

THE LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST



May 89?

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COBHAM BUS MUSEUM, REDHILL ROAD, COBHAM, SURREY, KT11 1EF, TEL: 0932 64078

CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 293319

Officials & Committee Members

Chairman: David Hurley, Valerie Road, Worthing, West Sussex.
Treasurer: Julian Bowden, Forde Avenue, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3EU.
Secretary: John Bedford, Albany Court, 38 Alexandra Grove,
London, N12 8NN.

Committee Members:

Alan Cross, Rollswood Drive, Solihull, West Midlands, B91 1NL
David Kriesler, Headley Avenue, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 8NQ.
Eric Chambers, Mansfield Close, Darwall Drive, Ascot, SL5 8NW.
Tim Nicholson, Bridge Close, Cippenham, Slough, Bucks, SL1 5JP.
Tony Peters, c/o Cobham Bus Museum, Redhill Road, Cobham, Surrey,
KT11 1EF.
Win Wickens, Brent Close, Chatham, Kent, ME5 0TG.

THE NEWSLETTER

Members articles and contributions are always welcome.- Please send any material for inclusion in the July 1989 edition to the Newsletter Editor c/o Cobham Bus Museum, by 3rd July 1989. This is due for publication on 17th July 1989.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the London Bus Preservation Trust.

A lot of activity can be reported since the last newsletter.

Bill Cottrell finished removing the body from Q69 and in the week-ends prior to open day he could be seen perched on a stool gradually painting the chassis. Subsequently, he has removed the engine as a donor heart for Q83 and the old engine will be refitted to what has now become a smart chassis exhibit. Terry Stubbington and Colin Wickens did a great job in accelerating progress on STL 1470 and thus it was part of the STL line up on open day under its own steam! The ceiling of the TD is now finished and Peter Plummer is continuing to make progress with his willing team.

The "clear-up" week-end of the 18/19th March was well attended. It is now quite noticeable that the environment of the museum has a "cared for" look these days. The resident tree planter (Blackie) laid out more conifers and in due time these will smarten up the boundary. A lot of undergrowth at the Redhill Road side has been cleared and Alan Cross and his scythe have certainly enlarged the rear carpark. Also there is now a flower/shrub bed near the telephone kiosks.

Our 16th open day was graced with brilliant weather and a good attendance. Since a high proportion of our membership was involved in one way or another - in some cases more than one way!! - I think we can all be pleased at the way the day went. The prior planning of an event like this should ensure that no major problems arise and you will never stop the odd small irritation. I know that the open day organisers envisage changes next year and before detailed planning starts for April 8th 1990 we shall be further along the (long!) road in liaising with the Brooklands Museum which would make the event much simpler to run. The setting up and financing of the whole Brooklands Museum project is taking longer than the Museum Director, Morag Barton, and Elmbridge Council had foreseen. Complex negotiations with Trafalgar Brookmont (the present owners of the ex-BAE site) continue but obviously these high level problems have to be solved before we can be allocated an actual site. I attended a meeting at Brooklands on the 17th March, when Morag reaffirmed her desire for the Trust to be deeply involved in the project. I have also been making contact with Andrew Scott and Bob Bird of the LT Museum and following some behind the scenes manoeuvring I hope that the entrance gates to Chiswick works will be donated to the Trust.

In connection with a "Museums On The Move" exhibition at Duxford; when most of the large transport museums will be represented, it is proposed that the Dennis be involved in a joint LBPT and Brooklands presentation.

As this years Southsea Rally has "Dennis" vehicles as its theme, it has been agreed that our Dennis should attend.

Following a meeting with the Charity Commissioners, it will be necessary to reorganise our present structure. Once more detail is available and advice received from our accountants and solicitors, I propose to hold a general meeting to explain the changes necessary - suffice to say that at the end of the exercise we will end up with a suitable structure identical with that required in our plans of 1984, but minimising large payments to H M Treasury, Customs and Excise and the Land Registry. I think it would be fair to say that some of the professional advice received by the Committee in 1984 whilst legally correct was lacking in practical aspects of tax avoidance (this is the legal one - tax evasion is illegal!!)

THE LONDON BUS

The attendance at the social meetings held during the winter proved to be disappointing. At the last two meetings less than six members attended each time despite the trouble taken by Blackie, Bill Cottrell and myself to organise entertainment. Obviously during the summer months we will have a break but I would be pleased to hear from members which day is the most convenient and what type of attraction will encourage their attendance.

Back on the Trust vehicle front - Tim Nicholson has identified the problem on RM3's brakes and with the replacement of some seals, etc., and some modifications to suit standard RM test equipment our problems should fade (but not the brakes!!). Tim has also obtained some main servo spares for STL 441 and once RM3 is finished he will endeavour to deal with this brake problem.

