

LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST

NEWS  
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**PHOTOS:**

- Front cover; 724J (STL 338) at either Lea Bridge or Hammersmith.
- Inside front cover; Two photos by John Gillham to illustrate his article about Brooklands.
- Inside back cover; The social Trip, Halifax Regent 215 with Routemaster engine, LCC Tram 106 at Clich, London Trolleybuses at Sandtoft, and our weekend travel aid Southend 249.
- Back cover Top; KMB, s DMS in China.
- Back cover Bottom; SMS with an upright engine and crash gearbox, don't believe it? Wait until Geoff's piece about Malta...

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**VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS MAGAZINE ARE THOSE OF THE CONTRIBUTOR AND NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE L.B.P.T.**

IMPORTANT IMPORTANT IMPORTANT

CHANGE OF EDITORIAL ADDRESS.

Please note that contributions for the next Newsletter (due for publication just after Christmas) or comments about this one should be sent to Dave Jones at Romford, Essex. RM7 8RB.

This is because Geoff is likely to move house (~~and so the "BDFW Social" account looked empty~~) in the near future.

**EDITORIAL**

*Dave Jones*

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**SEC'S REPORT**

TACHOGRAPHS.

As there appears to be some confusion concerning the present situation with regard to tachographs on preserved buses, it has been suggested that a brief note of the current situation be included in this issue.

When the regulations were first published by the Department of Transport (DTp) a meeting was held in London between representatives of the National Association of Road Transport Museums (NARTMs) and Derek Grossmark, Chairman of the Historic Vehicles Joint Committee (HVJC) whose recommendation was that all negotiations with the DTp should be conducted through a single body, i.e. the HVJC. We were strongly advised not to make separate and conflicting representations to the DTp as it was felt that this approach would lead to a weakening of our position.

As a member of NARTMs, the LBPT representative agreed to abide by this recommendation on the understanding that we would be notified of progress of the negotiations between the DTp and EEC. We were subsequently informed of the proposed amendment to the regulations which had been previously discussed and agreed by the HVJC and submitted to us as being the best compromise likely to be achieved.

During the lengthy period since these amendments were submitted, we have been awaiting a positive response in the form of a written statement from the DTp which will be official and binding.

We have been unofficially advised by the DTp recently that although it is anticipated that the amendments to the regulations will be approved, in the form agreed, there is still no definite document available from the DTp and not likely to be for some time.

Meanwhile we can only recommend members to observe the draft guidelines, details of which are printed below. Any further information will be distributed to members as soon as we receive it.

The present situation is:-

A draft Statutory Instrument (this is a document of which hundreds are issued every year on every aspect of law enactment) which in simple English says this:-

- i. A retired bus or coach must be 25 years old to exclude it from the need to have a tachograph fitted.
- ii. Not more than nine people including the driver may be carried on the public highway.
- iii. The vehicle is not used to carry passengers for hire or reward AT ANY TIME.
- iv. The owner/driver must be a member of a road vehicle preservation

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club or society although such a club can be a group of two or three people. This is to exclude "hippies" and such who are not vehicle preservationists.

- v. The S.I. also sets out what constitutes a rally. That is to say either a static display where vehicles use the most suitable route to get there or a road run on a pre determined route.
- vi. There is no limit placed on the distance a vehicle can travel from its normal base.
- vii. Vehicles can use for leisure purposes any suitable public road, i.e. wide enough and with acceptable height restrictions. In other words, do not take your 8 ft. wide bus up a road where you know there is a 7'6" width restriction or your 14'6" high 'decker and try to get it under a 13 ft. high arch. Not only will you wreck your vehicle, you will also cause trouble to other road users and that we must not do!

Finally, it is possible to carry passengers up to the full seating capacity of a vehicle to provide A FREE BUS SERVICE at a transport event but proper supervision of such activity is essential. Furthermore, such a service must be run to a timetable published in advance of the event. The distance limit for such a service is 50 km. This does not mean that a full load of passengers can be carried from, say, Manchester to London once a year by splitting the total distance and dividing by 50 to make a series of "linked" services. This activity would constitute a mis-interpretation of what is permitted.

We have just received a copy of Statutory Instrument No.805 of 1987 relating to the Road Traffic Act, the effect of which is to exempt vehicles manufactured before 1 January 1947 from the need to be equipped with a tachograph, so far as those vehicles come within the scope of The Community Drivers Hours and Recording Equipment Regulations. Thus if your bus was built before the above date you don't need a tacho.

#### HIGH PRICE CAR

On Thursday 19 November Christie's will be selling what may be the worlds most expensive car, a 1931 Bugatti Royale, "Kellner Coupe". It is one of only six known to exist, of the seven built. An example sold in America last year fetched \$8 million.

If you fancy a look at this incredible car, it will be on display at Beaulieu from 24 October to 8 November inclusive.

#### A WEEKEND UNDER THE WIRES - OR CRICH AND SANDTOFT VIA A LITTLE LIGHT REFRESHMENT.

We collected coach 249, a Leyland Tiger with a Duple Carribean body from Southend on Friday night after its return journey from London on the X1, and returned to Ensign's at Purfleet to park and give the coach a wash and brush up ready for Saturday, leaving at around Midnight to make our way home. Geoff could have a lay-in on Saturday morning because the coach was being delivered to his door by courtesy of not only an Ensign driver but also one of their management!! Now that's service for you. But did he lay-in, not on your nelly, the door bell rang around 10 past seven. They couldn't sleep, so Geoff couldn't sleep!

Sixteen of us started right on time(ish) from Romford with Mike Banks driving towards Euston via a most peculiar way indeed, almost a back street tour of deepest East London. A case of if its 8'2" wide then the coach will fit ..... just.

