By doing this, the whole basis on which Cobham Bus Museum had been built up would have been undermined and potentially destroyed any hopes of retrieving the situation in the future.

Following further advice that this was not the way to proceed, the London Bus Preservation Group Ltd set about following the right path of obtaining charitable status for itself. It divested itself of its trading activities as it is recognised that charities are not allowed to trade commercially for profit. Having done this, the London Bus Preservation Group Ltd was in a position to apply for charitable status. Based on previous experience and advice from the Charity Commissioners a suitably amended Memorandum and Articles of Association were submitted with the application for charitable status.

In the more recent past, at the request of the London Bus Preservation Trust, a revised Memorandum and Articles of Association were submitted in substitution for the original ones which were based on recommendations made by the Charity Commissioners. The directors of the London Bus Preservation Group Ltd are awaiting a response from the Charity Commissioners to the revised submissions. As soon as further information is received, the directors will be advising both the

Chairman and Treasurer of London Bus Preservation Trust as to progress.

– J J Bowden (Director)

We are able to comment on the accuracy of all the elements of his statement but we should make the following points:-

For the benefit of newer members, the four paragraphs submitted by Mr Bowden above covers ten years' work on behalf of the directors of LBPG Ltd and *only* the directors, to negotiate a properly established charitable status. This remains UNRESOLVED to this day, yet the directors refuse to hand over the assets or to include in these negotiations your current committee democratically elected in February 1993.

Meanwhile, the trading organisation continues to function as before under control of the LBPG directors.

It is true David Morgan did submit revised Memorandum and Articles of Association in November 1993 because he and the Charity Commission had objections to various provisions to those submitted by the accountants acting on behalf of the LBPG Ltd.

We understand the new Mem and Arts were not submitted to the Charity Commission by the LBPG Ltd until late January 1994. The Commission raised various points in a letter dated 29th March 1994 which we have not seen, but we know these still had not been addressed when the Charity Commission wrote again on 13th May 1994 and raised eight further questions. A copy of this last letter was subsequently passed to us and in so far as reference was made to the London Bus Preservation Trust, David Morgan has written direct in reply to those points on which he was able to comment. No further information, however, has been given by the Directors of the LBPG Ltd.

Because of our continuing concern, we have taken counsel's advice and now have a written opinion recommending that proceedings be taken by the Trust against the Directors of the LBPG Ltd. This is the action of last resort because it has been suggested that the LBPG may suffer a tax liability if assets are transferred to the Trust. This would have been avoided if the directors had implemented their proposals made in 1989, and confirmed by agreement in a meeting and a letter in June 1993, that the LBPG Ltd be converted into a charitable company and this Trust re-merged with them, which would have obviated the need for such transfer.

Progress to be recorded on the other hand is that a decision was made, despite the aforementioned problem, to proceed with the museum extension, the plans and approval of which were agreed some five years ago. Demolition of two of the bomb-shelter outbuildings is now well under way and the new building is expected to be complete by the end of the year. The extra floor space achieved will be used to house spares and parts enabling the main building to be more presentable to visitors and provide a better working environment for the volunteer workforce.

The Trust is honoured to be offered the opportunity to purchase T31, a superb AEC Regal I fully restored in the livery of the GENERAL OMNIBUS Co. The vehicle will make a welcome addition to the Trust collection and your committee is currently negotiating with the Science Museum for a grant to assist in its acquisition.

Progress on Trust vehicles has been outstanding this summer and I would like to extend my gratitude to the loyal volunteers who make it possible. New member Andy Baxter, a qualified vehicle fitter and electrician, has enabled the pace and professionalism of vehicle restoration to enter a new era and members may be interested to know that STL2377 appears to one of his pet projects.

Your newest committee member, Paul Morris, has settled in well, taking up the challenge of his tasks and duties with dedication, currently assisting Ian Barrett as co-Publicity Officer.

We are indebted to Mike Nash for his contact with national transport magazines and several features and promotions are planned for next year.

Finally, our membership has now doubled its previous highest peak in the late 1970s, which positions me to extend a welcome to new members and thanks to long standing members for their continued support.



Peter Plummer

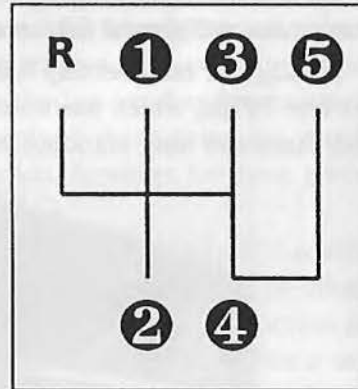
## THE BRISTOL BUS: PART 2

Alan Bond

In my continuing saga of the Bristol bus, this time around I thought we could take a little look at the L, LL and LWL types, along with the replacement of the Bristol K, namely the ubiquitous Lodekka.

The single deck equivalent of the K type was the L, none of which survived into my time with UCOC. We had, however, the use of the occasional LWL5G, the 30 foot long, 8 foot wide version. These were fitted with the five speed version of the Bristol gearbox, a type which I was to become better acquainted with in later years. The overdrive 5th gear gave a respectable top speed performance to these vehicles once you had got them on the move, and therein lay the problem. Despite the absence of more than half a ton of top deck, the power/weight ratio was modest, to say the least, and acceleration was decidedly sluggish. Eventually, your LWL would reach 40mph or so and fifth would be engaged, whereupon the revs would die down to a murmur and the process of winding up to maximum speed could begin. This could only take place on the flat or downhill and if insufficient road was available or a hill appeared, it was down the box again. That was only half the battle because fifth gear engagement was by the peculiar system unique to the Bristol marque. The layout of this gear change is made clear from the accompanying diagram.

You would be rolling along nicely with fourth gear engaged and in order to obtain fifth it was necessary to remain in fourth and move the gear lever across the gate towards you, forward into neutral and thence forward again into fifth. So far, so good, fifth gear is engaged and we are hurtling along at a rate of knots befitting a modern vehicle. All is not roses, however, for pulling power in fifth gear under 40mph is non-existent so an early change down to fourth is necessary and this is the easy part. The next downward change is the tricky one, four to three (and this is where many a Bristol driver gets caught out inexperienced or otherwise) The correct procedure is: hold gear lever away from left leg, clutch down, forward into neutral, clutch up, hold gear lever towards left leg, rev



engine, clutch down and forward into third. Absolute adherence to this procedure is the only way to obtain a satisfactory change down. Many a driver has been lax in its application and found himself back in fifth after a modicum of grating, and at that point, all is lost because speed has fallen so low that a downward change from fifth to fourth is now impossible. At this stage, the wise man admits defeat, stops the vehicle and starts off again, this time endeavouring to get it right if possible.

As with the K type, some L types were fitted with the 6 cylinder Bristol AVW and we had one of these, an LL6B ex-Hants and Dorset, which had been converted to full front for omo. It was swiftly christened the Yardley Gobion flyer and it would certainly go when pushed. It had a sliding sunshine roof which used to vibrate open and this did not please the punters at all on a snowy winter's day and I might add that it did not endear itself to the drivers on such occasions either.

The regular LWLs had, for the most part, the ECW rear entrance 39 seat body. Like most buses of the time, no heaters were fitted to either the cab or the saloon and cold was the normal condition of the interior on a winter's day. On a busy urban bus this is not normally a problem but on the rural type of route where you would normally find the L type, your average conductor would be clad as if for an Arctic expedition.

