

COBHAM BUS MUSEUM NEWSLETTER



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From the Chair

As the year draws to a close, it's time to reflect upon the 'ups and downs' of 1985. The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the Blackpool Tram Centenary week-end. It needs something special, such as a notable anniversary, to provide the reason for not going to the same old rallies and doing the same old things.

At the start of the year, I resolved to attend more local shows in the Museum area, to fly the flag as it were. We get numerous invitations to attend school fetes, Parish days, etc., from a wide area and the organisers seem to think that it is sufficient compensation for ourselves to gain publicity from being present. After a summer of fighting off hordes of children whose only interest in the buses is to use them as climbing frames, of fighting off hordes of adults who only want to shelter from the rain, and drunken yobboes who are only present because the beer tent is open all day, I can honestly say I've had enough.

On the Museum front, the final outcome of our application to the Charity Commissioners is still awaited. I sincerely hope that early 1986 will see the completion of this project as it is difficult to make any plans until the accompanying administration changes have been completed. Perhaps we shall have some positive news by the A.G.M.

A Happy New Year to you all and see you at the A.G.M.

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VEHICLE NEWS

RM 3. There has been steady progress in cleaning and repainting the cab.
 T.448. Work is progressing in the area of the entrance door.
 G.351 Has finished its display at Covent Garden and returned to Cobham where a space was found after the winter shunt around and clean up.
 TD.95 The window pans have been collected from Aldenham and fitted. The side half round moulding is being fixed and the roof stripped. The engine was removed for cleaning and checking. The slipping clutch problem was found to be caused by a worn out wafer thin clutch disc. There also looks to be cracks on the flywheel which needs further investigation.
 ST.922 passed its FFD (Freedom From Defect) in October.
 RT 2507 has been revived and is in for conversion to open-top for a promotional tour of Shell filling stations in 1986. Other modifications include conversion to interior fluorescent lighting.
 Craven RT 1499 suffered a nearside collision with a car and is in for repair to the fuel tank and surrounding body structure.
 RT 593. Owned by Peter Plummer and George Townsend was repainted recently and looks to be the star of next year's rally season.

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Cover Photographs - 1

The restoration of RT 593 has been completed and its owners, Peter Plummer and George Townsend are to be congratulated on their outstanding achievement. The RT was photographed in Redhill Road shortly after being repainted.

Cover Photographs 2 + 3

During the summer, The Oxford Bus Museum Trust opened its new building. A small group from Cobham visited the pleasant Oxfordshire village of Long Hanborough where they were made welcome by members of the Trust.

(2) In this photograph an AEC Regal, still carrying delivery plates, poses for the camera before being despatched to its new owners.

(3) Children evacuated from London at the outbreak of World War II arrive in Oxford. The buses in the background will be AEC Regents' of the City of Oxford Fleet.

VEHICLE NEWS (Cont'd)

We were asked recently to tow a couple of buses. The first was TT.5, one of the shortlived Thames Trader/Strachan Tunnel Bike Rack Buses. It is at Wolverhampton, where I seem to remember they were sold to Don Everall, Dealer. Further information was received that the rear axle was missing so that tow job was aborted. The second bus we looked at was an RT, with a view of towing it to Devon. It had been cannibalised so much that the top deck was missing apart from a few pillars. For those of you that keep such records, the bus has been effectively scrapped.

OTHER NEWS

We have been fortunate in gaining a few pieces of equipment surplus to other people's needs but invaluable to us. The first is an iron man in good order which enables us to get rid of our dodgy older one. The second item worth mentioning is an extendable tower. For the first time we can get right into the roof without balancing a ladder on a chair on top of the open-topper. Perkins Engined STL's

We have in our possession an injector servicing chart dated October 1938, showing service data for injectors for Perkins Engined STL's. There is no mention in the STL book of this variation. Perhaps it's only the injectors that were of Perkins Manufacture. Further information, please.

