

LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST  
**NEWSLETTER**



**APRIL/MAY 1991**

THE LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST  
COBHAM BUS MUSEUM, REDHILL ROAD,  
COBHAM, SURREY, KT11 1EF.

TELEPHONE 0932 864078 CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER 293319

OFFICIALS & COMMITTEE MEMBERS

OFFICIALS

***CHAIRMAN***

DAVID HURLEY. VALERIE ROAD, WORTHING, WEST SUSSEX.

***TREASURER***

JULIAN BOWDEN. FORDE AVENUE, BROMLEY, KENT, BR1 3EU.

***SECRETARY***

JOHN BEDFORD. ALBANY COURT, 38, ALEXANDRA GROVE, LONDON N12 8NN.

COMMITTEE

***ALAN CROSS***

ROLLSWOOD DRIVE, SOLIHULL, WEST MIDLANDS, B91 1NL.

***DAVID KREISLER***

HEADLEY AVENUE, WALLINGTON, SURREY, SM6 8NQ.

***ERIC CHAMBERS***

MANSFIELD CLOSE, DARWELL DRIVE, ASCOT, BERKS, SL5 8NW.

***TIM NICHOLSON***

BRIDGE CLOSE, CIPPENHAM, SLOUGH, BUCKS, SL1 5JF.

***TONY PETERS***

c/o COBHAM BUS MUSEUM, REDHILL RD, COBHAM, SURREY, KT11 1EF.

***WIN WICKENS***

BRENT CLOSE, CHATHAM, KENT, ME5 OTG.

## RML, CASUALTY OF ITS OWN SUCCESS?

It looks as if future generations desirous of restoring an RML will face an impossible task. Apart from the current Cummins and Iveco re-engining program, moves are afoot to modify the bus in almost every area. A victim of its own success, it has outlived most of its spares and suppliers, so that parts to the original specification are becoming prohibitively expensive to repair. Items such as compressors, steering side arms and most electrical units, both major such as alternators, or minor such as wiper motors are proving difficult to overhaul, radically affecting the overall reliability of the bus. Whilst seeking to overcome the problems of supply the opportunity may be taken to update specification by fitting fluorescent lighting and better heaters. The rexine may be replaced by waite easy-clean panelling, different floor covering and seat moquette. The answer could be to buy one now, or perhaps Don Allmey could store all the obsolete parts away for the benefit of those following on behind us.

## RLH'S IN THE NEWS

Dave Pring has bought the erstwhile London Country clothing unit 581J, formerly RLH44. It appeared at Cobham at the start of this year to enable work to be carried out cleaning the chassis. David tells us he intends to use it as a caravan but the only external mod. will be the re-instatement of the front upper deck windows. It will also provide a secure future source of spares for RLH 23.

Meanwhile, Marco Ghidorzi appeared at the Open Day with dramatic photos showing his progress with RLH 29. He was originally going to run it in Switzerland with only the minimum of work to comply with local regulations, but after discovering more corrosion than anticipated, he decided to totally strip and rebuild the bus as he did with RLH 24. His pictures showed the skeletal outline of the body frame supported on oil drums and the chassis stripped of every part, sand blasted, sprayed and re-assembled in progress. Good luck Marco.

## TRUST VEHICLE UPDATE. APRIL 91

The Bedford half of the canteen unit 702B has been extensively rebuilt over the last year. Roy Gould began the project by changing the kingpins, renewing the wheel rubbers and wheel bearings. A team including Brian Hine, Malcolm Lewis and Philip Millard then took over the more mundane tasks of stripping all the units from the chassis, checking, cleaning, painting then replacing them. Whilst the units were removed, the chassis was scraped, derusted and primed and painted. The rear springs were sent away for re-setting. A major problem has been refurbishing the cab. Areas of serious corrosion on the floor pan had to be cut out and new sections welded in. This work was carried out by Ian Barrett. The cab is now fitted back on the chassis. The next part of the project relies on the skill of David Kreisler in fitting a new wiring loom. We are hoping to get the unit ready to tow the

trailer to the RF40 rally at Staines at the end of May. At the time of writing, end of April, there is still much to do.

## TD 95

The TD has been accepted for a place in the HCVS London to Brighton run.

