

LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST  
NEWSLETTER



SEPT/OCT 1991

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

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NO COPY DEPT

Apologies for the delay in producing this issue of the LBPT Newsletter but the lack of copy was the only cause. The lack of material may have been due to the 'copy date' being 'past its sell by date' by the time the last Newsletter arrived - this was due to a hold up at the printing stage - hopefully this issue will be more speedily put together!

In true bus style - no copy, then several items arrived together - just when I had no free time. Enough excuses here it is.....

UPDATE ON THE  
APRIL/MAY ISSUE

from Peter Gomm

The cover picture of RF 70 is taken from a post card showing the start of the 727 service. This bus unfortunately ended up at Wombwell but had had the distinction of being used for publicity shots by both London Transport and London Country.

I was very interested to read the saga of RT 3491's platform renovation, at the moment being heavily involved in restoring sister vehicle 3496. This bus has now fallen into very caring hands and is now being made roadworthy again, hopefully making its debut in the Autumn.

I think Malcolm Lewis has not got all his facts quite right as this was a time when I worked in St Albans. My childhood memories of St Albans go back a bit further when we spent Sunday mornings at the traffic lights on Holiwell Hill observing buses from the Central garages on excursions to Whipsnade Zoo and D's on the 726. I work for the AA and was interested to read of your request for an AA

box. I don't think these have all been removed yet and an approach to the AA organisation at Basingstoke might help. There is a museum there and they might be able to put you on to a suitable box.

RT 3491 - CONTINUED

by Ian Barrett

Once the riser had been cut away, Bill carried out a close inspection of the rear suspension. A lot of the shackle pins and bushes were quite badly worn. Most of this was probably due to the broken auto-lube pipes. When finished several new pins and bushes had been replaced, thus stopping the large amount of free play that had been present before. The auto-lube pipes that were broken were also replaced.

With that job completed, I was able to make a start on welding new steel into the body structure. To aid this part of the process we fitted the new riser temporarily so that I could see how much was missing. Once the jobs had been marked up, the riser was removed to gain the necessary access. Whilst working on the bulkhead it seemed sensible to repair the footrest positions for the rear seats.

I started to remove the wood flooring, but my lever slipped through the metal of the foot rest. I took up another eight inches of floor and lost my lever again. This situation happened continuously, until I had located some sound metal. New panels were made and welded in to provide a strong floor support. After completing this job the riser was fitted back into position and clamped in place. This was done so I could drill

and ream any bolt holes necessary to hold it in position. The lower saloon doorway bulkheads were then fitted and welded in position at the same time as the outer riser ends to the body uprights.

What must be the worst job of all was now tackled - making a new back rail for the floor supports to bolt onto. This was a figment of my imagination as there was little of the original left to copy!

I spent a lot of time under RT's 190, 593 and 2775 with a tape measure, pencil, paper and torch to give me a clearer picture of what was required.

Eventually it shaped up quite well, but it had to be made up from two pieces of steel. This was because it tapered over about 40% of its length. When that was completed the platform supports and n/s edge were fitted, followed closely by the stair support/battery crate panel.

Whilst all this was going on, Simon, Brian, Malcolm and Mark were cleaning and preparing parts that had been taken off, if they were suitable for re-use. As well as being generally helpful, between them, they painted all the new structure. Mark blended in some of the repairs with P45 to get a smooth finish. Colin Wickens then 'jacked' the usual dent out of the back pillar.

Peter is the 'chippy' amongst us and he started by making the wood fillets to fit into the channel-work of the body, to replace the rotten bits, as well as those removed for access. Peter then moved onto the stairs and replaced the two lower step tops that had been removed.

The platform itself was next to receive the 'Plummer' treatment.

All the boards were replaced with new ones. Whilst putting the boards down, Peter had to make sure all the ends fitted flush, and the new riser facing plate matched up. This item was very important because the centre floor was to be replaced next. With time other sections, such as the battery crate and surrounding fittings were put back together.

Panels were now the order of the day, so a mixture of old and new were fitted to the back. This was carried out at about the same time as I was fitting a new n/s wheel arch hoop and associated structure around the platform riser.

During February and March this year, Peter, assisted by Brian, has been cutting and fitting floor slats to the new platform surface. The floor having been first stained and sealed with varnish for protection.

Most of the back panels on the inside of the bus have been re-rexined by Peter and Brian, which has started to make it look very smart indeed.