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PERSONAL VIEW No. 1

Stuart Ray, Editor of the Ipswich Transport Society Bulletin assesses the rally scene in 1985 and makes observations based on his experiences.

Three excursions have ventured forth with I-T-S members aboard in September, to Showbus, Butterley and Crich - and Norwich. To be honest, the first and third of these events I found rather disappointing - no disrespect to the organisers - but rallies, even bus rallies, are now so commonplace that they have become almost boring. We just have too much of a good thing and this surfeit of vehicle rallies does - to my mind - encourage mediocrity in transport preservation. As to the middle trip - well, there is nothing mediocre about Crich, it sets a standard that all museums should aspire to and one could visit this establishment time after time without any fear of boredom!

Showbus is one of the larger rallies and the grounds of Woburn Abbey provide an impressive setting but it always strikes me that this event falls between two stools, trying on the one hand to be a shop window for the latest buses and on the other to be a historic vehicle rally, and I'm not sure that it's completely successful in either field. There was some impressive new machinery on display but this was no Commercial Motor Show. Equally, there were some fine historical gems (the Leicester pre-war Renown particularly caught my eye), but in between these two levels there was an awful lot of pretty nondescript stuff.

Norwich, a couple of weeks later, also suffered a distinct lack of anything of a really veteran character and, indeed, this display seemed very 'lopsided'. Bristol buses were, understandably, well to the fore and the rally organisers' own particular vehicles a real credit to them, but can one make of a rally that has umpteen RE saloons but doesn't boast a Leyland Titan - the classic British half-cab - or, for that matter, half-cabs from the Daimler or Guy stables. It is hard to blame the organisers, they can only display what people are prepared to enter, but with so many bus rallies being staged these days, owners of quality preserved material can be very fickle about where they take their buses.

I'm sorry if my comments on these rallies seem a little caustic and it would be wrong to say that I derived no pleasure at all from them, but with so many rallies

now being staged inevitably the palate becomes jaded and the pleasure diminishes.

If, by the law of diminishing returns, rallies are losing their appeal through their very abundance, it seems that the same might apply to transport preservation centres. The market has been saturated by museums of one kind or another and the public, even the enthusiasts, are becoming increasingly blase about the whole preservation game. This was reflected in our trip to Crich. Time was when this Society could have filled two coaches for a visit to the Crich Tramway Museum and though one didn't expect quite that response for our proposed excursion in 1985, it came as a nasty shock to find barely a dozen members expressing an interest in coming.

Before reaching Crich, the excursion took on a visit to the nearby Midland Railway Trust at Butterley. Still quite young as railway preservation projects go, this centre has achieved quite a lot and seems to have the potential to become a major working museum, although a lot of work is still required if that potential is to be fulfilled. I liked the emphasis on preserving one particular railway's relics, in this case the Midland's (and its successors) rather than collecting a mish-mash of railwayana from all over the place.

And so to Crich, and an object lesson in how transport preservation should be undertaken but so seldom is. I am convinced that Crich has benefitted from the scarcity of its subject matter, the tram. By the time preservation became a fashionable passtime most of the trams had gone and to achieve their aims the tram preservationists have had to eschew the splintering of interests and other self-indulgent practices so rife elsewhere in transport preservation. They have had to concentrate single-mindedly on getting one really decent project underway. It has been a long, hard struggle but all the work has been rewarded by an outstanding museum.

From Excursions Report - The Ipswich Transport Society Bulletin- October 1985.

PERSONAL VIEW No. 2

In this extract from, Public Service Local Government, Henry Law discusses recent research which suggests that one person operation of buses has not produced many of the benefits claimed for it.

Until 1970, London buses were specially designed, and quite unlike their provincial counterparts. Careful attention to design always gave them a certain air of superiority which set them apart from the buses which ran anywhere else in the country. This is still true of London buses today, for the streets of the capital are still dominated by a type of bus, with an open platform and an engine at the front, which, having vanished everywhere else, is now unique to London.