We picked up another four at Euston and turned towards Finchley when Bill suggested a slight detour. So, into London's biggest one way system we plunged "left, right, oh we can't do that, next right - er no, left". Anyway after a quick crawl round the "yuppie" parts of Camden we reached our goal. Parked in the middle of a terrace of houses was a smart RT, acting as an estate agents office, complete with dummy driver and conductor, together with a man in the process of being run over. It was very interesting, until the queue of traffic became a little restive.

John Bedford, Jeff Stoute, Ian and his four friends were waiting at Finchley. Although not all in the same place!! But soon we were on our way. It was Geoff's turn at the wheel now and we headed for the A1 northwards because of delays on the M1.

Geoff had arranged a half way stop at somewhere interesting before Crich but as the A1 detour was a little longer than expected we stopped before then for coffee at a country pub. After half an hour we were back on the road heading across country to Burton-Upon-Trent for our surprise visit to the Bass Brewing Museum for dinner and light refreshment. Where's Bill gone!

We found the Museum of great interest, lots of preserved bottles of beer! On display were a steam engine and their Directors coach, vintage vehicles, shire horses, brewing equipment of all ages, hic!! and much more, and that was the free bit. A special admission price had been arranged to the main museum building which some of us took advantage of to look around.

Their food was marvellous and so was their beer we're told. Well worth a visit if anyone is passing. Feeling fully refreshed and in fine form we left Burton and made for the first of the proper transport places of interest - Crich, which was reached very pleasantly without recourse



to Motorways. Prior warning of our arrival meant that LCC 106 was one of the cars in service, along with Johannesburg No.60, which was being driven by one of Dave's JRL colleagues and it was this that led to Dave being given the dubious honour of swinging the pole round at the northern terminus. Its certain all our group on the tram expected to see him dangling on the end of the rope, but Dave's obviously heavier than he looks!! After a visit to the souvenir shops and the recently refurbished tea rooms we returned to the coach for the remainder of the day's travel. Its amazing how much a place changes when you hav'nt visited it for some years. The last time we visited Crich must have been 6-7 years ago and its certainly changed.

Having left Crich around half-past six and made our way still northwards to our Hotel, a Trust House Forte Motel just north of Doncaster. We checked in with no problems at all and while everyone else was trying out their colour T.V. or tea and coffee machines or shower, Geoff was being relieved of some money by reception (he gets all the good jobs). Three-quarters of an hour later, (because we don't waste any time on our trips!) we were once again back on the road heading into Doncaster town for the evening and a meal. We parked up in the bus station and all went our own way, meeting back at the coach at eleven. This is where it should be pointed out that our coach had a three line number blind which also had letters on three lines. Isn't it amazing what one can make out of three letters! What was displayed on the front going back to the hotel turned a few Doncastrian heads who thought they had drunk a little too much (good job it wasn't a 4 line blind I heard someone say).

To bed, and a nice lazy night, not up too early Sunday for breakfast in the hotel's sister restaurant, the Little Chef. Cheak out time 10.00 and a short drive to Sandtoft, with yet another blind display!

Sandtoft was nearly in full swing when we arrived; their trolleybuses already in service along with tours by many different motorbuses including an ex B.E.A. routemaster in L.T.E. livery. A variety of trolleybuses were operating in service on the rather restrictive oval track, including two Maidstone vehicles, 56 and 72, Bradford 834, six wheeler Huddersfield 631 and a Peading vehicle. Most of us had a ride on each, even at 20p. a go. The main sheds had been cleared of most vehicles and the room occupied by numerous sales stands. One particularly impressive feature was the educational area and lecture theatre where, at other times, school children are taught much about trolleybuses and electricity in general. Quite a selection of work by school children was on display, together with "take-away" educational packs.

The rally of visiting vehicles grew by the hour with the arrival of the road run. We counted 80 vehicles on display not including Sandtoft's trolleybuses or the vehicles in service. From the London stable were: RT's 172, 1379, 1574. BF's 351, 319. RM's 16, 529, 737, 1314 and Northern 2105, and not forgetting Trolley's 1812, and 1201 (all those years not having a London Trolley and suddenly they have two).

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RT 172 looked really nice in its Bradford livery and was a credit to its new owners. Dave even managed to persuade one of the owners to put up route 14 to Fagley, one he had used often as a child in Bradford.

Finally we visited the cafe, hot dog stalls, fish and chip stall (complete with mushy peas!), beer tent, where's Bill gone again! Another ride on a trolleybus and it was time to leave and head homeward.

"Take a short cut back to the A1" they said across the marshes. They must put their roads down with their hands and feet as it felt like the big dipper at Southend, (have they still got a big dipper at Southend?). Anyway we found the A1 and were soon travelling at maximum legal speed towards London apart from a quick stop at the Nene Valley Railway. It was a quick stop because it was closed. They did keep the restaurant car open a little longer for us though. Still never mind. Someone did suggest we all went round J.B.'s for tea!

We arrived back in London around 8.00 o'clock and returned to Purfleet via Romford arriving at 10.00 o'clock.

Dave, Sue and Geoff returned the coach to Southend a little later, refuelled the coach with 55 gallons, signed it off and returned home after another successful weekend.

This has been a joint Singer-Jones production, 'cos neither of us realised the other had written something. Typical isn't it!



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## INAUGURATION OF BROOKLANDS MUSEUM

By John Gillham.

Our next-door neighbour in the Museum business is only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles away, at Brooklands, so we ought to know what they are doing. They held a grand opening ceremony on Sunday 7 June 1987, and kindly invited the London Bus Preservation Trust to send two people to represent the Cobham Bus Museum. I had the honour to be one of these, Tim Nicholson was the other, and we took the 1925 Dennis open-top bus so as to be part of the display and to give short rides to some of the motor-racing and aeroplane people who perhaps don't often mix with buses.