## Lodekka

Still, we have not yet reached the dizzy heights of the Lodekka, that ubiquitous piece of machinery so loved by Bristol fans everywhere. For a vehicle like the K type to have leg and lever transmission was at least excusable as it had been designed before the war. The Lodekka, however, was a different kettle of fish altogether. For a vehicle that was designed after the war, and deemed to be revolutionary, to incorporate a transmission system that was already twenty years out of date was stupidity in the extreme and detracted from its appeal very greatly. Fortunately, London Transport was not impressed with the dubious benefits of this monstrosity and was not talked into buying even one. In its initial stages, it would seem that it came out as quite a lot more expensive than an RT so there can have been little good reason to buy it unless your operating territory was teeming with low bridges. Part of the problem was an increase in weight without an increase in power and this made the 5LW powered version even more pedestrian than the K type. Eastern Counties, one of the most penny pinching and miserly of the Tilling companies,

even de-rated the power output of its 5LW engines, ostensibly in order to save fuel, and many's the EOC Lodekka that spent most of its working life in third gear. United Counties had an even more interesting brain-wave. In order to save fuel a programme of replacement of ALW engines by the 5LW was initiated for the LDs in the fleet and a number were done before a change of fleet engineer brought a halt to the programme. Needless to say, the programme was not reversed and the bastardised vehicles ran out their lives even more under-powered than when they started. Still, at least the 6LW made its appearance in 1966 when the FS and FLF types came on the scene. In the case of the FS it was a step up and these flat floor versions of the LD had a reasonably respectable performance. It would not have taken a genius to work out that the 30 foot version of the Lodekka required a bit more power due to the increased weight. Bristol did go some way towards providing this in the form of the BVW engine of 8.9 litres and 110 hp, but the equivalent Gardner installation remained as the 6LW in the FLF. The FS6B was quite lively, could pull and was preferable to the Gardner powered variant as it was very much more free-running. The FLF6B was still rather under-powered. The FS6G was about average and the FLF6G was also still under-powered. After this, experiments were carried out on the FLF with Leyland 0.600 and Gardner 6LX engines as well as semi-automatic transmission, but I was never in a position to try out either the Leyland or the semi-automatic types though I later had the opportunity to sample the 6LX version, of which more in due course.

An interesting part of busmen's folklore are the localised names given to types of buses and these were as common in Bletchley as anywhere else. The LD type Lodekka was known colloquially as a 'Scharnhorst' but most people missed the 't' off the end and the name came out as 'Scharnhorse'. The FS was generally known as a 'sixty' in deference to its seating capacity, but I have heard this type called a 'Scrag', the origin of which is a complete mystery to me. The FLF was generally known as the 'Seventy Seater' for obvious reasons, but I have heard the type variously called the 'Wardrobe', the 'Chunter Box' and the 'Effy' (for front entrance). AEC fans had one common name for them all - JUNK.

## Gardner engines

I have never been a particular fan of the Gardner engine despite its reputation for reliability. I like my engines to have a little more life in them and without doubt, part of the trouble with the engine is its enormous crankshaft throw of 152.4mm, which is longer than any of its rivals apart from the post war Albion engine, which had an identical stroke, and the pre war Crossley D1 of 9.1 litres which was also of 154.2mm. The AEC oil engine has, since early days, had a stroke of 142mm, and this is about average for most oil engines and as a result the compromise is about right giving a nice balance between low speed torque and a lively and responsive performance. After the Gardner and its confrères the next longest stroke of any oil engine was the Dennis O4 which was of 150mm.

All of these had one thing in common in the form of the very heavy flywheel needed to maintain smooth and even idling. A heavy flywheel takes longer to get going and, once going, takes much longer to slow down. This leads to slower gear changing and more than nullifies the good torque characteristics of the Gardner engine. This is only part of the story, however, as the AEC 7.7 for example has a maximum torque of 330 foot-lbs at 1000 rpm compared with the 5LW figure of 300 ft-lbs at 1100 rpm. In this category the outright winner was the Meadows 6DC630 of 10.35 litres which had a torque figure of 420 ft-lbs at 1000 rpm. This engine was fitted to London Transport's G436 and was the reason for that vehicle's reputed sparkling performance. Sadly, the 6DC630 was not very reliable and thus it disappeared from the scene relatively early. The BMMO Guys thus fitted were gradually fitted with own-make engines and others around the country were replaced by the ubiquitous Gardner 6LW. The problem is one that has stayed with the Gardner engine, though its effects are very much nullified by modern transmission systems and nowadays this, of course, means fully automatic. Despite the great weight of modern buses, the poor output of the Gardner 6LXB when set to 1850 rpm is adequate and gives a respectably lively performance. My, how things have changed!

For the next instalment of this newly packaged critique of the Bristol/Gardner combination see the next issue of the magazine, when I shall look at a couple of underfloor engined Bristol types.



## SCRAPPED MOST SUDDENLY

Kevin McGowan

'What did you want to buy one of those \*\*\*\* things for?' is a typical response from many bus enthusiasts on hearing that I have recently become the proud owner of SMS369. I admit that the Swifts were not exactly one of LT's great success stories but nonetheless they were a prominent part of the transport scene in London throughout the 1970s, so surely one or two must be worth saving for posterity?

Although the class was notoriously prone to failure in LT service, it must be realised that many of the problems were eventually overcome and with careful maintenance the Swifts can prove to be a realistic and reliable preservation project. They also come with interesting gadgets to play with, like air-operated doors, internal and external PA and, if you're lucky, an AFC machine.

Admittedly not to everyone's taste, on their introduction 25 years ago they appeared to me at least to be fine, modern looking vehicles with a restrained styling that didn't date quickly and, dare I say it, a fitting successor to the much loved RF! As only a handful of the 838 Swifts built for LT survive, I had to wait for quite some time until a suitable example became available and in the meantime, I settled for a Routemaster, acquiring ex-Clydeside RM291. As the RM's restoration was nearing completion I began to think about starting a new project and it was at this time that I heard that SMS369 was for sale. This particular example was withdrawn from Edgware garage in December 1980, being one of the last Swifts in passenger service (excluding Red Arrow duties). It was used as a school bus for a few years before being acquired for preservation by the previous owner who returned it to LT livery and reinstated the Automatic Fare Collection (AFC) equipment.

An inspection of the vehicle, which was standing in a farmyard near Milton Keynes, was duly arranged and it was found to be basically in sound and original condition although the paintwork was very rough due to it being stored in the open since LT days. A price was agreed and the bus made ready for the journey back to Dorking. Because of the type's propensity to break down, the long drive south was faced with some trepidation, so John Bedford kindly offered to accompany me back in the car in case any problems arose. The drive along the bumpy lanes from the farm to the motorway exposed the fact that we had a set of totally

useless shock absorbers as the bus regularly leapt into the air like an oversized spring lamb with me desperately clinging to the steering wheel to avoid being ejected from the driving seat at every bounce. I suppose it was one way of shaking out the wildlife that had probably accumulated during the years on the farm.