The last mechanical problem to sort out for passing the MOT test was the lack of braking effort on the front axle, a problem that was hidden by the super efficient rear brakes. This was a major headache because so many things were found wrong, and every time a fault was rectified it was assumed the problem was solved. The first stage was to check the shoe adjustment. The liners were lished and the drums skimmed. when the shoes were re-assembled there was very little improvement. Attention was then given to the servo side of the system. The wheel servos were overhauled, as was the main servo. This was found to be in poor condition with the seal only just recoverable. After overhaul and re-assembly, there was still no perceptible improvement. to the front brakes. It was then decided to move the bus to a certain friendly North London Bus garage where improvements could be monitored on a rolling road. The front brakes were stripped again, and this time a fresh pair of eyes noticed the cams were not lifting the shoes as they should. It appeared the cams were assembled on the axle back to front. They were correct for an air-brake system where the cams push forward, but on our servo system the cam is pulled. This resulted in very little effort being transmitted to the shoes due to the different

angle on the front and heel of the cam. The obvious answer was to swap the cams over, nearside to offside and vice-versa. However, it proved not to be as simple as this. When cams were swapped the wire from the adjuster would not line up due to the offset of the holes. The only explanation could be that the previous owner, it was known, had some twenty years previously had changed the axle unit from a Leyland PS1 coach. Prior to fitting the 'new' axle, he stripped and replaced some parts with new. It could be that at this time the wrong cams were fitted. In this era the brakes would have been tested for the MOT using a Tapley meter.

Tim Nicholson spent many hours burning the midnight oil setting the shoes as close as possible to the drum. Every time the check was made the hubs and drums had to be stripped and re-assembled. Eventually the best compromise was reached. I am pleased to add that when tested on the MOT the brakes locked up all round. At the time of writing, Peter Plummer and his bodywork team are steaming flat out to be ready for the Brighton Run, working until 11pm last Sunday night. The condition of the TD reflects great credit to all those who took part in the project and I believe Peter is going to write the definitive article on the subject when, of course, he gets an idle moment.

## RM3

Work is in hand in solving the long term problem of RM3's power steering oil leak. Investigation by Tim Nicholson has shown that the oil is being pumped into the column faster than it can return to the reservoir.

Tim is at present doubling the return capacity by adding a second pipe to the system.

## RT2775

Steady improvement is taking place with Philip Millards efforts.

A start has been made in re-signwriting the 'Mobil' advert on the rear, due to Philip's initiative in gaining a £250 sponsorship from Mobiloil. At present work is in hand in stripping very many coats of paint off the stairs, the paint being so thick that it is taking a days work for each level.

## T504

The 10T10 is another vehicle having its long term problem sorted by Tim Nicholson. Those of us who have driven it are aware of the smoke signals it gives out under acceleration. The pump has been recalibrated several times and the injectors also checked more times than the Trust has elections, however with no perceptible improvement. It is suspected that the pump fitted does not match the characteristics of our particular variation of AEC 8.8 engine.

## RF332

The Towbus was aroused from hibernation to pass its MOT in time to perform its duties on Open Day. After the embarrassment of refusing to start halfway through the test, the batteries were subsequently changed.

## NON TRUST VEHICLE NEWS

### RT3491

The riser replacement project (see detailed article in this issue. Ed.) is coming to a successful conclusion, now put into abeyance while other tasks take priority. A fuller write up on this project will soon flow from Peter Plummers pen (when he gets an idle moment).

### Q83

The Q has benefitted from a double rear spring overhaul. At the same time the extremely worn bushes in the chassis were renewed. The offside bias has now been corrected somewhat.

### T219

T219 has borrowed the front axle from derelict T252. Tim Nicholson has stripped the original pending overhaul of the king pins, bushes, bearings and brakes.

The original axle will be replaced when this is done. T219 attended many events last year in connection with the Greenline Diamond jubilee celebrations, and was also used in February to convey VIP's to the re-opening of a restored 'Jubilee' bus shelter locally at Walton. The shelters were built to benefit the people of rural Surrey to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935.

### IPSWICH 16

John Bedfords Regent travelled back home to Ipswich for final painting by the Corporation, and replendant it now looks, whilst at Ipswich, it passed the MOT test and looks set for a successful rally season.

COPY DATE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER END OF JUNE

## RT 3491 - THE STORY SO FAR

BY IAN BARRETT

It was several years ago when a small group of Cobham residents sat on RT 3491 at the last Southall Rally. All of us were looking at each other in disbelief and partial dismay. Why?, you may ask. The news about Simon Douglas Lanes bus was gradually filtering down the grape vine. He had been told by Paul Morris that to put his RT up for another Class Five MOT test would be a waste of time as it would not stand a chance of passing. The corrosion in the platform riser was terminal and because of this it had started to collapse. As if this was not bad enough, the front bulkhead was also starting to crumble in places.