This brings this report about RT3491 nearly up to date. There is still much work to carry out, but the commitment of finishing TD95 for the HCVS London to Brighton run and the re-panel of UMP 227 ready for the Staines RF40 celebration rally meant that RT3491 had to take more of a "back seat" until other work had been completed

Keep your eyes open for more up to date progress reports in future LBPT Newsletters.

## NEXT ISSUE

It is hoped another issue of the Newsletter can be sent out before Christmas (1991!) but this is obviously dependent on the

amount of copy I receive. Ideally copy should be with me by the middle of November to ensure publication.....over to you!

## NOTICE

It is planned to clear the rubbish compound in the near future in readiness for the construction of the building extension.

If you have any private property in the compound - on the roof of the building, next to it - or in the store accessible from inside the building at the end of the paint bay, can you please remove it to a safe place as soon as possible. Thanks. John Bedford

## COVER PICTURE

Photographed in France whilst on the way to Paris this RT had no identification on it (does anyone one know which RT it is?). Note the lack of the usual indicators, the re-positioned side lamps, the new headlamps with car type bezels (yellow bulbs) and the side marker lights.

## THE LONDON BUS - ABROAD

Thanks to Michael Dryhurst for his transatlantic report which ties in nicely with the cover picture and my shots of the ex-London buses operating at Niagara Falls, Canada.

## NIAGARA TRANSPORT

Double Deck Tours Limited of Niagara Falls Canada operate 30 mile, 3 hour, tours using ex LT double deck buses. Although RTL 1315 is parked strategically at the end of the main street in a car park, it is only now used as

a life size advertisement.

To assist with the left-hand drive traffic system an oversize nearside (for us anyway) mirror is fitted, as are roof marker lights. 1315 is looking a little down at heel and the rather crude platform door does not appear to be much of a deterrent as can be seen from the photograph.

The "Falls" tour is currently operated by RM's and RCL's (RM1919 and RCL 2255 were seen) and these are painted in a rather deep red with black wheels. This colour scheme looks really awful but probably convinces the average Canadian/US citizen that this is the typical London livery. The tour brochure states....."let us show you the way in comfort and style on a Double Deck Bus".....In early August with temperatures around 95 degrees the comfort goes out the window, literally, for the RM's are seen plying their trade with a very basic air conditioning system.....the front upper deck windows open and the rear upper deck emergency window open - allowing a through current of air!

The tour brochure has a nice picture of RT 4773, complete with roof box, set against the falls with route 13 blinds destined for Piccadilly Circus.

Do you have any photographs of London Buses abroad? Lets borrow them for publication here. We will return them safely!

## SEND YOUR NEWSLETTER COPY TO:

Les Duplock, Central Road, Worcester Park, Surrey, KT4 8HY.

Tel 081 1187 (DAY ONLY)  
or Fax it on 081 7825.

"WALLY THE BUS"

aka

"RT-CRAFTY"

By Michael Dryhurst.

As we all know, Washington D.C. is the capital of the United States of America; that does not make it the most important city in the USA. We know that New York is the largest city in the USA. But it doesn't make it the most important. We all know that Los Angeles is the most innovative and trend-setting city in the USA; but it aint the most important. No, that honour falls to a small city some twelve miles west of Sacramento, California, by the name of Davis, population some 40,000.

Dear Reader, do I hear you say ".....how does such a seemingly-insignificant place bear such a responsibility?". Simple. The local transit authority operates, in regular revenue-earning service, 5 RTs and an RTL! Therefore, it has to be the most important city in the USA!

The operator is Unitrans, which is the provider of public transport for University of California, Davis; originally, just campus transit was provided, but now Unitrans provides public transportation for the whole city of Davis, receiving both federal and state transit funding to do so. It was during the 1960s and early seventies that the London double-deckers came to Davis, the maximum such complement being 2 RLH, 7 RT and 2 RTL, but over the ensuing years the buses suffered various failures and were not repaired, and by the early 1980s, none was serviceable.