This great day almost coincided with the 80th anniversary of the opening of Brooklands racing track away back in 1907, and we now sincerely congratulate the Brooklands people on inaugurating a magnificent museum to commemorate the many magnificent achievements of those 80 years. Motor racing ceased in 1939, but flying still continued. The Museum project started in 1967, when the Brooklands Society, Limited, was formed by Bill Boddy, who was and still is the editor of "Motor Sport" magazine, and when also a "Wings over Brooklands" exhibition was staged. A great deal of good work was done in 1970-75 by Kenneth Evans with local, county, and national bodies to secure preservation orders on most of the pre-war surviving installations, and generally to save Brooklands for posterity. On 12 March 1987 the Brooklands Museum Trust, Limited, was officially incorporated with the full support of Elmbridge Borough Council, and with eight Trustees, of whom the Chairman is Sir Peter Masefield. The aims of the Trust are to administer and finance the preservation of all the best of the historic Brooklands scene within the 30 acres of the heritage site, together with the formation of a museum, to restore and preserve a part of the former motor-racing track and aerodrome and the buildings and facilities associated therewith, and, in pursuing these objectives, to encourage and assist in the promotion of events and rallies on the Trust's premises.

Let us now go back to 1907, I confess I know far less about racing cars or aeroplanes than I do about buses, but, however much we love our RT's and RF's we cannot fail to be impressed by all the wonderful things that are chronicled in the 120 well-illustrated pages of the commemorative brochures we were so generously given on 7 June, from which I am extracting just a very few items at random. By 1906 the motor car, already about 20 years old, was beginning to progress from the primitive to faster more practical vehicles. But H.F. Locke-King, who owned the ground on which Brooklands was built, was worried because Britain had nowhere to test its vehicles, and no racing tracks on which to practice, hence the French, German, and Italian cars and drivers were winning all the big races and leaving Britain out in the cold. So he generously provided the 340-acre site, wedged between the main line of the London to Exeter

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railway and the road from Weybridge to Byfleet, with the River Wey running through one side of it.

The  $2\frac{1}{4}$ -mile oval track was designed by a leading railway engineer, and construction started in October 1906, straight and flat along both sides but with high banking around the sharp curves at each end. The bridge over the river at the northern end, where the Member's Banking was to start to flatten out into the Railway Straight, was itself a masterpiece, with the complex geometry of a surface which had to be concave or bowl-shaped in both planes, with a length of 165 ft, a width of 100 ft, and height falling from 40 to 32 ft around a radius of 2000 ft. So it was made (by a Yorkshire firm) entirely in reinforced concrete, one of the largest jobs that had yet used this new material at that early date. The concrete surface for the rest of the track needed 200,000 tons of gravel and cement, delivered in 80 truckloads every day from London, with 2000 men working on the job.

The Brooklands Automobile Racing Club was formed on 12 December 1906 under the Chairmanship of Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, father of the present Lord, the track was opened on 17 June 1907, and the first motor race meeting was held on 6 July. There was a very horsey atmosphere everywhere, as befitted a wealthy gentleman's country estate. Drivers were identified by jockey's silks, the cars came under starter's orders, and races ended on the Finishing Straight; but it was the world's first closed-circuit motor-racing track. Records very soon started to be made, and broken. On 28-29 June 1907 S.F. Edge in a 7.7-litre 60-hp Napier car did 1582 miles in 24 hours at 66 mph, which even today would be quite an achievement. Percy Lambert did 100 miles in one hour here in a Talbot in 1913. The one-lap record was raised, first to 108 mph in a Fiat, then to 127 by Kaye Don in a Sunbeam, then to 128 by Parry Thomas in 1924 in a Leyland Eight, to 134 in 1929 by Kaye Don to 135 in 1930 by Birkin in a Bentley, to 137 in 1931 by Kaye Don again, to 138 in 1932 by Birkin again, to 140 in 1934 by John Cobb in a Napier-Railton, and finally to 143 in 1935 by Cobb again.

Along the Railway Straight a Sunbeam raised the world's land-speed record to 134 mph in 1922, and later Cobb's Napier did 152 mph here, Brookland's fastest ever. Numerous races of all types were run, for 200 miles, 500 miles, 1000 miles, or for 6, 12, or 24 hours, and many others. Different races were for cars of different sizes, ranging from the huge Chitty Bang Bang of 1921 with a 23-litre 305-bhp Mayback engine down to the humblest Austin Seven or Morgan 3-wheeler. Just imagine the boredom (or excitement), and concentration needed for the 1000-mile race, going almost non-stop around the same track for 363 circuits; one year this was won by two ladies in a Riley Nine. Sir Henry Segrave and Sir Malcolm Campbell also raced extensively at Brooklands.

Buses have never done this sort of thing, but in October 1933 Captain G.E.T. Eyston did 106 mph around Brooklands in a Chrysler

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chassis fitted with an AEC 8.8-litre diesel engine of the type used in LGOC "LT" six-wheelers. Raymond May raced at Brooklands in Rileys and Invictas, and then from 1938 designed and made and sold his own range of ERA racing cars. There have also been many notable motor-cycling and pedal-cycling races here. In order to test braking and cornering a separate Campbell Road Circuit was opened on 20 April 1937, as a tortuous twisty route inside the main banked oval. But, alas, the last race at Brooklands was on 7 August 1939, just before the war started, and then the RAF occupied the aerodrome, and Vickers enormously expanded their aircraft production, with new factories built on a part of the race track, and the whole place was sold to Vickers Limited in 1946. A part of the Byfleet Banking at the southern end of the track was demolished during the war in order to lengthen the aerodrome runway.