We then made stately progress down the M1 and stopped for lunch at Toddington services to celebrate seven miles of trouble-free motoring. By now full of confidence we resumed our journey and got as far as the M25 when disaster struck! Everything had seemed OK until JB suddenly appeared alongside (still in his car, I hasten to add) frantically gesturing me to pull over to the hard shoulder. The cause of his alarm turned out to be the torrent of hot water gushing out of the radiator filler pipe. Yes, the Swift's famous overheating problem had manifested itself. We allowed the engine to cool down for a while before driving slowly to the next motorway exit. The engine sounded OK except for a peculiar squealing noise. Safely off the motorway, JB sprung into action and drove off in search of help, which soon arrived in the form of Paul Morris and the Epsom Coaches breakdown lorry. Paul discovered that the power steering reservoir was bone dry which probably compounded the overheating problem as the PAS drives the hydraulic fan, at least it does when it has got some oil in it! A slack water pump drive belt probably didn't help matters either. The peculiar noise turned out to be emanating from the alternator bearing which is situated underneath the radiator filler so perhaps its sudden dousing in hot water hastened its demise? (The trouble was later cured by regreasing the bearing.) We might have limped home but Paul suggested that a tow at 60mph would be quicker and safer than a 25mph crawl around the M25. The trip was uneventful, the Swift was probably making the fastest journey of its life – even JB had trouble in keeping up! We probably made history that day being the first day that anyone had towed a Swift towards London instead of away from it!

The bus is now safely in its new home at Dorking Bus Storage in company with a large contingent of its more illustrious predecessors (the site should be renamed 'The RF Heritage Trust!') and work will soon begin on fitting the new body panels that came with the vehicle, before its repaint into original style LT livery. I've never worked out what SMS actually means although the title of this article is one possible definition!

In conclusion I would like to thank John Bedford, Paul Morris and Mike Nash for their help in getting SMS369 home.

# BARRETT'S BUS BUYING GUIDE

## PART THREE: ROUTEMASTERS

So here we are, nearing the end of another rally season. Once the rallies finish, we can start major work through the winter months and begin jobs that we want to do, without setting ourselves particularly strict deadlines.

With working days ahead of us, let's have a brief look at body problems we may find arising on the Routemaster bus or coach, which is the last in the series of articles I am writing on specific vehicle type body work.

Unlike the two previous vehicles, this one is built without a chassis running most of its body length. Instead, it has two very large sub-frames (for ease of definition, similar to a mini-car), called 'A' and 'B' frames. 'A', obviously at the front, carries the front suspension, engine and ancillary components. 'B' has the back axle and part of the suspension, the remainder of this being body-mounted. The gearbox is supported by a part of the bodywork that is reinforced.

The advantage of this was a considerably improved passenger-carrying to weight ratio compared with the RT, but it also meant the body taking much more stress than before, so it had to be much stronger and more rigid. This in itself has helped to preserve the bodywork, because less flexing means less cracks at joints, so water and road dirt ingress is less. In fact, RMs are semi-monocoque and have a unit construction build. Body sections are made separately from many pieces and then joined together like a big, well-planned jigsaw. The sections themselves consist mainly of aluminium extrusions in channel, H-section or angle, joined together by small brackets. Like RFs, they have an inner stressed skin for strength.

Most of the lower panels are held in place by machine screws which fit hardened threaded inserts pressed into the body structure. Other panels are held by blind rivets or solids, but this is mainly above the lower saloon waist rail. However, many operators, including LT, often knocked out the inserts and fitted pop rivets if the screws broke off.

As Routemaster buses are almost completely built of aluminium they don't tend to suffer from rusting, but aluminium corrosion is still a bit of a problem. This usually comes about as a direct result of accident damage, where the surface treatment of the aluminium is compromised,

thus helping corrosion to gain a starting point. The most obvious place to look for this is inside the back panels under the staircase and platform.

Possibly, all London vehicles have, at some time or other had something driven into the back of them. RMs have a cover pan that spans the area below the staircase and keeps dirt out (supposedly). Usually this gets bent out of shape and allow road dirt and salt in, with the resultant effect that panels corrode from inside and the first you know of it is paint blistering. Although the body frame can also get a bit 'eaten' by corrosion, because it is so thick in comparison to the panelling, this doesn't present a problem.

Whilst at the back it is perhaps a good idea to mention that RMCs and RCLs have some wood in this area. This is due to the design incorporating an emergency exit door.

Coming further forward, you may find some problems around the rear wheel arches, but 'as they go', again Routemasters don't present any great problem. However, the cab floor, making up part of the front off-side arch, is the most likely to suffer as it acts as a bit of a dirt trap.

Unlike the earlier articles, I feel it necessary to mention a bit about the main frames. 'A' frames rarely give any trouble, but 'B' frames do. There is a rust problem, which is usually evident in the gap between the parallel fitting plates of 'B' frames. The cause is the ingress of water and general road dirt, causing rust to form a wedge action and drive the two plates apart. There is also a problem of fatigue cracking, which in my experience is usually near a corner joint of a frame where there is less flexing, thus leading to the formation of cracks. Having said that, cracks may appear centrally under certain conditions, in the material around the rear brake mechanisms. It has also been known for the panhard rod mount onto the body to fatigue and break away, but this is believed to affect mainly the longer bodied versions.

There is little more I can add on the subject of RM corrosion as most bodies are pretty sound and any rot will probably be due to badly repaired accident damage – unique to your particular vehicle.

## Conclusions

Well, you've read my articles. It's time to decide what to buy, if anything. Just as a reminder, here is a brief summing up.

RTs: possibly what everyone thinks of when you mention London buses. Full chassis to front of platform only. Rear body riser can rot, rendering the bus an expensive hobby (thousands of pounds to repair) unless you can do it yourself. The purchase cost of an RT can be quite high so make sure major bits are strong before parting with money. As it's built using steel with wood fillets, panel edges can separate and beadings become very distorted and uneven because of corrosion between these inner parts. Doesn't have a fixed inner body skin for strength.

RFs: relatively modern looking so they are not always thought of as old buses, despite being over forty years old. Not as prolific as RTs. Still have some problems with structural corrosion, partly due to the use of wood, but not in the same league as RTs. They have an inner steel body skin which helps to make them very strong, but also increases their weight considerably.

RM: virtually rot-free but for isolated areas and 'B' frames which, as with RTs, can be very costly to replace if there is any problem due to corrosion or stress cracking.

So, as you can see, all of these buses have their particular problems. Price wise, out of the three, RFs are the cheapest to buy when comparing vehicle condition against pounds spent on purchase. I don't think that is because it is the only single deck of the three, but because RTs are more sought after and RMs still have a useful commercial life with operators.

If you are considering buying a bus and this is your first foray into ownership, for pure ease of driving and value I would suggest starting with an RF. Once you have more confidence and are sure of yourself, change to another if that is what you want, or just buy more!

Good luck in preservation, and remember, if you are not sure about anything, just ask others for advice. In the long run it will make things much cheaper than buying expensive mistakes.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FROM STEVE HEMMINGS

I must offer a big 'thank you' to the Trust's PR department, who are, in my opinion, doing a first class job.

My own RT2084 is in hospital having the body/battery risers and platform supports replaced, as many know, at vast expense, also several other parts either repaired or replaced to bring the vehicle up to satisfactory/MoT standard.

When the mechanic drops the bombshell about the risers and then proceeds to make matters even worse with the inimitable words that we have all heard 'oh, and by the way the \* \* \* also needs replacing', the heart sinks and so does the bank balance. The wife, although happy to share our hobby, sees the new kitchen savings disappearing, and then, as if by telepathy a mailing arrives from the bank offering a loan for 'anything you want - fill in the form today'. Closer inspection of this wonderful glossy brochure showing people lazing on a sun drenched palm beach and a super picture of the car that we have always wanted, tells us that you pay back in interest nearly 50% more than you borrow, especially over 200 years.