Simon, understandably, was less than chuffed, what a thing to find out. He had a major decision to make. Did he scrap his 'Evadnie' and buy an RM, or did he fork out around £8000 for a major re-fit?

Conversation on this subject went on for some time. Eventually after a lot of thought and more discussion a number of the people on board offered to rebuild the back of the RT at Cobham, if Simon could get some of the parts required re-manufactured to LT specification drawings.

After about six months more use, Simon decided to let us start work. Evadnie was put up the front of the garage facing nose in on the side next to the canteen.

I made a start on stripping the platform, but unfortunately shortly afterwards suffered a knee injury. This left Peter Plummer and Bill Cotrell to do most of the dismantling work, ably assisted by others.

Two months passed before I was able to attend Cobham, but when I did get back there the others had removed nearly all the back of Simons bus. Peter was just starting to cut the riser out after jacking the bus up, with Bill supporting the body and lowering the chassis down to leave room for access.

With all the platform parts removed it was plain to see there was more rust than bus at the back of RT 3491. Simon had been lucky to have been driving Evadnie for as long as he had been.

Not only had the rear riser collapsed by half an inch on the nearside but the bulkhead that it was attached to at the top was badly corroded..

The rear lower body rail that the platform supports bolt to was like a pepper pot and about 18" of this section had at some point belonged to another bus anyway.

The bottom step was like tin foil and both wheel arch hoops had detached themselves from the greater part of the body.

This was definately not a five minute job!

To be continued

## CHILDHOOD RECOLLECTIONS OF BUSES IN ST ALBANS

BY MALCOLM LEWIS

In August 1964 I arrived in this world for better or worse (probably the latter) at home in a three bed semi in the Marshalside district of St Albans, Hertfordshire. I lived here for 18 years and hence witnessed several changes of buses, routes, and numbers.

Marshalside was the terminus for the 341, occasionally the 330 (I think) and the 354 routes.

I first remember RT's on the 354, the highlight of a ride home was in "The Ridgeway" at the end of the journey when the conductor allowed my mother and I, for my benefit, to remain seated in the lower saloon rear seats to watch the bus being reversed into the side road at the route terminus. I recall a lay-by being made into the grass verge especially for the bus to park in: this layby still remains today but few St Albans residents will now know of its original purpose.

The RT's were replaced by MBS'. Unpleasant vehicles to ride in with a large standing area at the front of the bus. Poor suspension caused all the internal fittings to rattle at the slightest bump. I was always pleased when an RF was substituted as these were comfortable and cosy to ride in especially on a cold and wet winters day.

The 341 route, I recall, had RMC's and I think RMC 4 worked this route though I stand to be corrected. The RMC's still had the luggage racks in place which I see have been removed from the ones now operating in London. The RMC's were also comfortable to ride in - not surprising since as I was later to learn they had been built for Greenline service.

What I believe was unique to St Albans were the Marshall bodied SMW's diverted from, as I later discovered, South Wales Transport. These seemed very modern looking vehicles compared to the MBS'. The front entrance with single leaf swing open doors with handrails attached seemed revolutionary at the time. Inside, the ramped floor, unlike the high step of an MBS seemed like a good idea. The last two rows of seats (I think) before the back seats had a 2+3 arrangement leaving a very narrow gangway at this point.

I can still remember being frightened by the terrible noise of an SMW going along the main street in St Albans. I was too young to realise it was just a blown exhaust as I thought it was going to blow up! Does anyone know what happened to the SMW's after presumably being sold by London Country? I would be interested to know if any have survived as such a unique type would be worth preserving.

I could recall more but I will start getting rather up to date in terms of vehicle age. I stand to be corrected on any wrong information but please bear in mind I was only vaguely interested in buses with regards numbers and types up until age 18.

## COPY DATE FOR NEXT NEWSLETTER END OF JUNE

## COVER PICTURE

Cover picture this month is a modernised RF on the first day of operation of the 727 in 1967.

## REPLACING THE COBHAM AA BOX

Barry Lloyd would like to replace the AA box that was removed from the main gate at Cobham. Any members that can assist with help, drawings or measurements should contact Barry on 0322 271655 or see Colin Wickens at Cobham.

(I think there is a similar AA box at Beaulieu. Ed.)