Although Brooklands was planned in 1906 only for racing cars the early pioneer air people soon realised the space in the middle would be nice for flying. At this time no aeroplane had yet flown in Britain, the best in Europe had been a hop of only 721 feet, and the world's only successful fliers were the Wright Brothers, who flew 24 miles in 38 minutes at Dayton, Ohio, in October 1905. But A.V. Roe and others brought their design and test work to Brooklands, and on 8 June 1908 Roe became the first Englishman to leave the ground except by balloon or glider, when he flew 150 feet along the car Finishing Straight in a biplane he had made himself. Lt-Col J.T.C. Moore-Brabazon experimented here with another flimsy biplane at the same time, and obtained the first pilot's licence issued in Britain, and later became an AEC Director from 1929 to 1965. The first public flight in Britain was at Brooklands by Louis Paulhan on 29 October 1909. T.O.M. Sopwith first flew from Brooklands in 1910, and established a flying school there, and is still alive today at the age of 100.

Aircraft manufacturing at Brooklands started in 1910, and planes were built wholly or partly there by Martinsyde, Sopwith, Wright Bros, Flanders, Bleriot, and (from 1915) by Vickers, who were previously at Erith. Throughout 1909-14 Brooklands was the centre of 75% of the real work and effort behind British aviation, and of 664 licenced air pilots in Britain by 1914, 318 had been trained at Brooklands. Harry Hawker flew around Brooklands for 8½ hours on 24 October 1912, and climbed to 12,900 ft in 1913, to 18,393 ft in 1915, and to 24,408 ft in 1916, all in Sopwith biplanes. Many hundreds of fighters and bombers were made by Sopwith at Brooklands and Kingston for the RFC and RAF in 1914-18. Alcock and Brown, the first to fly the Atlantic, did so in 1919 in a Vickers Vimy designed and built at Brooklands, and Vimys also made the first-ever air links from Britain to South Africa and to Australia. Hawker later joined with Sopwith to form the famous Hawker Aircraft Company, which became Hawker Siddeley in 1935.

Brooklands was closed to civilian flying and racing during the war, but re-opened on 10 April 1920, Vickers continuing as a prolific

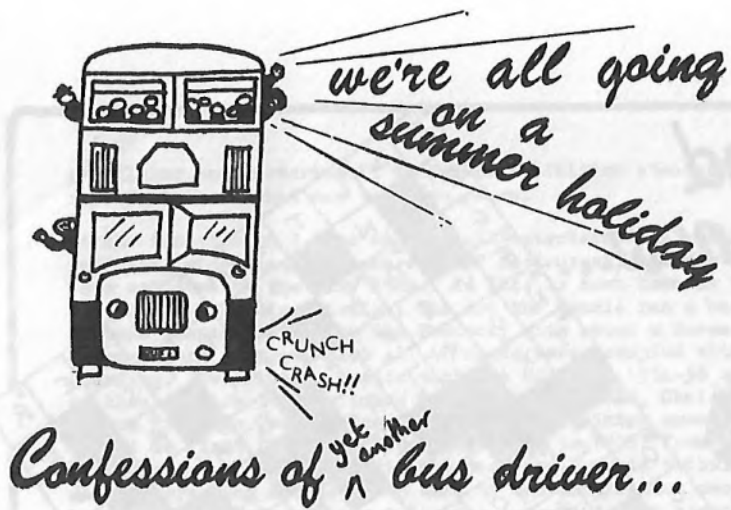
manufacturer. The annual Kings Cop air race at Brooklands in 1932 was won at 124 mph by a de Havilland Fox Moth. The first flight of the prototype Hawker Hurricane fighter was made at Brooklands on 6 November 1935, and these later helped to win the 1939-45 war. Also in 1939-45 some 2514 Vickers Wellington bombers were made at Brooklands. On 29 June 1962 the prototype Vickers VC 10 jet liner made its first flight from here, and today's Concorde with a cruising speed of 1333 mph is largely built here.

More than 8000 aircraft, mostly large ones, have been made at Brooklands in its 80 years, and this is part of what we were celebrating on 7 June 1987, with the inauguration of the Trust and of the first stage of the new Museum. The Museum is to be a "Hall of Fame" to commemorate the Magnificent Men and their historic machines on the surface and in the air which made Brooklands famous throughout the world. Of the total 340-acre site the 240 acres west of the River Wey, including the whole of the aerodrome and aerodrome buildings and two-thirds of the race track, are now owned by Trafalgar Brookmount Limited, who are planning extensive industrial expansion here. A further 60 acres, including all the aircraft factories, are now owned by British Aerospace Limited, as successors to Vickers, and the 40 acres in the north-eastern corner of the oval are now owned by Gallaher Limited, who in 1983 granted a 99-year lease for 30 of them to the Museum Trust. These 30 acres include the motor-racing Paddock, the historic 1907 Club House, several early wooden sheds or workshops, the northern end of the Finishing Straight, the Test Hill, a large part of the Member's Banking, and a part of the Campbell Circuit, onto all of which Preservation Orders were placed in 1975.