The late 1930's saw the emergence of the classic phase of the London bus, and the 'RT' of 1939 must be amongst the most elegant motor vehicles of all time. Technically, the RT was very advanced for its time, and, in the post-war period, when RT buses came to be built in large numbers, London Transport's war-time experience of air-craft production bore fruit in the jig built system of construction which was adopted; jig-building meant that RT body components were fully interchangeable.

The next development was the Routemaster, a vehicle of monocoque construction, built almost entirely of aluminium.

Outstanding Success

The Routemaster may lack the elegant appearance of its 'RT' predecessor, but it has proved an outstanding success. According to current criteria, the big drawback is that, like all buses with open platforms, it needs a conductor. After

1970, as elsewhere, new double-decker buses in London were of the front-entrance rear engine type, with doors, and operated without a conductor.

Cutting Costs

Though it is hard to believe today, one-person operation (OPO) was intended, in the boom conditions of the late 1960's, as a way round the chronic staff shortage which had played havoc with London's bus services since the end of the war. But now, getting rid of conductors is now seen mainly as a way of cutting costs.

Whether this does, in fact, cut costs, is highly questionable, as was shown by a study* commissioned by the Greater London Council. The main issue to emerge was the cost of keeping people out of work. The report concluded that, in the present climate of high unemployment, further conversion from the March 1985 figure of 53 per cent to a proposed 65 per cent one-person-operation could not be justified. The additional public expenditure costs, estimated at £7.5m, outweighed the savings, which were estimated at a maximum of £6m.

In addition to the unemployment costs, the economics of OPO are a doubtful proposition for a number of practical reasons. Not all the conductors' wages are saved, because the drivers are paid more for their extra duties. In addition, there are the extra costs of buying new buses which are more complex and heavier than those which they replace.

One-person operation also leads to a loss of revenue. Fraud is a serious problem, as some passengers take advantage of the opportunity which OPO offers to travel further than they have paid for. More losses are incurred because longer boarding times with OPO buses slows them by at least 10 per cent; each vehicle and its driver thus does 10 per cent less work, and some passengers vote with their feet and stop using the buses altogether.

What applies in central London must be true also for town centre services elsewhere. Unfortunately, any bus operator wishing to reintroduce conductors would not be able to realise the full benefits if they continued to use the modern type of bus with doors, because the slowness of OPO is in part due to the interior layout of the bus itself, which is inevitably congested and awkward.

What is needed is for a manufacturer to produce an updated version of a bus based on the Routemaster concept.

* One Person Operation of Buses in London by Dr. P.B. Goodwin. Report prepared by: Oxford University Transport Studies Unit.

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SUMMER/WINTER CHARGING on RT, RF, etc. Control Panels.

We have had a number of requests to clarify the above due, I understand, to unclear advice given in another society's publication. This was a modification introduced in the early sixties, so if your bus was sold before then, e.g. Jersey RTL's it may not be fitted. Assuming everyone knows what the control box looks like and where it is fitted, there is at the bottom left hand side a detachable lid. Upon removing this there should be revealed a metallic fuse. This is the main charging fuse and must be left intact. Just above this there is provision for an ordinary RT type lighting fuse. If it is 'in situ' it brings an additional resistance into the circuit and reduces the voltage by one. This is the Summer charging circuit. If the fuse is missing, you are on winter charging. In addition there is also one, in the RF, or two in the R7, glass fuses. These also must be intact. We would advise you to leave the charging fuse out, but if you find on a long journey on a hot day the batteries are fuming, then replace it from one of the lighting fuses.

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ROY'S REMEDIES - PART 5

New Year 1970 saw about a dozen of us bowling up to Crich again in GS 67 for the TMS A.G.M. film show, and the promise of seeing a Derby Trolleybus run under its own power at Crich.

We arrived at Crich late on Saturday afternoon with a good layer of snow on the ground, The long suffering Bill Cottrell 'volunteered' to drive again. Is he totally mad?? Answers please on a postcard.....