Enter Wally Mellor. Wally is an ex-Liverpudlian who emigrated to the USA. A Mechanic Fantastique, Wally took over at Unitrans in 1984 and set-about immediately to get the London double-deckers running. By the time



that Wally took over, RLH21/34, RT3572/3889 and RTL1194 had been sold, the remaining fleet being RT742/1235/2819/3123/4735 and RTL1014. These six latter buses are all running now, but with the difficulty in obtaining spares, RTs 1235 and 4735 currently are powered by Leyland 0600 engines, and are dubbed by Wally and me as the LRT type! However, as these words are being written, an AEC 9.6-litre RT engine is on the high seas bound for Davis, having been tracked down by Wally to Wealden PSV, in Kent. Wally has found another RTL in the Sacramento area; this has been purchased and will take its place shortly in the Unitrans fleet, once it has been brought up to par by Wally and his dedicated team. The sold RTL1194 is rotting in a Sacramento parking lot, and again Wally is attempting to repurchase the bus, but it has a stubborn owner (and a sagging upper deck Jicwood roof!). Since knowing Wally I am on the look out constantly for spares or complete buses, and have found recently 2RTs and an RTL deteriorating in a Los Angeles suburb, and another RT in northern California that has been converted into a mobile restaurant, although I have a strong feeling that this is RT1330 (it has no markings on it whatsoever, no dumb-iron plate, nothing to belie its origin), which was converted by LPC in 1971. Hopefully these can be brought up to Davis.

The city elders of Davis have said that they want the London double-deckers running as long as is possible, to which Wally has replied "...as long as you want them, I'll keep them running". As I said earlier, spares are a constant problem, and much is made in the Unitrans workshop, to keep the RT-fleet running. Wally is very anxious to obtain front wheel rings for the fleet, all of which has lost them, so if anyone knows of 5 RT and 1 RTL sets, please let Wally know. Also, the London blinds

are faded and tatty, so replacements are required. All donations welcome! The subject of vehicle emissions is a very touchy topic in California, and this State has the toughest anti-emission controls within the USA. Recently, the emissions control people went out to Davis to do tests on the RT-fleet, all of which had emissions considerably below the permitted maximum, which again is a great credit to Wally and his team. Chiswick would be proud of them, as I am, as it is just wonderful to stand in Davis and hear an RT pull away from a stop, fully loaded, as they often are.

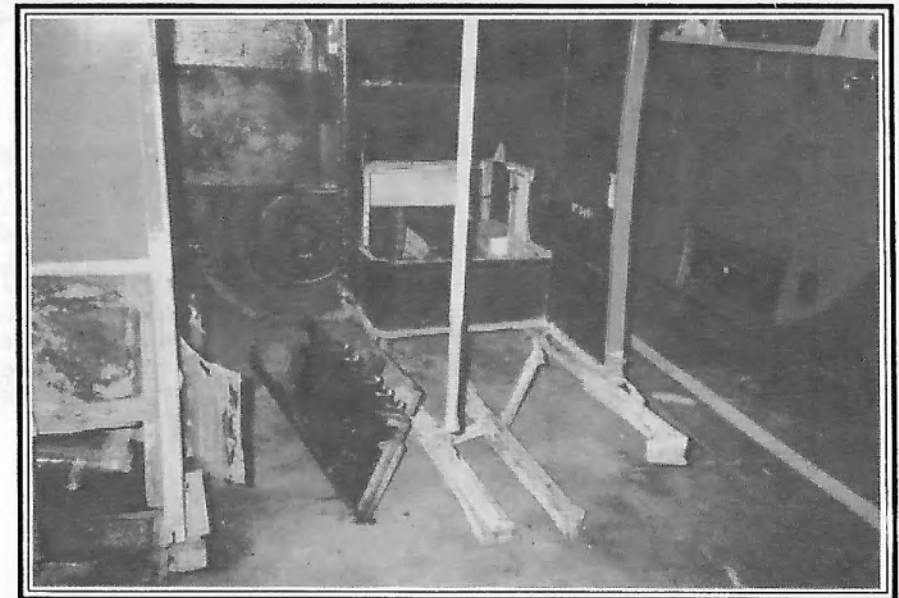
The double-deckers run only during University term time, and so are not on the road around Christmas, Easter and for the months of late June, July, August and early September (in addition to the London buses, there are also 2 ex-West Riding Roe lowheight Daimler Fleetlines and 30 assorted American single-deckers, including 3 1958 "Old Look" GM Transit buses). Davis is about 10 miles west of Sacramento, some 60 miles north west of San Francisco, on Highway 80, and is served by Amtrak trains from both cities. Wally is always pleased to have enthusiasts drop by, but please remember that this is not a museum, but an operating bus company; the address of which is: ASUCD Unitrans, 372 Memorial Union, University of California, Davis, CA.95616, USA. Oh, and by the way, RT742 retains its roof route number box still!