The Club House had been beautifully restored by Gallahers, and scheduled as an Ancient Monument. It now accommodates most of the Museum exhibits, including a magnificent collection of enlarged photographs of all the many cars and aeroplanes that raced at or from Brooklands and the men who drove or flew or serviced them, and a Reference Library is being built up. These, and many other small exhibits and models, are under the enthusiastic care of the Curator, Mrs. Morag Barton. At least seven of the famous cars that had won Brooklands races or lap records still exist today, but six are in other museums elsewhere or in private hands, and only the Whitney-Straight Duesenberg car which achieved 138 mph in 1938 is in Brooklands Museum. But the collection does include about 8 or 10 more ordinary motor cars of the 1920's and 30's, also several huge semi-modern aero engines, and one of the little Flying Flea light aircraft of the mid-30's, several historic bicycles, some office furniture of 1907-10, and other items, whilst a replica of A.V. Roe's 1908 biplane is now being built and should be ready next year for its own 80th anniversary. Another major project now in hand is the Wellington bomber, which crashed into Loch Ness in Scotland in 1940, remained there deep down under the water for 45 years, and was salvaged in September 1985 and returned to Brooklands where it was made. Although heavily corroded and at present in a pretty horrible state it had already been partly dismantled, and work had started on







1979 and near to our holiday. This time we were going to try Spain. We had been with this company two years running, first year to the South of France, second year Italy. The company in question was Taurus Travel, they owned two Bristol PLF's, one rear entrance RAG 403 and the other a front entrance Lodekka XCS 961. Both vehicles converted to kitchen/dining area downstairs and airline seating upstairs, and both vehicles, I was assured, were pigs to drive.

The phone rang on a Wednesday, as I recall, it was Roger, who was one of two partners in Taurus Travel. My first reaction was the holiday to Spain was cancelled, but it was far from the truth. The Spanish holiday was on, only the driver for the holiday to the South of France which left a week before us had personal problems and could'nt drive and would I like to do it. Well, being used to Cobham Bus Museum and always used to being thrown in at the deep end I agreed, providing one thing, that I could also go to Spain a week later, and also that Helen could come with me (That's two). This they agreed, so I arranged an extra week off work and by Friday morning I was about to use my FSV licence for the first time. I went to their office in Islington to be met by Roger and the Lodekka, this was the first time I'd come into personal contact with a Lodekka, and I hope the last.

"Can I have a practise?" followed by a roar of laughter from the office, "yep, course you oan" came the reply, "take it to Kings Cross Coach Station via Lloyds Bank and the supermarket". My Lodekka familiarisation course lasted about 14½ minutes.

We picked up 18 people at Kings Cross, all longing for a holiday of a lifetime to the South of France with an experienced bus driver, who not only knew France, but also knew how to drive HA!

We settled down on the A2 - M2 -A2, myself getting used to the bus, the first crash gearbox since I passed my test. Going up the box from 2nd to 5th, they

were all there, but coming down - where the hell was 3rd? - you know the feeling. (It was there going up, so it must be there somewhere coming down) but was it hell! In fact it took me 1,300 miles before I found it and when I did find it (in the South of France) by mistake, after giving up trying miles ago, one wondered how I ever missed it in the first place.

We travelled over the water by Sealink on a French boat. Take a hint, if its French don't ask for a cup of tea unless you like looking at the bottom of your cup through slightly coloured water.

As the vehicles were unchained, we made our way to customs. The passenger list and tacho were checked and after a French lesson which lasted 10 minutes, between me and a French customs official, we left (I think thats what he wanted me to do).

We headed out of Calais and towards the autoroute and on into Paris for our first night, and our first lesson in French road behaviour. When one wants to overtake (which is rare in a Lodekka) you put your lefthand indicator on. Now, if the car behind flashes you, you move out into their lane because they have given you the OK. WRONG! Not in France. Flashing you means I'm not going to let you out, and I'm coming through whatever. WRONG, because I had moved out and the road that was once clear was now filled with big red bus! Once the object of the exercise had been overtaken, I moved back to the nearside lane and got ready for some French lessons in obscenities but all I got was the driver, his wife and kids waving at me as if it was the first time they had seen a red double-decker bus, come to think of it, it probably was.

We found Paris, quite easy really, its at the end of the autoroute, but the trouble was finding the campsite. All the roads from the Paris ring road look the same.

We stopped to ask directions, when one of our passengers asked if I had done this trip before. "Of course", we replied "why"?, because I've seen the Eiffel Tower 4 times out of all 4 sides of the bus. There must be more than one then. We found the campsite which had to be approached by driving under the Paris ring road by way of a 13'3" bridge, so that's why there was so much paint under the bridge. But I was assured the bus had been under it many times before, also the campsite was used by another holiday bus company, Top Deck.

A well earned rest after a visit to the bar of course, and up bright and early for breakfast and the start of a new day behind the wheel. Back onto the autoroute for a days travel to Lyon and our next night under canvas. Day 3 and once again back to the autoroute, where after an hour or two we came across number 2 in French road behaviour. Imagine a coach travelling at 49 m.p.h. and a Lodekka travelling at 52 m.p.h. You start to overtake, get level with the coach driver who looks at you, waves and speeds up to 53 m.p.h., forcing you to out back in behind. He then finds it fun to drop back to 49 m.p.h. and so on. This happened several times, needless to say I was getting a bit fed up by this time so the only answer was to take him by surprise, wait until a downward hill foot flat down, and pass him like a bat out of hell. It only worked as well, blew his windows out at 65 m.p.h., that was some Lodekka. It wasn't long before he had overtaken me again, and it was back to square one, so I settled down and let him win. Knocked about 1 hour off my journey but we arrived safe and sound in Antibes on the South Coast.

By this time we had all got to know each other quite well, and it was usual for the old foot stumping on the floor every 3rd gear change down. Our tents were erected for the last time for two weeks and we all settled in, swimming, drinking, eating, you know typical holiday. I parked next to another Lodekka belonging to Top Deck and it was now that I was thankful I wasn't driving for them. The bus in question had developed alternator trouble, and in turn had burnt out all its wiring, not very good at the beginning of your holiday, and still 6,000 miles to go. Drivers for Top Deck, it seems, have to be willing to do anything from change a wheel to an engine transplant on the road. Well this poor driver had not only to change the alternator, but also require the bus. The goods arriving the next day by air to Nice Airport of which I duly obliged with transport. His bus, believe it or not, was off the road only 24 hours.