Anyway, we went to the pub a couple of miles down the hill towards Matlock, just in time for the film show after the AGM. Had a few pints, went back up to the museum and dosed down for the night in the bus. It was a bitterly cold night, so cold in fact that ice formed on the inside of the bus... Woke up frozed, so someone decided to make a pot of tea. We had three or four plastic containers of water, soused one of these for tea and washing up. Someone used some of the hot water to wash the cups up. 'Hmmm, this water smells funny. The detergent won't froth in it' he proclaimed.

About the same time, someone else was busy filling up the tea pot. 'Water smells funny' he said. I tasted a drop of tea, some pillock had used the white spirit instead of water. AAAAGHHHHH. Thinking back, it's lucky the whole bus didn't blow up.

Anyway, a bit later on we went for a ride up the quarry to give me a chance to drive - still being under 21 couldn't drive on public roads, changed into second at the end of the quarry to pull away after a three point turn and GRAUNCH. Now GS's have a habit of jumping out of second gear 'cos the selectors get worn, so I'm told. This is what had happened, but this time the lever was stuck in reverse. A chap by the name of Bill Gardiner renowned for his skillful use of a 14lb whitworth hammer was summoned from the depot end. He soon had the floor trap up by the gearbox, and took the top off the gearbox using a screwdriver and spanners. Whether they were the right size I never found out. He explained it was a simple job to click the gears back into neutral using a screwdriver or crowbar and put the top back on the gearbox.

Someone told the tale of a certain TD being driven home with one bloke driving and another changing gear, but that's another story.

Anyway, Bill Gardiner managed to successfully put the thing back together, and even to this day, despite fitting a new selector on the gearbox, it still slips out of second, usually when going up a steep hill or somewhere equally embarrassing.

Next month Roy's Remedies deals with what to tell Thames Valley Constables who decide to nick you for only having one back light working on your bus and how to blow up bus engines.

Roy Gould,

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THE DAY WE COLLECTED THE ST. - That statement conjures up a few thoughts of the day, that might interest some of the members. It was quite a nice day weather-wise for February, dry and sunny. We had arranged to leave Cobham at 8.30 am, but as usual, when a time is set for leaving Cobham, it's normal it seems to be about 20 minutes late - all the last minute things, you know. Well, we eventually got going in the trusty tow bus, our destination somewhere in Kent.

The only problem on the way there, was where to turn off on the M25 for a comfort stop, as there aren't any service areas on that motorway.

We finally arrived at what had been the ST's temporary home and there it was, all ready and waiting. But before we started our return journey we were allowed to have a look round. If one is interested in old vehicles you could have spent more time there than we could spare. There were mainly buses, but there was also some lorries and vans, ranging from solid tyres up to RT and RF.

In a field out the back was a scene that reminded me of a picture I had seen in 'London Buses between the Wars.' The one on the page, 'Some old buses never die', with all those half's of K types. It was just like the picture except no chickens. I didn't think there were so many remnants of K or S types about.

Well the engine of the ST is all warmed up and ready to go. We had an expert with us to sort out any problems that may have occurred with the magneto ignition petrol engine that Tilling and General ST's had fitted. We had no problems though - only a small one and more about that later.

After getting on the road, the ST first, followed by the tow bus. We decided to get through Maidstone before stopping for petrol. That seemed simple in itself, but filling stations aren't built to get double deck buses in, with all the low canopies. (With diesel buses the diesel pumps are usually over to one side away from canopies). When a place was found without a canopy, the bus was carefully negotiated past the pumps as they were set on a curve. It was found the garage only had four star petrol, and that wouldn't do, as in 1929 when the ST engine was designed it would have been something like 1½ star. So we went on, a bit worried, then we found a place that had a canopy but room for manoeuvre.