## A NEW BUS?

For those that have a passion for smaller buses (that fit the front room) there are rumours of a new range of model buses to 4mm/1-76 scale (EFE to you). First model is nearing completion and will certainly be of interest to LBPT members. Watch this space!

## NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter seems to have adopted a quarterly issue which reflects on the amount of copy I have received. Thanks to all those that sent me a contribution, especially Bill Cottrell for his two pages of vehicle news which at least made interesting typing/reading for me!

Remember the Newsletter will only appear if there is sufficient material to print.

**Please do not complain there is no newsletter if *YOU* haven't submitted material!**

If you must complain, please do it in writing so I can print it! Photographs are always welcome and they will be returned after use if requested..



VIDEO. We've never quite got round to having a video machine at home. We have talked about it, and how useful it would be to record programmes etc. etc., but a video film has now come on the market which will almost force Olde Alan to think again and get one. It's the "London Archive with John Huntley". I've not managed to see it on anyone else's video yet so I am not sure how much of the Geoff Ashwell material shot in 1949 is on it. I saw Geoff Ashwell's film many years ago and I know it included a shot of my C 111 as a relief on the 53A going round Parliament Square. There were also shots of LTs and STs (including a Bluebird ST) on the Epsom Downs Race Service. I know these are on the video because I was asked about the white crosses chalked upon the nearside wings of many of the buses. One person suggested they indicated that the vehicles were earmarked for immediate withdrawal. Now it can be revealed! Nothing as subtle as that. Bus enthusiasts strike again. It was like this 'ere. There was a team of us, all making a photographic record of the buses on the Race Services, and it was our intention to record every bus running on the services. To ensure there was not too much duplication of effort we agreed that whoever photographed the bus would then put a chalk X on the wing as a sign to the others that it was "in the bag" and so no one else need snap it. Simple! But we did not realise that our chalk markings were being recorded for posterity and that we would see them on video 42 years later. We must all be eternally grateful to Geoff Ashwell and Vic, Jones who co-operated with him not only on the filming but also on the many historic sound recordings which they made of buses and trams at the end of 1949. It is good that this visual record is available on video to show the younger generations that there was life before the RT/RF era - to hear some of them talk you would think that life only began with the RT and RF and that before then it was the dark ages.

One can see their point of view - the RT and RF are the earliest vehicles they can remember, whereas older folks can say that because the earliest buses they recall are LTs and STs, then NS/B/K/S types belong to the dark ages. I must say I cannot muster much enthusiasm for stage coaches. At one time I was not overly enthusiastic about pre-1929 buses, but with the passing of the years my interest has gone back in time so that now I find the 1920s immensely interesting, particularly the independent London operators. There are a number of reasons, one is the publishing of "London's Buses" vols. I and II by Ken Blacker and Reg Westgate, another is my being able to obtain most of the late Noel Jackson's negatives taken in the late 1920s which has brought many of the vehicles to life for me. Perhaps also with the passing of the years one becomes more interested in research and in the value of one's heritage. In my case it is transport heritage and history and very specifically the heritage which is collected at Cobham Bus Museum. I suspect that many of the younger visitors to and members of the Museum have, perhaps understandably, not a great deal of enthusiasm for the pre-war exhibits, especially the Dennis open top and the Tilling ST. For them the space would be better occupied by yet more RFs or RTs. But I say to them "be patient". As the years go by you will grow to appreciate them for their true historical value. We are fortunate to be custodians of such a great past and of such a unique collection of London buses. Long may they be loved and cherished, not only by those who remember them in service but by those who only became interested in buses long after the pre-war fleet vanished from the streets of London. In 20 years time there will be enthusiasts who are now in their nappies coming

along and joining the Musuem who will think that RTs and RFs belong to the dark ages and that the only buses worth preserving are Dennis Darts (post Gulf War version). They will be all for chucking out the RTs and RFs cluttering up the place...!

TD RESEARCH. Our very good friend Derek Fisk, who ably assists behind the counter on Cobham Open days and the LOTS "do's" is a keen modeller and particularly enjoys drawing scale plans of different types in 4mm scale. He is very enthusiastic about modern types as well as types from the dark ages, which is very commendable. I fear I can muster little enthusiasm for the present day "goings on" in London. My motto is "it's not the same since the trams came off" but Derek can wax lyrical about all the modern mini and midi buses, and all credit to him. All credit to him too for his current research into all the body variations of the TD class (NOT the post-war TDs, the pre-war ones which were taken over by LPTB from the Independents in the early 1930s). As is the case with a lot of research what started out to be a fairly simple task of sorting out just a few standard body types has turned into quite a long saga. I think the idea was to draw up scale plans of the basic types and he was researching into which TDs had which type of body. It seems there is a photographic record of a very considerable number of them, albeit mainly whilst still owned by Independents. There is a dearth of photos of them in London Transport livery and photos of them in later life with LPTB are now wanted to record changes to blind layouts and cabs carried out on overhaul at Chiswick. It is amazing how much information has come to light after all these years and it is good to know that research of this calibre is being carried out by transport enthusiasts throughout the country, as is witnessed by the historically definitive books which continue to appear in the bookshops.