*Above.* RCL 2255 stands ready to start the days tours at the Double Deck Tours Office at Niagara. *Below.* RTL 1315 waits forlornly, now a mere advertisement, with a more modern tourist attraction The SKYLON TOWER towering over the Falls.



*Above.* RTL 1315 with the additional marker lights and the rather in-effective rear platform door. *Below.* RT 3491 with the platform and platform riser removed after major surgery and prior to the transplant.





## LONDON BUSES ABROAD

Dont get worried! - RT 742 is just undergoing some engine work, and as this is written, the valve springs are on their way from Southall, no Nottingham, or Leyland or Boras or Pyongyang, or wherever. Anyway, five of the Unitrans fleet are visible here, with the two Saunders examples in the front (Top box extant RT742 and circumcised RT3123), and at the back are RTL 1014, Leyland engined RT4735 (still with its Weymann body) and just visible is one of the two ex -West Riding Fleetline Daimlers, with Roe lowheight bodywork. Note the blind of RT 3123 has been amended to show the local Davis phone number instead of 222-1234 (does that number date me? Shouldn't it be ABBey 1234, anyway?!). At the time of writing (mid September), RT742 was back on the road.

Michael Dryhurst. USA.

The biggest item of news since the last newsletter is, of course, the success debut of TD95 at Brighton. In such a competitive rally to win one trophy is good - to win four is magnificent. Congratulations to all concerned - certainly the team on the day were walking on cloud nine. The group photograph is awaited for reproduction in the next newsletter!

Another vehicle to emerge during the summer was JB's Ipswich Regent, now resplendent with period signwritten adverts. Initial nervousness about driving his pride and joy have now evaporated and JB is now out and about. A large contingent of Cobham based vehicles participated in the Sevenoaks rally - Bill's Q parked at the pond at Otford really summed up for me what we are working for - to see and hear our vehicles in their old haunts.

I am glad that this year more of the Cobham vehicles have attended events - it is very important for members to enjoy the fruits of labour just as much as the restoration work.

Blackie and Eric are continuing the modernization of the canteen and Bill and his team are beavering away at the tractor unit.

As I write this I have just returned from Midhurst having successfully started up C94 with the assistance of Mike Hebard. Many of you will know that C94 was a little sick at Southsea - oil in water and water in oil!!! It was felt prudent to take it back to Midhurst as this was nearer. Luckily I managed to strip it down OK and various units have been overhauled by John Flint and outside contractors. On the plus side, the performance should improve but the fuel consumption will increase - the pump was only delivering 25% of the specification required!!

A couple of items are underway:-

1. In order to reduce the number of vehicles in Cobham and thus create more working room and create a safer environment for vehicles and people, we are at present talking to the owner of a building near Guildford which would accommodate 6 to 8 vehicles. Obviously, like any negotiations to lease property, these could be:- successful, a failure, short or protracted, but I feel that where possible members should be aware of our strategy.



2. Many of you will be aware that T31 has appeared in adverts for sale. Norman Anscombe approached the Trust Committee through me some time ago and we are investigating ways whereby the Trust can finance the acquisition of this vehicle. Obviously we will require grants and sponsorship/donations and some progress has been made towards this. Again the whole Committee agree that negotiations should continue.
3. Site clearance in preparation for the extension has started. It is anticipated that construction will start in the next financial year. Obviously some of the specialist work will be contracted-out.

**DAVE HURLEY**  
Chairman

## DRIVER LICENCING LEGISLATION REGARDING PCV (Passenger Carrying Vehicle)

Most members will have seen and heard of the changes in the legal requirements for driving PCVs. I did give a brief verbal report at the AGM and the following script I hope will be a simple guide to assist members in what action they wish take or not, depending on their own personal circumstances.

### **BACKGROUND**

Until the new legislation was introduced (following an EEC Directive) in the UK, the requirement to hold a specialist licence for bus/coach drivers was based on the use of the vehicle, ignoring its physical size, etc. Therefore, if the vehicle was being used for hire and reward the driver needed a PSV - if not in use, a person with a full licence over 21 years of age could legally drive. The taxation class was also irrelevant since it was also legal for the holder of an ordinary licence to drive a PSV, not at the time, being used under hire and reward.