Day 4 was my day off to laze about here, there and everywhere. Day 5 started with a drive to St. Tropez, that's the place where everyone who's anyone hangs out (literally). Day 6 was a visit to Nice and then to Juan-les-Pins for the night life. Day 7 was Monte-Carlo via the back streets going, and the mountain coast road coming back. One road on this trip was a wrong turn which ended up climbing a mountainside by way of hairpin bends, you had to take all the road, and you daren't stop half way round because of the sound of the dog rails scraping the tarmac. The way back was a different story with rounded tunnels where the middle of the road was the only place to drive a double-decker, or you got scrapings off the roof.

Monte-Carlo or Monaco has its own Police Force, being its a country of its own, the police at this time decided they did not want a double-decker caravan in Monte-Carlo so just hassled us until the next thing we knew we were back in France. It's what you could call a flying visit. Day 8, and after another lazy morning, dinner time came with a Len Wright Volvo turning through the gate with next weeks driver to take over from me, and we were to return with the Volvo as far as Valence, which is a services on the autoroute between Lyon and Orange, where we had to cross the autoroute to the other side to await the other FLF which was being driven from England. It was then that we were told (a) that the bus had engine problems before it reached Dover and (b) could we also take 6 tables and 12 chairs plus 3 tents. We duly obliged and were left in the services on the grass verge looking like we were about to open up an open air cafe. We were glad the evening was fine and warm and we settled in for a long wait. Night fell and so did we, still on the grass verge, and then low and behold over the hill came RAG 403 the second FLF. It was all in darkness and the greeting from Dick our driver was "thank God we've made it"!

It was just before Dover when there was an almighty great bang from under the bonnet as the transfer drive shaft from the generator to the engine flew off and landed on the A2, and was duly run over by a lorry.

We camped down for the night in the services, all sleeping inside the bus. With 18 people there's no better way of getting to know everyone. Up at dawn, down to the garage to see what we could find that looked remotely like a transfer drive shaft. We found 4 jubilee clips, 2 pieces of hose and a scaffold cube, that should do the trick, and it did for about an hour, great on tick-over but when driven it always flew off in different directions. It got quite a routine: every morning screw up drive shaft, push bus to start, let tick-over charge batteries for 1 hour, drive bus 1 mile, big bang, stop bus, run back, pick up drive shaft, place under stairs ready for next morning. We had a rota after a time so everyone had a go.

We reached Spain by mid-afternoon. I collected all the passports and with the passenger list went to Customs. It was now time for Spanish lessons. He wasn't pleased, you can tell, you know by the look. There was an extra passenger and it was me! I wasn't on the passenger list. They were determined for me not to go to Spain. Then after a little while they found me, as a second driver, we could all breathe again. Off we set to try and find our campsite at Blanes. It was then we found Dick was new and hadn't driven abroad before, so I gave him a few tips as I was an old hand at it now. We found Blanes and the campsite quite easily. We were made very welcome, it was the first time Taurus Travel had used this site and the 10 ft. camp sign over the entrance proved to be the biggest problem, but this was overcome by taking the bus down a dirt track at the side of the camp and through a hole in the fence, would you believe!

To cut a long story short we visited several places during the fortnight such as Lloret which has more English pubs than England itself, including one called The Londoner complete with a genuine London Transport left hand drive single deck Pegasus bus going to Oxford Street Ref No.FU2, being used as a base for the Disco. Can't actually remember them working in London!! Also we visited Barcelona.

One private excursion took Dick and myself to the coast road between Barcelona and Mataro where we found a left hand drive Regent III ex Barcelona Transport, being used as a campsite office. It was less all mechanical units and radiator and the body was very worse for wear. In fact a look through its centre door revealed its floor was concrete!! It still bore its registration number as B.78529 SP. The campsite owner insisted the vehicle was to stay quite a few years yet.

The 2 weeks went fast and we soon found ourselves back on the autoroute heading North and Dick and myself took turns to drive to get us back to Paris a day early so we could spend a whole day in Paris itself. An evening tour of the sights of Paris was what you could call the blind leading the blind. There is the Eiffel Tower, no there it is, or is it there, but we had already been through that on the way out 3 weeks earlier.

The last evening and the last supper. Tea in Paris and midnight we set off for Calais again taking turns at driving. We arrived early morning at the docks where we lined up with the other coaches for the boat. The loaders insisted that we could not get on this one and then changed their minds 2 minutes before the off just to see if we could make it, we did (because I was driving). The boat was on the move before we had stopped. That's what I call close.

Back in Dover and the biggest hassle of the 3 weeks. Dover Customs. Youngsters with double-decker bus, must be hippies, must have lots of things they should'nt have, lets strip the bus and see. Pots and pans out, seats out, blind boxes out, so that's where they keep the tool boxes! They found nothing. thank God. Back to London and our farewells.

Delivered RAG 403 to Ensign bus premises at Purfleet where Taurus Travel kept them and parked next to XCS 961. This was RAG's last trip and XCS still had another holiday before she was withdrawn. The drivers last year were right, both vehicles were pigs, and if I don't see another Lodekka for as long as I live it won't be too soon. Still it was an experience I would'nt have missed for the world, I think.

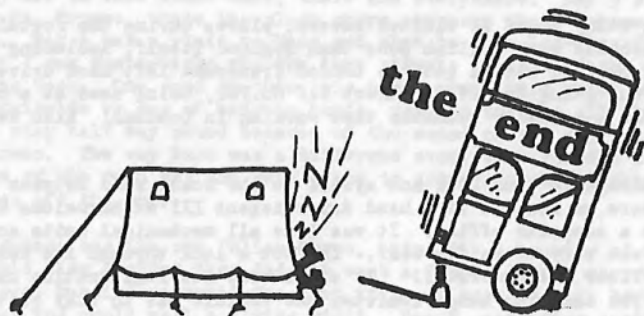


Taurus Travel have now disappeared, leaving Top Deck on their own, although there is a Company called Sundekka who store their open tops at Ensigns over the winter. They use Leylands where Top Deck are Bristol lovers.