A TICKET TO BUY, OR A TICKET TO COLLECT, OR BOTH? My last ramblings were about Pongs and to my amazement this brought more correspondence than from all my past Chit-Chats put together. Thanks to all who took the trouble to write and relate their nostalgic smells. It will be a hard act to follow and after much rumination I must confess I am rather stumped as to what to ramble on about this time. My mind turned to sounds but somehow they seem much harder to describe. I can visualise in my mind's memory the sound of a "leaning back" STL climbing up a steep hill on the 403 up to Chelsham on the 403 in the 1940s. Sitting upstairs on a front seat. Everything vibrating especially the front blind gear which seemed to rattle as though it would fall to bits, on a regular pulsing cycle. Put your hand on the grab rail and your hand vibrates violently as well. How do you describe the sound of one the District Line "Metadyne" cars? I cannot even start to, but the sound is there so clearly in my head. How about the violent pinking from an ST converted to run on producer gas but running on petrol as it turns out of Hartfield Road in Wimbledon into the Kingston Road, accelerating over the Merton Park level crossing in Kingston Road, on the 77A heading towards Raynes Park. There were two ways of telling an ST had been converted to run on producer gas. One was the triangle shaped metal towing bar arrangement attached to the rear platform wall and the other was the hole in the bonnet cover where the pipe carrying the producer gas from the trailer entered the engine compartment. After they were converted back to petrol the hole in the bonnet cover was plated over and in time the bonnet covers got switched around, so seeing a plated bonnet cover on an ST was not a guarantee that it was one which was converted to

producer gas during the war. Strangely enough the Museum Tilling ST has one these bonnet covers - see for yourself. None of the Tillings ran on producer gas. And how about the sound of a Bell Punch ticket machine? Of course this can still be heard occasionally, but tickets were very much part of my early formative bus enthusiast days. Indeed I was interested in tickets even before my interest in buses started, and that is going back a long way. A ticket to ride? Sometimes I would buy a ticket and not ride if I needed that ticket badly enough for my collection. An expensive way to add a ticket, to spend 8d to get a tram ticket which was rarely issued, no wonder many a conductor either refused or considered I was off my marbles. But listening in memory to the sound of a London Bell Punch and remembering the skill and speed with which the conductor got the correct farestage in just the right place in the Bell Punch machine. And when he had two or three tickets to punch the speed with which each "ping" sounded was almost a sleight of hand. "Three fourpennies, please"... ping, ping, ping..."one shilling please", all seemingly in the space of a second. I've tried to do it that quickly on my own Bell Punch, without success. Clearly there was more to conducting than meets the eye. I thought the Effra Road ticket machines were a bit tinny sounding compared with the Bell Punch and the latter definitely has more of a Rolls Royce feel about it compared with the Effra machine.

The bell in the drivers cab was always muffled but the best ones made a satisfying "clonk" when rung. Remember the sounds made by a conductor who was upstairs in the front who did not want to go down the gangway to the back to ring the only bell upstairs? Perhaps it was two heavy thumps with his boot on the floor over the driver's head, or bash, bash, with his ticket rack on the front window ledge. Downstairs, especially on single deckers, tap tap with a coin on the glass window behind the driver.

Engine sounds also stick in the memory, but to a great extent these do not have to be recalled because they can be heard every year on the Rally Fields of England. There was a noise associated with the utility Gs when idling and starting off, and that was a sort of vibration which sounded like a load of jam-jars. The Museum G 351 does not seem to have this trait, so what caused it remains a mystery. Many of us recall with affection the sound of the rear twin wheels of trolleys and LTs chattering over cobblestones. Final memory for the moment is the hollow sound of a tram trolley wheel as heard from inside the upper saloon. My own memory is from frequent travels on the 2/4 tram routes down to S. Wimbledon which was overhead from the Merton change pit.



**TD95 seen at Crystal Palace at the start of the 1991 HCVS London to Brighton Run**