### **NEW PRINCIPLE**

The new legislation is based on physical size, etc. Therefore, normally a driver of a bus or coach irrespective of use must hold a PCV licence. The Department of Transport, however, took heed of points made by the Federation of Historic Vehicle Clubs and have introduced what I feel are a number of concessions viz:-

1. Drivers who do not currently hold a PSV, but who can prove experience with buses/coaches over at least a 3 year period can apply for a **restricted** PCV licence under "Grandfather" rights. The restriction is that no hire or reward driving is allowed. No test is required, but the full medical is required. Persons over 45 must also submit to a medical every 5 years in order to renew.
2. Drivers can continue to drive "preserved PCVs" on an ordinary car licence providing not more than 8 passengers are carried. Needless to say, the bus must be taxed as private and, obviously, no hire or reward is allowed.

Therefore there are three choices:-

- a) Existing holders of a PSV will, in due course, have this amended to the appropriate PCV licence. They will continue to have regular medicals and their PCV licence will enable them to drive all PCVs irrespective of use and/or taxation class.
- b) Existing holders of ordinary driving licences who wish to continue to drive privately taxed PCVs, but to carry **more** than 8 passengers, can apply for a restricted PCV under Grandfather rights. Regular medicals would be required, but no test. The application

must be authenticated by a recognised organisation and I am authorised by the Department of Transport to sign applications on behalf of LBP Trust. Remember that unless a post 1947 vehicle is fitted with a tacho you cannot, under those regulations, carry more than 8 people anyway.

- c) Existing holders of ordinary driving licences who only want to continue to drive preserved PCVs with less than 8 passengers can continue to do so and will not need a special licence and/or medicals.

Obviously if a holder of an ordinary driving licence wishes to drive PCVs used for hire and reward then he must take a PCV test and medical checks - in the same way as the old PSV requirements.

The medical requirements for PCV licences have been made more strict, i.e. any person with diabetes is barred and the eyesight check now has a minimum requirement **without** glasses or contact lenses being worn. Those of us with short sight who have properly corrected vision with glasses or contact lenses may find difficulty in passing the minimum sight requirements when these corrective prescriptions are removed - especially as we get older! (before anybody else makes a comment!!).

My interpretation of these requirements are that if a person holds either a PCV or restricted PCV and they fail the medical at a subsequent date they could still continue to drive a preserved PCV on an ordinary driving licence. There is no guarantee, however, that ordinary driving licences will not have minimum health requirements in the future.

If anyone wishes to avail themselves of the Grandfather rights "restricted PCV" licence procedure, please contact me and I will send them the appropriate forms, or they are available from the counter of LVLO's and comprise forms Nod:-

- D2 - Application form for LGV or PCV  
DTP 20005 - Statement of Experience  
DTP 20003 - Medical Report

All applications for a restricted PCV must be submitted to DVLA before the 1st April 1992.

**DAVE HURLEY**

## DVLC CHANGES

# Truck and bus licensing - the new rules

by Eddie Gibbons, Head Policy Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, Swansea

Driver licensing is being re-shaped. The licensing system is undergoing fundamental change at the present time. The changes to the system will affect not only drivers but also employers and vehicle manufacturers. Some changes have been introduced already. More are in the pipeline and still further changes are likely to appear from Brussels within the next two or three years.

Planners will need to know the range of vehicles their drivers will be able to drive on existing licences; whether further training or tests will be needed and whether the changes will have any impact on the recruitment prospects for new drivers.

I am referring to the new licensing system as it relates to vocational drivers - that is drivers of heavy goods and public service vehicles from next year onwards.

Firstly a few brief facts about driver licensing generally. Some 32 million people in Great Britain hold driving licences. In the main these licences entitle the holders to drive motor cars and light goods vehicles of up to 7.5 tonnes maximum authorised mass and large buses that are not being used for hire or reward. Of these ordinary licence holders about 1.2 million hold an additional supplementary Heavy Goods or Public Service Vehicle driver's licence issued by Traffic Commissioners. It is evident therefore that many people will be interested in the changes that are taking place.