So manoeuvre we did. It was backed into the forecourt by the edge of the offending canopy, across the pumps, so that any other customers could not drive through as both lanes were blocked by a double deck bus. It caused quite a bit of excitement - some passing motorists stopped to take photographs. After getting some diesel for the tow bus we were all set to go, heading for the M25 and away. While going along the motorway I was a passenger on the ST, waiting for my turn to have a drive and was wondering what it would be like to drive a petrol engine A.E.C. crash box. I had driven many miles in my own vehicle, a diesel engine A.E.C. crash box, now I was going to get a chance to compare. When my turn came round I was pleasantly surprised.

The ST is a very light vehicle, weight and steering. But the gear changing I found much smoother and if anything a little more easy. Perhaps the petrol engine is more responsive, the revs build up and die down quicker which helps the gear changing. But before that driving turn came there was another piece of excitement, I don't think ST's like motorways. By the time we reached the top of the last long drag on the M25, the one to the top of Reigate Hill, the ST decided to boil up. A rapid stop in the lay-by as the driver couldn't see through all the steam. We thought it best to wait and cool down, then we would top up the radiator and proceed. As the last climb was so slow the tow bus had gone on ahead, but went quite away ahead then realised that all was not right, so stopped and put a call out on the C.B. to see if a passing motorist may have seen an old bus anywhere broken down.

It just shows you that our old buses don't go unnoticed, as the tow bus received an answer telling them where we were. That meant they had to find a suitable place to turn round and come back. In the meantime we had got ourselves going, and I was having my turn at the wheel. It was while going down a long gentle slope that I glanced up a side road, and there trying to turn round was the tow bus - but we were observed going past, so the turning round was for nothing as they resumed their original direction, but followed us the rest of the way back

to Cobham.

We arrived at Cobham without any more incidents, pleased with ourselves that the mission was accomplished in full. Now we had another really worthy exhibit safely under Cobham's roof.

There was plenty of chit chat about our day whilst having our hot cuppa, before going home - tired but contented.

Colin Wickens

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MEMBER INQUIRY

Wanted - Transfers for RF:

PAY AS YOU ENTER PLEASE in white, SWITCH OFF HEATER WHEN NOT REQUIRED.

Interior poster for front bulkhead window.

Route number stencil holder over RF doorway or drawing of same.

Please contact John Hinson. Telephone 01- 1062.

GROUP SALES - Special winter offer on paint.

Fuel resisting paint for bus chassis. Silver or Black
£25 per litre including VAT.

Etching primer for bare metal. Buff or Grey
£30 per litre including VAT.

Prices do not include postage or packing.

1986 CALENDARS

These are being produced for our business customers and are available to members. They feature 12 drawings of various London buses. Price including postage, packing and VAT is £1.50.

For Group Sales contact Tony Peters - Cobham 64078

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MUSEUMS TO VISIT

The Bolton Transport Group Museum and workshop,
off Smithills Croft Road, Smithills, Bolton.

November to March SUNDAYS ONLY. Open 11.00 am - 4.00 pm.

Further information available shortly.