Total depression starts to overtake any logic, and desperate thoughts come to mind - scrap the bus, it is not worth it, rob a bank, sell the house. You then try and think logically and obtain the RT manual to attempt to go it alone only to find that the part you want to repair has next to it, in big letters 'do not attempt to repair, return to Chiswick'. This must be the ultimate Catch 22.

And then, as if by telepathy, the post arrives - the Trust magazine, and on the front cover a picture of Ian and Graham standing next to LT1059 *smiling*. Suddenly, the sun comes out, the heart lifts and you realise that compared to LT1059, RT2084 is in 'as new' condition, the impetus returns and everything is wonderful and the instructions to 'proceed' is given to the mechanic, who fortunately has not yet fired up the blow torch.

So a big 'thank you' to the Trust PR department for the front cover picture of the June issue, you have saved an RT and made an old man very happy. Obviously the financial problem is not solved, but compared to the costs that will be involved on LT1059, I have no problem. Would

Ian and Graham like me to forward the bank's glossy brochure? That will wipe the smile off their faces.

On a final serious note, not that the above is all jest, many of us have been there, may I wish them luck with LT1059 and well done on the saving of an important vehicle. Are you any good on RTs . . .

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

Can anyone help Steve to locate a 1960s/1970s LT single breasted jacket, the type with a Griffon emblem on the lapels, size 42/44; If so, please contact him. Meanwhile, thanks for all your encouragement, Steve.

FROM MARGARET BARRETT (Ian's mum!)

With Christmas looming on the horizon I thought readers may be interested to learn how Cobham Bus Museum members have, over the last twelve years, helped the Children's Society.

Our choir, at Holy Cross Church, Motspur Park, was invited to sing carols (in aid of the Society) under the Christmas tree at Trafalgar Square, and so, to transport choir and parishioners it was easier to travel by bus and keep together.

The first year, Paul Morris came to our rescue by providing RF672. Then, when we needed a bigger bus, Simon Douglas-Lane and John Greene's RT3491 ferried us, and drivers who helped were Peter Starkes and Ian Barrett. Interestingly, the reason this bus is green is because when it was purchased, London Transport's condition of sale was that it could not be in red or show any central area blind display, so as not to be confused with any service buses.

The choir sings for an hour and we have eight people distributing carol sheets so people can join in, and eight shaking collection tins. So far, over £2,000 has been collected. Incidentally, the date and time have to be booked in January by writing to the Department of the Environment.

The Children's Society has helped my children over the years as they run Day Centres where children can be safely looked after while parents are working and 'Safe Homes' where runaway children can be taken to sort out any problems before, hopefully, returning home. When children leave care at 16-18 and have nowhere to go, the Society has been able to purchase some houses where the youngsters are taught basic

housekeeping and cookery skills and can have their own room. The Society is also involved in adoption, fostering and conciliation services.

If anyone would like to come and join us this year, we shall be in Trafalgar Square on Friday, 9th December and the choir will sing from 8.00 to 9.00 pm. We have a most enjoyable evening, as being near Christmas there is a lovely atmosphere.

*Marina Avenue, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 6NQ*

FROM ALAN GOODY

Members may not be aware that Bristol REs are still in service here and gricers are often out with their cameras.

One certainly knows when a full day's work has been done on an RE, but in their favour, I admit that their footbrakes are less heavy than on a National.

*Fairlight, Sussex TN35 4AP*

## CONTINUOUS ROAD TAX

I'm sure that some members became very concerned when Roads Minister Robert Key announced a proposal to alter Vehicle Excise duty from a tax on use to a tax on ownership, whereby all vehicles, whether on or off the road, would have to be permanently licensed.

Although this measure, to be introduced from 1997, is chiefly aimed at combatting the evasion of road tax, which is said to amount to £145 million per year, it would of course be a bitter blow for vehicle enthusiasts, particularly those with large vehicle collections and of course museums such as Cobham.

Many bodies have already pledged to fight this proposal, most notably classic car magazines and the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs, but if you yourself feel strongly about this issue, why not write to your MP, just as Philip Millard has done. His letter is reproduced on the following page for your guidance.

Mike Nash

The Rt Hon Cranley Onslow MP, Member for Woking  
House of Commons, London SW1

Dear Mr Onslow

I am concerned to read in today's 'Daily Telegraph' that the government is proposing that all motor vehicles must be taxed continuously from 1997.

The London Bus Preservation Trust (Registered Charity No. 293319) operates the Cobham Bus Museum, which houses over 25 historic buses, many of which date from before WW2. Some of these vehicles have been fully restored, others await major or minor restoration work. A restoration project can take from three to seven years to accomplish, using volunteer labour. Limited resources mean that only one or two vehicles can be undergoing restoration at any one time, which means that certain vehicles will have to remain dormant for some years into the future. Nevertheless, it is important that these vehicles are preserved until resources for their complete restoration become available.

The new proposal seems quite unfair to the many transport museums and preservationists, whether of buses, cars or commercial vehicles. The Cobham Bus Museum could not possibly afford to tax all its vehicles, whether or not they were in running condition. In any case, vehicles undergoing or awaiting restoration could hardly pass an MoT test, which is a prerequisite for obtaining a tax disc.

Even our restored buses only venture onto the public road on a few days a year, which means that the cost of road tax is already quite out of proportion to the usage. May I request that some sort of exemption arrangements are made for historic vehicles in preservation and those awaiting or undergoing restoration work. Little revenue would be lost if the Government exempted historic vehicles used as 'private' – say over 30 years old – from road tax completely and such a concession would mostly overcome this problem.

I look forward to hearing from you that the Government in framing this new regulation will agree to make suitable arrangements to take account of museum and historic vehicles.

Philip Millard

## INTO THE 1950s

Henry Law

During the early 1950s, there were many tracts of central London where buses were rarely seen. These were trolleybus territory, and we moved to one such area – Gospel Oak – at the end of 1949. Parliament Hill Fields, close by, was the terminus of the 513/613/615 group of routes, which had formed part of the former LCC tramways and gone over to trolleybus operation just before the war. At this time, the tracks in Highgate Road were still in position underneath the tarmac and showed as raised humps on either side of the road. But just a mile away, the conduit system tracks in Kentish Town Road and Fortess Road were still serviceable and connected the depot at Cressy Road, Hampstead with the active tram system at Archway, terminus of the 35, though I have no idea when this was last used (does anyone have any information?). At some time in the early 1950s, Cressy Road depot was taken over by British Road Services but the tracks inside remained for many years, long after trams stopped running in London altogether; all the tracks in the highway, and the buried rails in Highgate Road, were dug up in a major operation around 1953.

Naturally, the trams were a great attraction, but it was several months before I managed to get a ride on the 35, which ran through Islington and the Kingsway subway to the Embankment, from where the Festival of Britain buildings could be seen taking shape on the South Bank. I was particularly struck by the way the tram whizzed up the ramp at the Southampton Row end of the Kingsway subway, which can, of course, still be seen, complete with its pair of conduit tracks, all locked up inside magnificent Edwardian iron railings. Could it be that one day, we shall see the subway used once more for the purpose for which it was built?

By the time I took my tram ride, the London trams had only a couple of years more to run, the evil day being 5th July 1952; special tickets were issued during the last week of operation. The London trams were a puzzle to me because I could never work out what the long poles on the roof were for – they reminded me of fishing rods and lines; none of the remaining track north of the river was equipped with overhead wire and it wasn't until I had a holiday in Glasgow in 1954 that I realised that the London system had been unusual and that overhead cables were the normal current supply for tramways.