Why do we need these changes? The answer is that they are part of a European Commission initiative to harmonise driver licensing systems in all Member States. The first steps in this harmonisation process were agreed as early as 1980 in the First Council Directive on the Introduction of a Community Driving Licence (80/1263/EEC). This required Member States to issue licences in a Community model format and to recognise licences used by other Member States. The latter requirement related essentially to visitors since foreign licence holders who became resident in another Member State were expected to exchange their licence for the national version within 12 months of becoming resident. Provision for the recognition of these licences was made in 1983.

The switch to the EC model licence means the end of the supplementary HGV/PSV driving licences. The version favoured by the European Commission requires all driving entitlement to be shown on a single licence. The licences issued in every other Member State already incorporate all entitlement into a single document. The switch also means the adoption of the categories of driving entitlement favoured by the Community. These are based on the categories formulated by the Vienna Convention on Road Traffic in 1968. They are recognised internationally both inside and outside the European Community.

All these changes require primary and subordinate legislation. The Road Traffic (Driver Licensing and Information Systems) Act 1989 paved the way for the new arrangements and Regulations will shortly be made to complete the details. The changes have been the subject of several consultation exercises over the past two years and adjustments have been made to meet the concerns expressed by interested organisations and drivers over this period.

What benefits will Great Britain derive from the changes? In the first place the new licence will be recognised in all member states. Since the categories and format will be similar throughout the Community, enforcement authorities will have no difficulty recognising its validity and the entitlement it conveys. This should be of benefit to drivers who go abroad. It should be of particular benefit to vocational drivers since the old supplementary HGV and PSV licences were not always recognised in other countries. Drivers who went to live abroad also had difficulty from time to time convincing authorities of their entitlement when they sought an exchange of licence in their new country of residence.

Another feature of the changes is the benefit of having a single licensing system. An integrated system using a single database for all driving entitlement will offer considerable scope for economies of scale and greater efficiency in operations. The new system should be more efficient and less expensive to run than the fragment licensing system for vocational drivers that is split between 11 Traffic Area Offices. This should be good news for the vocational drivers since the cost of issuing licences is reflected in the

fees charged to drivers. Where do things stand at present? The new integrated licensing system will commence on 1 April 1991. From then on all driving licences will be issued centrally by the Secretary of State from DVLA. The licence will be in the new model format. In fact ordinary licence have been issued in this format since June this year but they do not show vocational entitlement. From April next, fully integrated licences showing all entitlement will be issued.

The most striking difference in the new style licence is that the new version is in two colours - pink and green. The pink portion exactly follows the Community model. The green section is peculiar to Great Britain. It is intended to contain details of the provisional driving entitlement as well as penalty points which do not appear on any other Community licences. These features were essential to our licensing system and we have been able to secure EC agreement to their retention.

The new system has five basic categories and three sub-categories. These are as follows: Category A relates to motorcycles. Category B applies to motor vehicles with a maximum authorised mass not exceeding 3.5 tonnes and with not more than eight passenger seats. Category C applies to motor vehicles for the carriage of goods with a maximum authorised mass of over 3.5 tonnes. Category D applies to motor vehicles for the carriage of passengers with more than eight passenger seats. Finally Category E relates to combinations of vehicles where the drawing vehicle is in Category B, C or D, but which are not themselves in that category. This means articulated vehicles and drawbar trailer combinations.

There are also three sub-categories, namely, Sub-Category B1 for motorised tricycles, Sub-Category C1 for motor vehicles used for carriage of goods with a maximum authorised mass between 3.5 and 7.5 tonnes and Sub-Category D1 for motor vehicles used for the carriage of passengers with between eight and 16 passenger seats.

The sub-categories are optional in member states. In Great Britain we have used them to preserve the present arrangements as far as possible. Light goods vehicles up to 7.5 tonnes play a very important part in transport operations and minibuses with up to 16 passenger seats play an essential role in the transport of the young, the old and the disabled.

In the new system drivers who qualify for Category B entitlement by passing their ordinary driving test will be given entitlement to drive vehicles in Sub-Categories C1 and D1 automatically. This means that existing drivers will be able to continue driving light goods vehicles until their licence expires



## V L C C H A N G E S

at age 70. Any future changes will not be retrospective.

It is also worth mentioning that as far as vocational drivers are concerned the new categories will mean a significant change in the range of vehicles that may be driven on the basis of a single test. For example drivers who pass the Category C test will be able to drive all rigid goods vehicles. The transition to the new categories will therefore mean enhancement for some drivers as regards the vehicles they may drive. In order to avoid disadvantaging drivers who might otherwise have to wait until they were converted to the new system it is proposed to convert the entitlement of all existing drivers to the equivalent entitlement of all existing drivers to the equivalent entitlement in the new system from 1 April, 1991. This will mean for example that Class III HGV licence holders will be able to drive all sizes of rigid goods vehicles from then on without exchanging their licence.