Taurus' buses, well RAG 403 is probably on Top Decks fleet now, and XCS 961 was converted by Ensign back to a bus and sold for further service, although it was back again late last year up for sale - NO I don't want to buy it!

Warning Any complaints about the length of this story will only result in the showing of my holiday slides at the next meeting!!

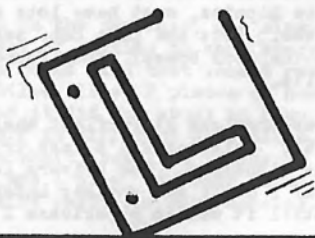
Geoff Singer.



#### PSV DRIVING.

The Trust's PSV driver training scheme is planned to start again shortly. Lessons will take place on Saturdays, a morning and evening session, based at Cobham, using the Southport PD2.

A list of potential trainees is being drawn up to allow a programme to be compiled for the next few months. If you would like to be considered for training, please write to The Secretary at Cobham as soon as possible. Detailed arrangements will be passed on as soon as possible. It is not the intention to train drivers to go on to driving for a living.



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#### PROLONGING THE USEFUL LIFE OF A CAR BATTERY - Part 2.

K.L. Martin B.Sc.

Since my first article on batteries, a large number of people have written to me with questions, problems and telling me of the sometimes very dangerous practices which they carry out on their batteries. This follow-up article attempts to sort out some of the more common problems, and more importantly offers words of advice on safety.

The electrolyte in a battery is sulphuric acid at a concentration about mid-way between the dilute and concentrated acids which you may have met when at school. As such, you have to take care when handling it. The one thing you must never do is get the acid in contact with your eyes. Don't peer into a cell if you are charging the battery with the caps off, the spray from the fizzing can get into your eyes and will cause permanent damage if it does. Remember that the gases given off during charging constitute an explosive mixture - if they are as much as sparked by even static electricity, the explosion which occurs can splash acid out of the battery all over your face. If you think that there is ever any possibility of the acid getting into your eyes then wear goggles whilst you work close to, or with, your battery or its acid.

Battery acid spilled on you or your clothes will cause burns if left for very long - the treatment for acid spillages wherever they occur is always the same - wash down with large amounts of cold water.

Beware of where you keep old or new batteries - think of what could happen if one were to fall off a high shelf, split, and deposit acid all over the garage and you. If you store battery acid, do so in only glass or thick polythene screw-topped containers leaving a space for air at the top. Label the containers permanently, keep them out of the reach of children, and store where they can't fall, and nothing can fall upon them. All this should apply to batteries too.

By far the most common problem which people seem to have encountered is what to do with a battery during a period of inactivity, or if it is superfluous to needs, what needs to be done to store it for future use. If you can't get into the habit of charging it regularly and often, it must be stored dry and the following procedure can be adopted. Firstly, the electrolyte must be carefully removed from the battery. The simplest way of removing it is to take off the cell caps, turn the battery on its side with the terminals uppermost, and then completely upside down, over a plastic bowl. Never do this over a metal container, the acid may react with it - the battery also still works at this stage and any dead short across the terminals may well burn a hole through the container. The electrolyte will probably be re-usable, even if it looks dirty, so if it is caught in a bowl it can be kept for future use. An average sized battery contains about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  litres ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  - 3 pints) of electrolyte which should be stored as described above.

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After the battery has been emptied, it should be washed out with copious amounts of cold water. Don't stint on this, keep filling and tipping out until the last trace of sediment emerges. If you don't remove all of the acid at this stage, it will cling to the plates and coat them with lead sulphate, leading to all the familiar problems associated with sulphating. Store the battery on its side with the cell caps removed.

When the battery is to be used again, the acid can simply be poured straight back in followed by a recharge. Before that, the plates can be cleaned of any sulphate deposits which may have built up during its working life by using EDTA or its tetrasodium salt. Add about half a tea-spoon of the powder to each cell, and then top-up with a hot dilute solution of washing soda (in the case of EDTA) or just hot water (in the case of the tetrasodium salt). As I explained in my earlier article, EDTA works slowly in battery acid, but extremely quickly in alkaline solutions. Leave the EDTA solution in the battery for an hour or so, shaking it occasionally, and then remove and wash out well with water. After the EDTA treatment, put the acid back in and recharge. If you are short of electrolyte, (you shouldn't be if was drained properly), get a little from your local battery suppliers. If they won't co-operate, ask your local chemist if he will make you up a little 4 M sulphuric acid (1 part concentrated sulphuric acid to 4½ parts water).

Another point regularly raised is whether anything can be done with a battery which seems to be completely dead, or more commonly has one dead cell. A voltage check may not tell you very much - a reading in the range 13 to 14 volts is nearly always obtained. Testing the specific gravity with a hydrometer can also be misleading, different manufacturers use slightly differing acid concentrations and so the "red" and "green" areas on the scale are a bit arbitrary. As a rough and ready guide, a battery which suddenly and spectacularly fails, or fails to start a car after a long static charge, might as well be thrown away. Those most likely to be resurrected are ones which were in good condition but have stood neglected for some time. These need the electrolyte removing and a treatment with EDTA as described above. In one albeit spectacular case, someone recently claimed to have returned to use a battery which was 14 years old and had laid out of use for 10 years!