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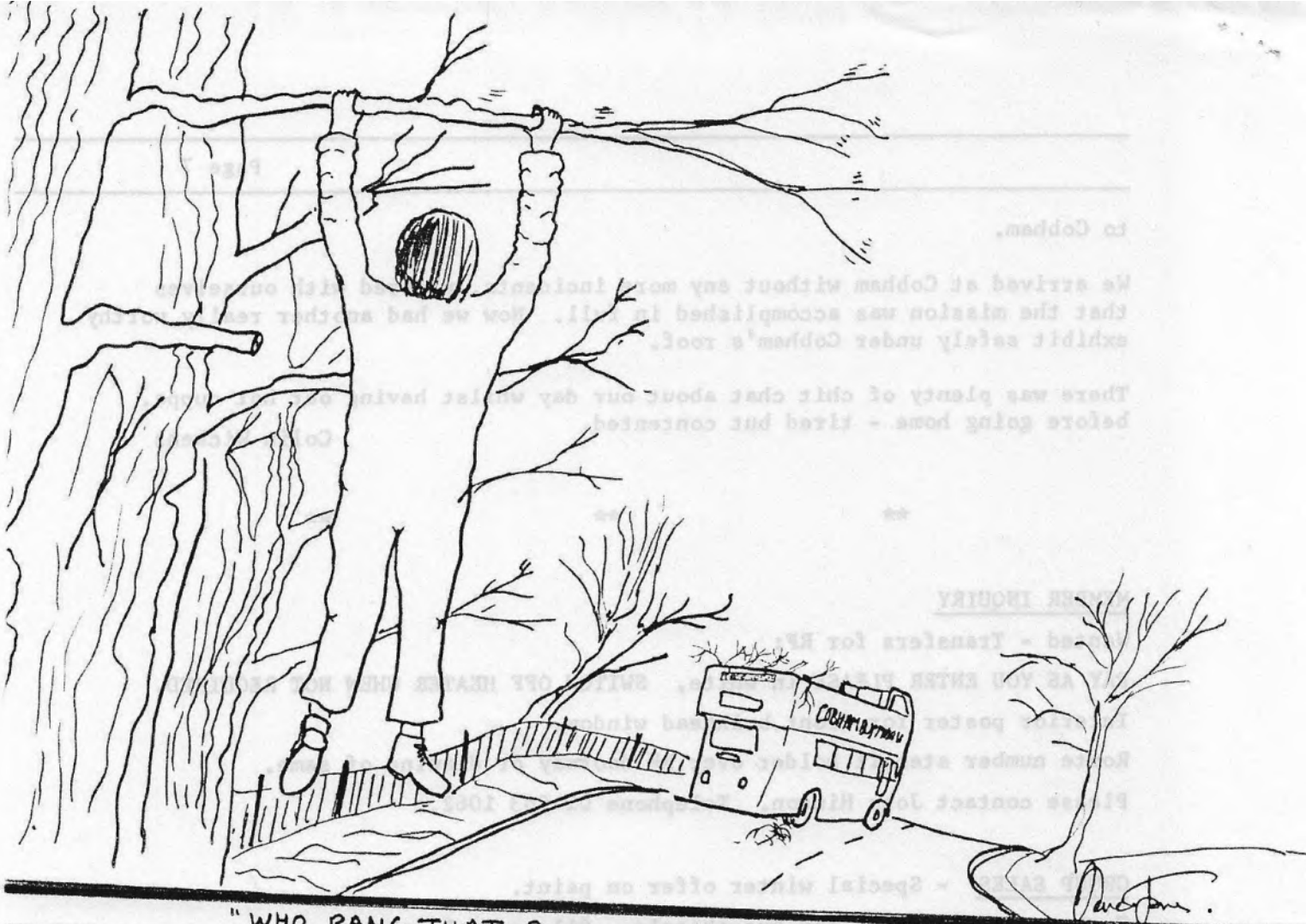
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NOTICE

COBHAM BUS MUSEUM OPEN DAY 1986

The 1986 Open Day will be held on Sunday 13th April.



"WHO RANG THAT B----- BELL?"

We extend a welcome to the NEW MEMBERS listed below.

Mr. Brian Forecast,	Warren Drive, Hornchurch, Essex, RM12 4QU	RF271/510
Samuel Bell,	Palestine Street, Ormeau Road, Belfast, BT7 1QJ	RM 654
William Bell,	Wedderburn Ave., Erinvale, Finaghy, Belfast BT10 OFY	RM 654
Robert Gillespie,	Rathmoyne House, Dunmurry, Co. Antrim N. Ireland.	RM 654
Dean Sullivan,	Wallwood Road, Leytonstone, London, E11 1DQ.	RT 3461
R. Herridge,	Downsview, Small Dole, West Sussex, BN5 9YB.	RF 406
John Slater,	Croydon, Royston, Herts, SG8 ODX	

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Julian Bowden,	Forde Avenue, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3EU
Alan Pritchard	Belgrave Manor, Broomlyn Road, Woking, Surrey, GU22 7TW

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