

APOLOGIES

For those of you who are in other societies and clubs I am NOT going to bore you with any of the standard excuses that everyone churns out about why the newsletter is late. You know, the usual 'Delay at the printers' and 'illness in the family' plus also 'computerisation of the membership list' and of course 'other commitments.' No, here for the first time is another (!) quick newsletter which is both very late and very short due wholly to the fact that I haven't had time to deal with it! However, since LBPG newsletters are traditionally late and always less impressive than they were intended to be, we trust that you will not be too upset. And I am not going to mention that there IS a dispute with the printer who does the front page photos, and that the typewriter I use got stolen from the car in Waterloo Place three weeks ago! (Not a dry eye in the house!).

Leon Daniels

COBHAM BUS MUSEUM OPEN DAY AND BUS GATHERING

It is unlikely that you will have missed the publicity everywhere else for the Group's 1980 Cobham Open Day so just as a reminder, it is this Sunday (13th April) and opens at 1100. There are lots of new gimmicks (sorry - attractions) including an open top bus ride, a passenger carrying model railway, and also a place for buses to park and talk to one another for the very first time. Of course, willing volunteers are needed at Cobham the day before (Saturday) for last minute preparations (and if you haven't been before you will be fascinated to see quite how last-minute these preparations are!).

John Bedford is in overall charge so please, don't be shy, come along on Saturday and offer your services to him (and then of course, come on Sunday too). There will also be an enthusiasts flea market (Geoff Singer in overall charge) and, of course, the free bus service, ably scheduled and supervised by Alan Pearce. We know how much you like this particular facet of the Open Day, and there will be an even wider range of interesting buses in use. Our thanks go here to those members who have kindly offered their own vehicles for use on Open Day. I am sworn to secrecy about one such vehicle, being provided by London Country from their double-deck Green Line fleet, just emerging from repaint by a man who must have used some 1957 instructions when doing it.

For even-more-last-minute-than-ever information please call Cobham 4078.

MEMBERSHIP FORMS

It is rather awkward to have a club like ours with no members, but I am afraid that is just how we are. You may have paid your money (by standing order) but since I haven't sent out the membership forms (there not being a newsletter with which to send them) I suppose we don't have any members. Prompted by our membership secretary Terry Stubbington (pressured might have been a better word, threatened another) you should find one attached. Please complete it whether or not any of the details have changed. Remember subscriptions are now £7 for ordinary full members, and £5 for invited members. If your bankers order operated at the old amount, kindly pay the balance. If you pay by cheque - please send us one. If there is a silver lining, perhaps it is that the traditionally bad time for paying subscriptions (January) is long gone!

OPPORTUNITIES

We have for sale Ultimate ticket machines with box and ticket roll holders at £5.00 each at Cobham. Also RT handrails that fit over the used ticket box, all newly covered in white doverite. These are £4.00.

Member Robin Thomas of RT4325 fame has offered to supply other members with supplies of screws, bolts rivets etc through their account with GKN. Please write to him at ■ Nevin House, Bourne Avenue, Harlington, Middlesex UB3 1QU

COBHAM NEWS

Since our last review, RF518 visited us to rejoin bits of chassis together again (sorry boys), and RF332 went out to Reading to tow in Bertie the Burger Bus (RT3960). Following starter change and rebuilding of the platform it is now back selling hamburgers again. MoT passes were RT3220 (also repainted), RF255, RFW14, RTW467, RTW75, RF362, RTL453, RT2300, RT3491, RTL1256, SM508 RF255 and RT2157.

Cobham regulars Christmas lunch was on 23 December cooked and served by Wyn Wickens (co-owner in law of STL2692) and enjoyed by all.

New resident at Cobham is B214 (having taken the place of 738J, now sold. B214 you may remember was an early Cobham resident, owned by Jim Atkinson, and now retired from active preservation in Hong Kong, to passive preservation at Cobham. The transformation is quite remarkable since we saw it last and we look forward to seeing further progress in due course.

We have bought in ex-Brighton PD2 5006CD and provisionally now sold. It is famous for its television appearances on the News taking Grunwick workers across the picket line during the dispute and it can safely be described as 'secure' with no outward door handles, fuel stop, opening windows etc. Also in the deal was the RF which operated similarly prior to the purchase of 5006CD, this being RF406 and now sold to Mr Bernstein, already owner of RF538, and the subject of a gearbox change at Cobham recently.

RTW467 appeared on This is your Life in January, covered in modern adverts and 'This bus is operated by XX district' notices to make it look more convincing (well it is eight foot wide!). Subject that night was Terry Griffiths (who?) and his car was stopped by the bus in a tiny mews near Berkley Square. The connection is that Terry was a bus conductor in Cardiff or somewhere in the fifties.

On 26 February we took RT190 to Park Royal Vehicles Ltd and after an interesting tour of the works (where the only production was for London Transport Titans), it posed alongside T190, one of the latests Titans just before delivery to LT. After much film was exposed at every angle RT190 became the very last RT to emerge from the gates of the works before it ceases operations this year.

Various vehicles in Group members' ownership made the journey to Amsterdam for the Grey Green rally a short while ago, amongst them RF672, RLH29, NLP645, RF463 and RF600.

LONDON TRANSPORT MUSEUM OPENS

The new London Transport Museum opened to the public on 30 March and there are lots of new things to see, including various refurbished vehicles, since we last saw them at Syon Park. To my mind, the green ST is stunning, and the refurbished LT magnificent (even if it does look a bit too new for a wartime portrayal).

The wall displays and photographs are much better than at Syon Park, but unfortunately, a few signs and fixtures are still just screwed to the wall without much attempt to put them into context. The buses are formed in a fan layout, and considering the shortage of space, are well presented. A coffee shop and bookshop are welcome features and we wish London Transport success in their new venture. Admission is £1.40 (60p child) and the museum is a short walk from the Strand. Perhaps I am allowed to plug the Vintage Bus Service 100, using D142 and ST922, which serves the museum from Oxford Circus, daily.

FINALLY - A DAY OUT FOR THE FAMILY

A trip is being organised by Geoff Singer for Group members and their guests aboard the last ocean going paddle steamer, the Waverley. The full day's outing will be on Saturday 3 May and will cost £6 each. This will be a major social gathering for those of us who meet every weekend anyhow and we hope that lots of other members will come along and join in the fun. Geoff is personally underwriting the cost of the venture so I am sure he will welcome you more than ever (he doesn't know yet)!