Many people question whether distilled water is strictly necessary for topping-up, and if it is, whether it is worth the cost. In both cases the answer is "no". If you have a fridge or a freezer, you can collect the frost that forms due to condensation of water vapour in the air and use that. Failing that, you can use tap water if you have to, but it is better to prepare yourself a topping-up solution. To do this, put about a quarter of a tea-spoon of the tetrasodium salt of EDTA in a jug and add a pint of boiling water, allow it to cool, and carefully decant the water off any sediment which might fall to the bottom. Preparing yourself a topping-up solution like this is far more economical than continually buying distilled water for batteries and has the advantage over distilled water in that the solution you are adding has something in it to prevent sulphation of battery plates.

Finally, I am very happy to try and answer any queries which you may have about batteries, but please do include a s.a.e. My address is, as before, Brookmead, Meppershall, Shefford, Bedfordshire, SG17 5SA.

#### GROUP VISIT TO BROOKLANDS SUNDAY 25 NOVEMBER.

The Brooklands Museum have kindly invited LBPT members and their families, to a special viewing of the Museum, on Sunday November 15th 1987. The visit will include a guided tour of the Museum and a look at the Wellington bomber project. A video show depicting the history of the Brooklands circuit, as well as videos of other transport related subjects, will be given at the end of the tour. Light refreshments will be provided. To avoid lots of cars entering the security area at British Aerospace, all should meet at Cobham at 10.00. We will then go together in a bus.

In order to assist their planning of volunteer guides, the Museum have asked for the approximate number of guests to be advised beforehand. Would members intending to come along, advise either Tony Peters, or, Dave Jones by Tuesday 10th November.

#### ODD JOB!

May we extend an invitation to all owners of double deckers. We are providing a number of buses to take part in an attempt at a new world record for a motorcycle jump. This will be on Saturday 24th October. If any member (or non-member) would like to have his bus used in the line up, please let me know. It doesn't have to be a London bus, so long as it's double deck. A fee is payable, and guaranteed TV coverage - even if he doesn't make it! Details from Tony Peters on 0932-64078.



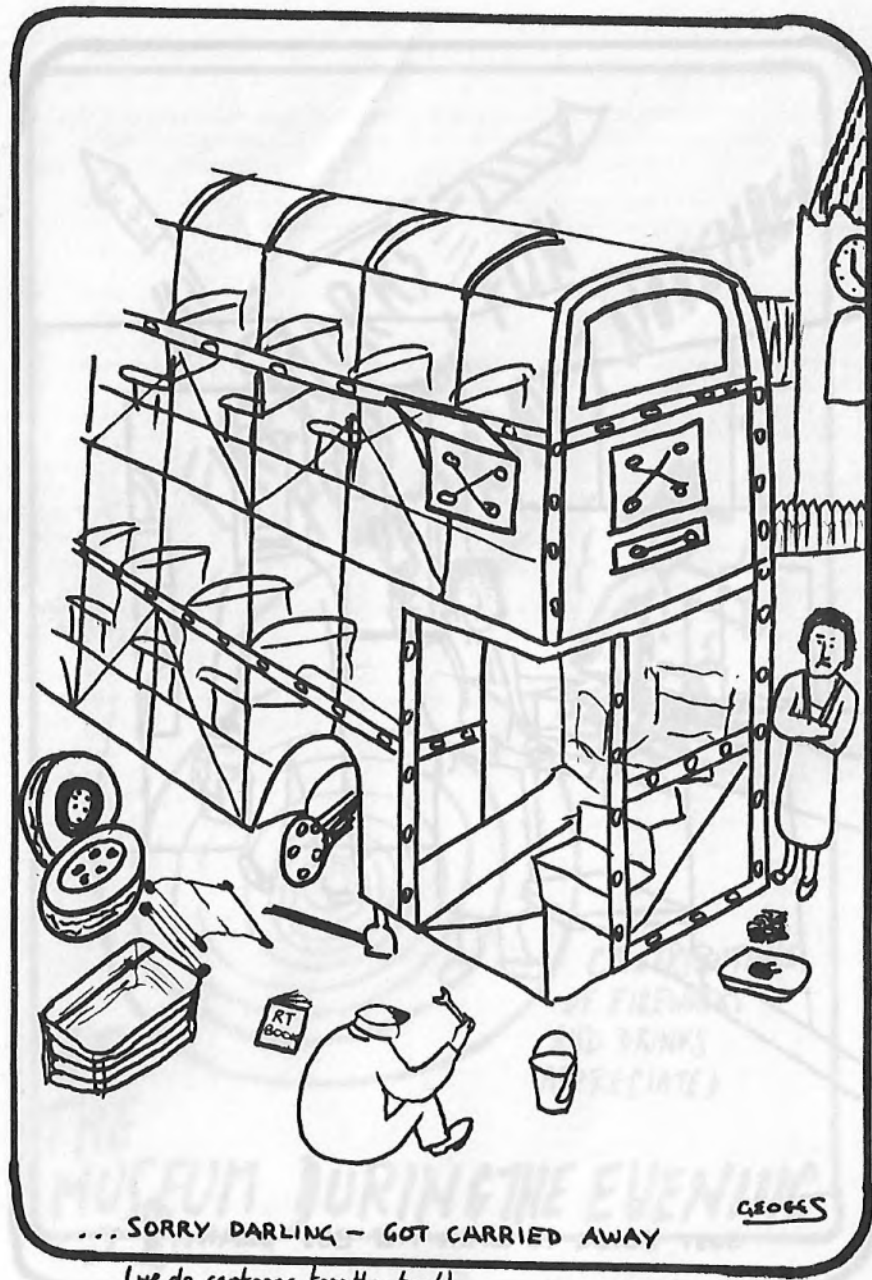


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JUST GOING TO WASH THE BUS DEAR... *J. J.*

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**LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST**

WITH COMPLIMENTS



1987		NOVEMBER						1987
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1987		DECEMBER						1987
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1988		JANUARY						1988
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1988		FEBRUARY						1988
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