All existing licences will remain valid in the new system. There is absolutely no need for drivers to exchange their licences for the new version. Drivers who hold vocational licences will receive reminders from DVLA when their licence is about to expire. They will then be able to apply for renewal and at this stage they will be issued with a new style integrated licence. I emphasise this point because some drivers and other members of the public have gained the impression that they will have to surrender their licences next April. This is not the case and we are advising drivers of this at every opportunity in order to save them unnecessary work and expense.

Another feature of the new licensing system is the duration of vocational licences. The first category C and D licences will remain valid until the driver's 45th birthday or for five years if they are over 40. This will be good news for young drivers who previously had to renew their licences and pay a fee every three or five years. From age 45 renewals will be needed every five years until the driver reaches 65. From then on renewals are on an annual basis.

What does the future hold for driver licensing? In 1989 the European Commission published its proposals for a Second Directive to complete the harmonisation process. The proposals envisage indefinite mutual recognition of licences issued in member states, standard categories of entitlement and common standard of competence and health. The Commission would also like to see drivers of light goods vehicles and minibuses required to take a second test and meet vocational standards of competence and fitness.

The United Kingdom does not agree with these proposals. The Government has made its position clear on the suggestion of tougher controls on light

goods vehicles and minibus drivers. The Commission has been urged to modify the proposals for these drivers. There is no road safety case to justify tougher controls, which would increase the burden on drivers and industry and would cause serious difficulties for charitable organisations who rely on volunteers to drive minibuses.

It must be recognised, however, that second tests for drivers of light goods vehicles and minibuses are already in place in virtually every other member state. Other countries may look askance at the idea of vehicles up to 7.5 tonnes being driven on ordinary licences. In the discussions so far there has been no support from other member states for the UK position on light goods vehicle drivers. Nevertheless it is too early to say what the final outcome will be. A good deal remains to be negotiated on the Commission proposal before the details are finalised. A decision is unlikely until possibly the middle of 1991 and implementation is unlikely before 1992 at the earliest.

Whatever the outcome, one important feature should be borne in mind. Any change will not affect the entitlement of drivers who hold full ordinary licences before any new arrangements are introduced. As I have mentioned previously the Commission proposals are not retrospective. Existing drivers will therefore be entitled to drive light goods vehicles of up to 7.5 tonnes indefinitely. Any changes will affect only new drivers who qualify for a licence after the commencement date. This will inevitably mean that the vast majority of GB licence holders will have entitlement to drive light goods vehicles for the rest of the decade and beyond.

On the other issues it is likely that some greater degree of recognition of licences from member states will be required and common standards of competence and fitness will become mandatory. The extent of these changes will not be known, however, until negotiations are finalised.

In the longer term once harmonisation is achieved the possibility of mutual recognition of disqualification is likely to be examined as well as the establishment of a common database of disqualified drivers. The advance in new technology is likely to make the exchange of information easier between States and the development of concerted action to ensure that dangerous drivers are kept off the roads.

To conclude therefore let me sum up the story so far. The driver licensing system is undergoing fundamental change at present. A new licence was introduced for ordinary drivers in June this year. This new style licence will show vocational as well as ordinary entitlement from 1 April, 1991. Existing licences will remain valid and licence holders are being encouraged NOT to exchange them

before they expire or need to be changed for some other reason such as change of name or address. Discussions are continuing on the proposals for a second ED Directive and final decisions are unlikely for some months.

Driver Licensing is likely to remain in the public eye for some time to come. It will be necessary for the UK to play its part in ensuring that the changes meet the needs of road safety and that the licensing system is developed to continue to provide drivers with an efficient and cost effective service. DVLA has produced a good deal of information about the new system in the form of booklets and fact sheets. Anyone who is interested in finding out more about the changes may obtain further information by writing to the Drivers Enquiry Unit, DVLC, Swansea SA6 7JL. Telephone: (0792) 783838 or 772151.

## CALLING POTENTIAL MEMBERS

If you would like to receive information on the Institute, along with details on how to become a member please return this form to: Peter Green, Director  
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