By contrast with the trams, the trolleybuses which were part of the everyday scene always seemed dull and uninteresting, probably because they did their job quietly and efficiently. They never made much of an impression on me. But who now remembers the rumbling noise which could be heard on the upper deck as the trolleys passed over points and crossings in the overhead wire?

Another attraction of Parliament Hill in the early 1950s was the railways; the neighbourhood was completely enmeshed by the spur lines which connected the Midland main line, the North London and the Kentish Town-Barking line. The variety of rolling stock to be seen was unbelievable. Day and night, a constant procession of freight trains rattled over the North London line; on our very first night at Gospel Oak, I was woken by the deafening sound of a long, loose-coupled freight coming to a halt, sounding exactly like a thousand dishes being smashed on the floor. Shortly after came the puffing of the engine restarting the train, followed by the smashing of another thousand dishes as the buffers recoiled against each other down the line of trucks. These trains were hauled by steam locomotives of many different classes; mostly, they were ex-LMS, but there were also ex-Great Northern and Great Eastern types, as well as the utility Southern Q1s, but I never saw an ex-Great Western locomotive and not a diesel was to be seen until 1956. The North London line was still electrified on the fourth-rail system, and the passenger trains were formed of the original London and North Western Railways Oerlikon stock in malachite green livery. Our local station, Gospel Oak, was a derelict timber structure which had been shattered when a land mine demolished the adjacent school. Another great local railway attraction was Kentish Town shed (14B), which could usually be visited unofficially without trouble early on a Sunday morning; in addition to the complement of modern Jubilee and class 5 4-6-0s and 2-6-4 tanks, the allocation included half a dozen LMS 4-4-0 compounds used on fast trains between St Pancras and Bedford, and some veteran freight engines dating back to the 1870s.

So far in this article, little has been said about buses, and this reflects the fact that in 1949, they played almost no part in my transport scene. The nearest bus stops to Parliament Hill were at Kentish Town and Hampstead Heath (South End Green) which was the terminus of the 24 and 187. Kentish Town Road carried routes 27, 134 and 137, and all of them had gone over to RT operation; I don't think I ever travelled on

another LT, ST or STL again, at least not in London. The brand new RTs with JXC and JXN registrations were resplendent, and route 24 was one of the haunts of the short-lived SRTs. The distinctive pre-war RTs could be seen at Camden Town on the 74 and at King's Cross on the 30. This really was a time of renewal, and, apart from the loss of the trams, the new was a great improvement on the old. But as a 'might have been', what if, in 1950, London Transport had developed a new generation of trams, using body components in common with those for the Routemaster which was then being designed?

It is strange how isolated memories persist; one evening, I was sitting upstairs at the front of a 134, when it drew up behind a 41 at Archway, and I remember noticing the S-shaped weather strip over the emergency exit, a characteristic Leyland detail which has been reinstated on RTW185. Talking of Leylands reminds me of a trip out to South Woodford for a school interview early in 1952 on the Central Line (1923 stock). At Woodford, we boarded one of the post-war STDs on route 20; these were PD2s with nice-looking standard Leyland bodywork. Vehicles of this class also turned up in Central London on the 38, but I do not recall seeing any after 1954. I think they were sold for service in Yugoslavia. They were identical to the buses used by provincial operators all over Britain, apart from their characteristic London-style roof number boxes, which, in the event, were never used.

A couple of other memorable bus journeys around this time were on private hire vehicles; one, in August 1952, was from a children's camp in Ongar to West Ham, for which a brand new red RT and a brand new green RF were provided, and another was a school trip to Horsham in a red RT. The use of buses in this way was normal at the time; nowadays, children would tend to make such journeys in the family car, and in fact I had travelled out to Ongar with a school friend whose father was, unusually, a car-owner, the vehicle being a 1936 Morris 8 with boxy, upright bodywork.

Coronation year saw the end of the trolleybus monopoly at Parliament Hill, with the arrival in the summer of the first bus. This was an extension to existing route 39, and it then became possible to travel direct to the West End, all the trolleybus routes going to the City. And the following year I visited the Commercial Vehicle Show, where RM1 was on public view for the first time; as displayed, it had a concealed radiator grille which made it look a bit like a 'Diddler' trolleybus. To tell the truth, I

didn't much like the look of it, especially when compared to an RT; I particularly disliked the slab sides, the clumsy air intake at the front and the absence of a proper radiator and bonnet.

The end of 1954 took me away from London and I spent much of the rest of the 1950s in rural Oxfordshire, with most school holidays in Glasgow. The latter city was a revelation; buses were almost a rarity there, the street scene being dominated by the green and orange trams, some of them brand new and far more luxurious than any town bus then or subsequently; these were to run for only eight years – what a waste! If you saw the television programme about Blackpool trams, you might remember the interview with E R L Fitzpayne, whose name was inscribed on every vehicle in the Glasgow fleet; this gentleman asserted that the trams had to go because they caused congestion – never mind the thousands of people they carried so efficiently day in and day out in all weathers!

During my time in rural Oxfordshire, however, I renewed my acquaintance with some old familiars. These were a couple of battered ex-London buses which formed part of a fleet operated by a company called 'Kemp's Motor Services' of Woodcote, running between Reading and Wallingford. The ex-Londoners were a Green Line coach similar to T504 and an STL, DLU157, one of the few of the class built with a lowbridge body. There was also an angular utility single decker of the 'flying pig style'. These relics were painted in red and carried on the sides a coat of arms surrounded by a laurel wreath, with the words 'Semper Eadem' (always the same) beneath. Kemp's lasted until about the end of 1955, when it was re-christened 'Chiltern Queens', and a respectable fleet of new underfloor engined AEC single deckers was introduced.

As the 1950s wore on, the pre-war RTs seemed to disappear from public service and were demoted to driver training, and the prototype RMs might be glimpsed occasionally. But if we were to return in a time machine, I am sure that one of the things that would strike us most about the streets of London would be the sheer uniformity of the buses.

1959 saw another family move, this time to Kensal Rise, also on the North London Line; it coincided with the end of an era in the London bus world, which was on the eve of another great upheaval.

## KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE PAUL MORRIS

I have been interested in transport since I was very young, my first interest being trains, probably due to my grandfather being a signalman on BR Southern Region. In May 1973 I visited Pioneer Coaches in Richmond with a friend, to see some ex-LT buses. This is where I met Richard Redfern cleaning the inside of RF672. We got talking and I said I would like to help him to restore RF672. (this was the start of a long restoration which is still going on!)

This, and my liking of mechanics led me to apply to London Transport for a job as a trainee mechanic. I started at Norbiton (NB) on the 5th August 1974 and working on RTs and RFs helped in the restoration of RF672 and later, with vehicles at Cobham.

I joined the London Bus Preservation Group in 1975, it being a valuable source of information and spare parts. In 1980, the accommodation for RF672 at Radnage became uncertain for the long term, so we applied to become residents at Cobham. Luckily, a space became available in May 1980. Since being at Cobham, I have helped in many projects including full mechanical overhauls of RF332 (the Towbus) and RF226.

In 1987, I left Norbiton Garage to work at Stamford Brook Garage in the MoT test lane. I acquired my MoT tester's licence there in 1988. I joined London Coaches in April 1989, passing my Class One PSV and HGV licences whilst there. I moved to Epsom Coaches in October 1992, ending an eighteen year spell with LT.



## BUS OF YESTERYEAR RALLY

STAINES, 14TH AUGUST

Alan Bond

The Bus of Yesteryear rally at Stained marked a turning point for Cobham in that it was the first time for many years that Trust vehicles had attended a rally en masse. Perhaps en masse is an exaggeration because only three vehicles were involved, RM3, STL441 and TD95, nevertheless, it was good to blow the dust off some of our vehicles and show them to the public at large. Due to the good offices of Andy Baxter and Malcolm Lewis, who stepped in at the last minutes as we were short of a driver, all three vehicles were on display soon after the official opening of the rally.

Once again, the organisation was magnificent, the only small problem being that most of the vehicles were parked facing the wrong way for the sun and thus caused some difficulty for the many photographers. This is one of the small things that it is easy to overlook when you are organising a rally, mainly because there are so many other things to think of, so it certainly cannot be taken as a reflection on David Bosher and his helpers. Your scribe is probably as much to blame as anyone else because he should have noticed on arrival, had a quick word in the appropriate ear and done something about it. Oh well!

Moans and groans over. The turnout was magnificent to the point of overcrowding and everybody was enjoying themselves thoroughly, none more than the audience for Ian Barrett's demonstration of tyre changing alongside the breakdown tender. Perhaps it is an idea we can incorporate in the open day programme next year!

There were a lot of lovely vehicles present on this day but special mention has to be made of the LT Museum's STL469 which was parked next to our own STL441 for most of the day. This was truly a meeting of old friends as the two bonnet numbers were new to Chalk Farm in the summer of 1934 and, even more extraordinary, both bodies were new to Hackney in the same year. Despite the higher stock number, STL469 now carries the earlier body of the two (14393) which is of the basic STL3 type while 441 (14503) has the later STL3/2. The main distinguishing feature of the latter type is the full depth glass for the route number aperture on the destination screen. At the end of the day we made the effort and turned the two vehicles around and parked them

side by side facing the afternoon sun and many photographs were taken. It was an opportunity that does not arrive too often and it is good to know that the occasion has been preserved for posterity.

Among many other vehicles, the very nice Leeds Leyland Titan PD3/5 came in for a lot of attention as did two very nicely turned out Bristol Lodekkas, on each from Hants & Dorset and Western National. The lovely Huddersfield Regent III was once again on view and there was a large contingent of RMs. After a hesitant start with brake problems, Q83 arrived on the scene a little later in the day and proceeded to do Bill credit again. It cannot be easy keeping a pre-war vehicle on top line these days but Bill manages it despite all his other commitments, not the least of which is his almost constant attendance at Cobham to work on the Trust's vehicles. Another highlight of the day was RT113 which is always a welcome attender at any rally. The way this vehicle is turned out in the early wartime garb is no less than magnificent and serves to show the youngsters a part of our transport history which they would otherwise only read about in books, so to see it in three dimensions must be counted as an educational experience not to be missed. My second favourite bus of the day was the 1966 Massey bodied Wigan Corporation Leyland Titan PD3. When I look at this machine I wonder why Leyland ever bothered to go in for tin fronts. My favourite bus of the day? Why, TD95, of course, especially as I was privileged to have the honour of driving her to her first rally for a long time. Many favourable comments were heard from appreciative members of the public and those who did such a superb job of the restoration should know that their efforts were well worthwhile. John Marshall had entered two vehicles for this rally and I have to say that if either of them had to miss it I am glad it was not RFW14. It's always a pleasure to see an RFW out and about and the kick I get from seeing one is no different now than it was forty years ago, such is the rarity value of these unusual vehicles. I always remembered the distinctive fact that the body carried more panes of glass than passengers. What a memory!

A couple of strange entries in the programme referred to RTLs and RTWs as Leyland Titan PD2/1. A minor error but important nevertheless. Leyland official records all show RTLs as 7RT and RTWs as 6RT. A small point, I know, but they were so far removed from the standard Titan as to be a completely different model. On the other side of the coin the gem in the programme was the photo of TD71 operating from Plumstead (AM)



in 1954. The TD type was only operated by this garage from 30 June to 4 August 1954 and TD71 was the only bus of its type to run from AM. The route was so busy that RTLs were substituted from 5 August. I have only ever seen one other photograph of TD71 on the 256 so this picture is in itself something of a rarity.

Once again a very pleasant day out was had by all. Well done David, we are all looking forward to next year's event.



We have several 'his and hers' teams at Cobham, one of the most active being Pam and Dave Johnson who own RT3496. Pam is pictured here, basking in the sun at the recent Bus of Yesteryear rally at Staines.

## RT/RF REGISTER RALLY

FINSBURY PARK, 21ST AUGUST

Alan Bond

For the second time this season the Trust was represented by three vehicles in the shape of TD95, RM3 and STL441. After a steady run through west and north London, which turned many heads, all three vehicles arrived at Finsbury Park in fine fettle.

There has been a two year gap since the RT/RF Register last held this rally and on that occasion TD95 was not available and thus she missed out on the run over the 210 route from Finsbury Park to Golders Green. This time around the omission was rectified and I am happy to say that the old lady behaved impeccably, which is more than could be said for her driver, who also happens to be your correspondent. In order to give a little window dressing for the benefit of photographers, we carried our maximum allowed eight passengers, including a gentleman, name unknown, who made a video recording of both the outward and return journeys. This particular person also happened to be a driver at Holloway (HT) at the time when that depot used to work the 210, but he only drove the SM type on it. Like many others, he remembers the days of the TDs on the route and I think it made his day to be invited to ride with us. We have been promised a copy of the video when it has been edited and this should prove very interesting and entertaining. The trip was enlivened by a long traffic jam on Highgate Hill, caused by two cars parked opposite one another outside the Prince of Wales (yes, I know all the local pubs). As a consequence of this I felt it necessary to make use of first gear on at least four occasions when we had to stop. I make no further comment save to say that the results can be judged when the video is made available! Once again many heads were turned in our direction, not just by enthusiasts but by many members of the public at large and I think that it bears repeating to say that it pays tribute to the effort put in by those people responsible for the restoration of this fine vehicle.

As with most of the Register's events, the emphasis is on quality rather than quantity and for the second time this season the Trust's vehicles could be seen consorting with RFW14. Another LT private hire vehicle to appear was RF4 and this I have not seen since it was with Premier Travel and I have to admit that the number confused me at first as I thought it was one of the Irish exports until the owner put me right. In a similar

vein, there were several Central Bus RFs in various guises, with that of Jim Andress (RF366) who carried the responsibility for the organisation of the rally, looking tidier each time we see it. The Hinson's pair (RF433 and 453) were, as always, evocative of the middle age of the RF family, one of them being a proper RF and the only one of its type on display. Special mention must be made of your editor's RF534, which not only looks immaculate but also goes extremely well, even when fully loaded. The two trips I operated with Mike as his 'honorary' conductor confirmed that the RF could easily hold its own in modern conditions despite the design being 45 years old. It is a sad reflection on the modern scene that it would probably be a lot more reliable too!

A smattering of RTs, Country RFs and RMs completed the scene for the day and most of the single deckers were used on the free bus 233 to Carter's Steam Fair at Priory Park. At various times during the day runs were made over the 212 route to Muswell Hill and TD95 took her turn on this, albeit rather late in the day. In order to create the proper atmosphere our run was started from the LT bus station in Wells Terrace and once again we carried our 'window dressing' to add a little more reality to the scene. Many photographs were taken and a good strong ascent of the Crouch Hill and Muswell Hill mountains! Well, they feel like mountains with an E181! A little crafty work in making two circuits of the roundabout at Muswell Hill Broadway enabled us to get on to the bus stand, probably the first time a TD has appeared there in more than thirty years, and more photographs were taken. According to some authorities, the crews on the 212 used to operate up to fourteen journeys in the course of a shift and, if that is true, then I take off my hat to them, for once was enough for me. I know that traffic conditions in those days were less hectic than they are today but I can fully appreciate the relief of the drivers when they received their RFs in place of the TDs. I just bet they would have loved to have driven Bristol Ls on this route!

With this kind of event it is hard to single out individual entries as the stationary vehicles tend to get overshadowed by the road runs, but RTW29 does deserve special mention. I have to say that I have no particular leaning towards RTWs other than that I took my very first PSV test on one. It's just that the two regular rally attenders of this type are always immaculately turned out and catch the eye. Even so, it is always nice to see a line up of proper LT buses and long may it be possible to do so.

Like the St Albans rally earlier in the year, this event was well staged and, in a way, low key. It really seemed that everything ran itself, which of course we know it didn't, so all credit to the Register members who put in all the hard work to make both these events such a resounding success. I, for one, am looking forward to the next.



RFW14 has made a welcome return to several rallies this season, including Staines and Finsbury Park. It is believed to be one of only two survivors in Britain.



You can read all about this scene on pages 16 and 17.

## DIARY DATES

REMEMBER REMEMBER . . .  
The 5th of November

The next great social event falls on Saturday 5th November when we hold our popular Clear-up Day followed by the ever more popular Cobham Bus Museum bonfire and fireworks display!

It is hoped that a number of tasks can be achieved during the day in readiness for a relaxing social evening around the bonfire. This year, to make for more interest and variety, the fireworks will be purchased by the Trust and an admission fee charged – there is no need to bring any fireworks, but of course we would welcome any that you do!

The entrance fee will be £5 per adult and £10 for a family ticket, payable on the night, and includes soup, sausages, bread and beverages (bring your own beer and wine). If you can't join us during the day, assemble from 7 pm, lighting up time 7.30 pm. There will be the usual popular raffle (well, I like it . . .) so please give generously on the night as proceeds will go towards our Clubhouse Fund. The museum will close at 10 pm due to the early start of the trip to Birmingham the next morning. Hope to see plenty of you on both days!

Bill Cottrell

## VISIT TO BaMMoT

Sunday 6th November

We have re-scheduled the trip to Birmingham and Midlands Museum of Transport to coincide with their 'Pre-hibernation Running Day'. Be at Cobham at 8 am, at which time our bus/buses aim to depart. There is a notice on the Cobham canteen on which to put your name if you wish to attend to help us judge the numbers, or you can let Mike Nash know by giving him a ring. Failing that, just turn up on the day. If this event is well supported we will hope to run some more trips out and about next season.

BaMMoT has a superb collection of about eighty buses, trams and other interesting exhibits, including several London vehicles, so it should be a great day out.

Our transport for the day has yet to be confirmed which is why we would prefer you to let us know if you plan to attend. It should be something with heaters, though!!

Mike Nash

## CHRISTMAS LIGHTS TOUR

Saturday 17th December

Organised by members of the RT/RF Register, this popular annual event usually plays host to around a dozen RTs and RFs and there is a photo stop mid-route in the atmospheric Bermondsey Tunnel before later re-grouping in Park Lane where a collection in aid of 'Children in Need' takes place before everyone adjourns in MacDonalds!

Last year's event raised over £200. If you wish to take part this year (with or without a bus) call John Hinson on 081- -1062 for more details. What a great way to finish a great season!

## SUBSCRIPTIONS '95

Sorry folks, – we just couldn't keep it down any longer. But it has been £10 for an awfully long time. So from January, subscriptions will increase to £12 – but with a guarantee that in most cases they will be held at this level for at least three years. The extra £2 will help to fund the Museum extension, your Club House, this (rather expensive) magazine and to put more Trust vehicles on the road.

The Committee is taking the opportunity to introduce a system of subscription payment by Charitable Covenant. For those of you that participate (it does not work for non-taxpayers) we shall be able to claim tax benefit which will increase your £12 to £16 – a substantial benefit and hence the promise of no increases to payments by Covenant for at least three years. Non-covenanted subscriptions unfortunately cannot be offered the same guarantee.

At the same time, we shall be asking you to pay your subscriptions by bankers order wherever possible. This will ease our administration (and yours) as subscriptions can be quite time consuming.

There is always one worry with Covenants – what happens if you break them? Do not worry, you will not get into trouble with the tax man and neither will the Trust – we just stop claiming the tax relief.

Full details (including instructions on form filling) will be enclosed with the next issue of the magazine but if you have any queries why not telephone me at home on 0252 978 (before 9 pm please) and I will be pleased to hear from you.

Roger West

## VEHICLE NEWS FROM PETER PLUMMER

This quarter has been unusual in that for the height of the summer months when rallies and trips are on everyone's agenda, Trust vehicle projects have progressed exceptionally well.

**TD95** Paul Morris and Colin Prince checked and adjusted the tapets of the 'new' power unit prior to the vehicle attending the rallies at Staines, Finsbury Park and Norbiton and fulfilling the honour of carrying Alan Bond's bride to the church on their wedding day, Saturday 27th August.

**702B** Dave Kriesler completed the rewiring and fitted a new ignition switch. Andy Baxter and Alan Bond investigated the gearbox problem whereby only two gears could be selected and Andy was able to reinstate the unit to full operation very quickly. Andy and Alan then went on to bleed the brakes in an attempt to discover why the braking efficiency was so poor. Several parts were deemed to be required, which included a new brake master cylinder. The new parts were obtained from 'Bygone Bedford Bits' but it was noted that the new master cylinder had provision for the pipework on the opposite side to that fitted to 702B. I subsequently established that we had been sent all that was readily available and it was in fact an export model component. Undeterred, Andy Baxter swapped all working parts into 702B's existing master cylinder body and brakes were reinstated, requiring only to be bedded in to obtain efficiency.

New belata belting has been fitted to cab scuttle and radiator shell by myself, to improve bonnet fit. Paul Morris machine-turned a missing collared stud for the driver's opening windshield and this was fitted by me, making this unit fully operational. Andy Baxter felt the starter motor was getting a little lazy and removed the unit, returning it the following week overhauled to good effect, making the best of 702B's electrical system.

**T448** Curved wheel arch timbers were finally made and fitted by myself in late July, with panelling up taking place mid-August. Three timbers and two panels are all that need to be replaced and fitted to complete the nearside of this vehicle. Rod Lucas, Malcolm Lewis and Brian Hine have cleaned and

painted the exposed chassis and body undersides ahead of fitting the rubber nearside rear mudguard and aluminium panels forming the 'skirt'.

**RT2775** Raja Kalsy started dismantling the platform at the end of May, assisted by Malcolm Lewis, Brian and Alan Hine. The badly corroded platform supports were removed by John Bedford and John Pimlott in July, with the battery cradle and support removed in early August. The heavily corroded riser was cut out by Ian Barrett on 27 August and the surrounding steel areas were cleaned and ground back to bare metal by George Langford and his father.

**T504** With modification work on the radiator top tank almost complete by an outside engineering company, radiator assembly using the specially made bottom tank is now imminent.



Great progress is being made with the restoration of STL2377. Part of the team involved is pictured removing the old engine; from left to right – Bill Cottrell, Alan Bond, Andy Baxter and Philip Millard.

STL2377 Andy Baxter, Bill Cottrell, Philip Millard, Martin Gibbons and John Pimlott formed a team to remove and overhaul the front axle mid-May. Front road springs were removed, checked and re-bushed by Bill Cottrell and Andy Baxter and, with the assistance of Philip Millard, were all refitted in late June. Removal of the engine followed to enable the engine bay to be cleaned and a battered cab side to be repaired by Ian Barrett and myself. As the engine had an unrecorded history and appeared not to have been run up for some years, it was decided to fit a known low mileage AEC A173 7.7 litre engine held as spare by Alan Allmey after the vehicle, a BBC broadcasting mobile unit on a Regal chassis, was broken up in the mid-1970s at Cobham. Ancillary equipment was removed from both engines and placed side by side for comparison. The BBC Regal engine had been fitted with a manual gearbox clutch unlike STL2377's own engine fitted with a fluid flywheel. The process of transplanting the fluid flywheel onto the 'BBC' engine necessitated grinding 1/8 inch all over the inside edge of the bell housing, which took me 1 1/2 hours of solid 'grind' to complete. Flywheel fitted by early July enabled Bill Cottrell and Andy Baxter to concentrate overhauling the worn steering box. Raja Kalsy and Brian Hine painted the engine bay after cleaning to spotless condition. The cab interior is currently being cleaned back to bare metal by Philip Millard.

RM3/STL441 The pre MoT checks were performed by Martin Gibbons in June, making the vehicles available for Alan Bond to obtain first attempt passes. The vehicles subsequently attended rallies at Staines, Finsbury Park and Norbiton during August and September.

## REXINE SUPPLIER

I have been in contact with Wardle Storeys of Essex (0206- 401) who manufacture Rexine in two different grades and in a variety of colours. Although not really flexible enough for use on window cappings, their products should prove useful for seat edgings and panel covering. Contact Derek Markham to request your free samples catalogue.

MN

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We continue to make good progress in this key area, with membership up to 240 – and this total does not include those members who are currently up for renewal. Well done to all who have tried to recruit new members.

You will note that I have been responsible for bringing in a fair few of these, simply by word of mouth at rallies and by making application forms available to those who are in attendance. My aim is to see Trust membership swell to 500, a target we can easily reach if each one of you makes the effort to recruit just one new member. With Cobham's fast improving reputation, it shouldn't be a difficult task. I'm counting on you!

I hope during 1995 to take a serious look at our membership records with a view to bringing them into the Nineties. A revised application form and other improvements should help the Trust in becoming more efficient and having useful membership statistics to hand. Watch this space!

Mike Nash

John Black	Newport Pagnell, Bucks	RM737	ML
John Hart	London		MN
Christopher French	Carterton, Oxon		
Edwin Knorn	Swindon, Wilts	RMCI476	RW
Robert McCloy	Walton on Thames, Surrey		
David Stanley	Basingstoke, Hants		
Chris Sullivan	Borehamwood, Herts	MB90	ML
Martin Walls	Addlestone, Surrey		MN
Andy Wylie	Watford, Herts		JH
Johnson Kane	County Down, NI	RF515	MN
Stour Smith	Western Australia		
Derrick Gregory	Macclesfield, Cheshire		MN
Graham Sibbons	Billericay, Essex	RM	
Colin Lawrence	Chichester, W Sussex		
Donald Barrington	Isleworth, Surrey		MN
Roger Hawkins	Sittingbourne, Kent		MN
John Hammell	Iden, E Sussex		
Ron Kitching	Basingstoke, Hants		
Phillip Cruise	Fulham, London		MN

John Shearman	Tunbridge Wells, Kent	PDI	PP
		and many more	
Roger Kent	Offham, Kent		PP
John Broadhurst	Staines, Mddx		PM
Richard Summers	Harpenden, Herts		MN
David Spratt	Walthamstow, London		MN
Kevin Whitehorn	Camberley, Surrey		MN
Frank Barratt	Sidcup, Kent	RF368/RM8	ML
Ken Bennett	Walton on Thames, Surrey		MN
Paul Lea	Emsworth, Hants	SM30/SMS637 FS6/FS8	
John Stevenson	Epsom, Surrey		
Mandy Reeve	Chingford, London		
Dr R A Sparks	Cardiff		
M J Padbury	Southgate, London	RT2688	MN
Ian Grant	Poplar, London		MN

Information supplied (15 September 1994) In the right-hand column are the initials of the members who have recruited these above. JH—John Hinson; ML—Malcolm Lewis; MN—Mike Nash; PM—Paul Morris; PP—Peter Plummer; RW—Roger West

Do let the Membership Secretary know when you recruit someone. Let's see a few more names getting the credit!

## COBHAM EVENING PARTY

John Gray

**D**esignated as Bus-B-Que in the calendar of events, Saturday 13 August turned out to be a nearly-identical re-run of the event held at the Museum twelve months previously. The weather, food, atmosphere – all very similar to the previous success; perhaps the number of people there was down a little bit, and certainly the content was rather different, both with new faces and some familiar ones absent. Some, we heard, had been torn away to attend more dignified events – weddings, accompanying a mayor, etc, but for those of us present, even the occasional wasp didn't stop our enjoyment.

Thanks again to all those who prepared it, consumed it and cleared up. Now for Guy Fawkes!

## ANSWERS TO VIC'S QUIZ NUMBER 2

Congratulations to member P R Mundy, winner of the second quiz compiled by Vic Chivers. Mr Mundy wins a year's free membership. There will be another quiz in the next issue, just in time for Christmas! Meanwhile, here are the answers to number 2.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 Aldenham Works                              | 12 Yes, prewar and possibly after WWII                        |
| 2 Yes   | 13 Reigate, Abbey Wood, Hitchin, Hendon, Addlestone, Enfield  |
| 3 LT Museum                                   | 14 It was front entrance STL1470, later used as a tree lopper |
| 4 MCW, Cravens, Park Royal, Saunders, Weymann | 15 STL2093, kept at Cobham                                    |
| 5 Yes   | 16 It was a first-aid post                                    |
| 6 Exhibition tour buses                       | 17 CS   |
| 7 RM5   | 18 RF41   |
| 8 ST922                                       | 19 The garage is part of Weymann's former site, hence WY      |
| 9 The last trolleybus depot                   | 20 Fifty  |
| 10 Ford Motor Company                         |   |
| 11 9.6 Litres                                 |   |

**FOR SALE** Ex LT service vehicle No. 1096F 1956 Ford 100E van. Fully restored and recently MoT'd. (photo below). £4,000 or close offer.  
Norman Anscombe 0293- [redacted] 907 (Surrey)





2/085/1  
Issue 2

## Portable Single Cylinder Air Compressor for Manual Operation



### Introduction

NEW from Bendix Limited, a special lightweight single cylinder compressor designed to supplement existing vehicle compressed air systems.

Your drivers are only too aware of the frustrations caused by loss of air pressure in congested traffic conditions. This compressor will enable them to boost their air supply whilst stuck in traffic jams, etc., and is a must for spring brake systems.

The compressor, with its own flexible hose connection (shown here cunningly stowed in the plunger assembly) can be connected to Schrader type test points which are now being included in air brake systems.

Illustrated here is the right hand version. Details of the left hand version are available on request.

### Specification

Air cooled manual operation, single stage lightweight design. Single cylinder. Bore 0.75 in; Stroke 11.0 in; Swept volume 0.85 cu ft at 1,000 strokes per minute.

### Construction

Robust lightweight construction in non-corrosive material. Only one wearing part.

### Maintenance

Negligible. Oil only when output drops.