Lawrence



OLDE ALAN'S RANDOM RUMINATIONS

by ALAN CROSS

"THE RACES"

In 1948 Derby Day was on the 5th June, which was a Saturday. I always thought it a pity when Derby Day was moved from a Saturday to the Wednesday of the Epsom race week. For one thing, Wednesdays meant taking a day off work, Saturdays did not. Derby Days in 1984 and 1949 marked the watershed in the variety and interest of the special L,T bus services to Epsom Downs. Up to then they were worked almost entirely by dozens and dozens of LTs and STs, including plenty of Tilling STs, and supported by petrol STLs, and a selection of CRs and LTCs along with a few oil STLs. That was the scene for the bus spotter on 5th June 1948 and bus spotters were amazed to see Interstation C111 arrive on Epsom Downs on the service from Morden Station. I photographed her, little knowing that one day she would be "mine". I wonder if C111 paid her way on that day. The single fare from morden station, to the Downs was 1/6d (7 1/2p). The Interstations were 20 seaters and crew-operated so the maximum of 20 passengers per trip would produce 20 x 7 1/2p (£1.50) for the full load. The buses returned empty to Morden to pick up the next load. At a fuel consumption of 6 m.p.h at best and a crew of two to pay the profit margin could not have been very much. On a hot day many of the petrol engined LTs and STs would have boiling radiators on arriving at the Downs after the long haul up from Ewell. The water cans were ready, the filler cap gingerly released with a thick sack over it to avoid scalding hands.

Before the war special tickets were printed for the Derby Day services, and the fare then was 1/=d. After the war "Deaf & Dumb" Bell punch tickets were used. Even these had to be specially printed because the fare was 1/6d and the highest value "D & D" then in use was for a 1/=d. A 1/3d was also specially printed, being the fare from Sutton Common Road to the Downs, but was rarely issued because 99.9% of passengers would do the whole journey to or from Morden. The 1/3d was a muddy brick colour and I had to buy one especially for my collection, as the chances of finding a used one was virtually nil. To get mine I travelled on G 185 on Derby Day in 1950 (27th May,) travelling from Epsom Downs to Sutton Common Road.

Two series of routes were worked. Firstly the Morden Station (Und) to Epsom Downs service; secondly two working from Epsom to the Downs. These were 406E (from Epsom Town) and 406F (from Epsom S.R, Stn). Looking at my notebooks for 5 June '48, the 406E & F services were mainly operated by red STs loaned to JH, RG, GD, CM, DS, ST and WY, along with a few petrol "General" and "leaning backj" STs, supplemented by a few green STs and STLs which were part of the standard allocations to those garages. Of particular interest were two of the STL 16 type painted in Green Line livery, normally used at RE on the Aldgate G/L services. The two on the 406F were STL 2523 & 2637, resplendent with G/L bulls-eyes on front and sides.

There were many other interesting things to be seen on Epsom Downs during Derby week. In addition to hundreds of coaches there were several fairs scattered around the Downs. They brought along old buses and coaches converted into living wagons and generating plants. I was looking for ex L.T. buses and two regulars with the fairs were ex T 89 (GF 543) still with original 7T7 body and which during the war had been sold to the Ministry of Works and ex DA 13 (GK 3050) was the other. One could still see the body number 10224 and the cab code AV clearly visible inside DA 13. In 1948 there were still very many aged pre-war coaches dating back to the early 1930s to be seen, and again the search was on for ex L.T. vehicles which were often rebodied and even re-registered by then. Much detective work was needed at times and a knowledge of L.T. registration numbers was a must. Just one example on that day. A coach in a grey, red and green livery owned by Henry Sharpe of Grays, Essex was spotted, regn no. GJ 2085. This turned out to be ex-Tilling ST 909, one of the handful of Tilling STs sold to the BBC in 1940, based on Aldenham House, Elstree. The BBC sold them circa 1946 and I had noted St 909 in a scrap yard (Mountnessing Auto Spares) on 1 October 1947. Obviously a buyer was found and by Derby Day 1948 ST 909 had acquired the coach body which I saw.

We walked miles over the Downs checking all the coaches and fairground vehicles, as well as logging every bus on the special race services. But we never saw the Derby races - too busy bus spotting!

OVERCOMING RECOVERY SERVICE PROBLEMS.

Tony Peters

In the past the bus owner/operator may have been forced to endure vehicle breakdown problems without roadside repair or recovery assistance. Even if help was available, it may have been delayed until the promise of immediate payment was made by cash or bank approved cheque. At the other extreme garages may have retained the vehicle until reimbursement.

A new service from AA-BRS Fleet Rescue means that anyone with a vehicle over 3.5 tonne GVW can take full advantage of the resources of Fleet Rescue's recovery service in the event of a breakdown. A single call to AA-BRS's communications centre in Birmingham will result in roadside assistance for broken down vehicles. All roadside service is free of charge and the agent will spend as long as it takes to get the vehicle moving - up to four hours if necessary. Over 75% of breakdowns are fixed at the roadside, but should a major repair be necessary the driver, passengers and vehicle will be taken to the nearest approved repairer. There are over 1000 BRS Rescue Agents available as part of the service.

One annual payment covering each vehicle for roadside assistance and recovery will cost £159.50 inc V.A.T.

For small fleet operators, Truckstart (01 229 2400) have a computer system linked to the AA-BRS system, and they no longer need to be credit vetted or await the processing of time consuming paperwork to ensure full breakdown cover for all their vehicles. This system offers the same standards of service whilst taking into account particular requests. The operator may stipulate specific agents for dealing with tyre, glass or other replacement service. Similarly a limit can be put on the cost of garage repairs beyond which explicit permission is sought. Truckstarts service can be provided anywhere in the UK including Northern Ireland.

As TD 95 is nearing the completion of its rebuild, it is nice to go back 18 to 20 years and have a look at some its' journeys and reminiscences being connected with TD at the time. I remember us making quite a lot of trips.

At that time TD 95 was kept at Stonebridge Park garage (Realy 'Depot' as it formerly housed trolleybuses), except for a brief spell at Aldenham (Leyland's part), but more of that later. When the engine and gearbox were removed during the rebuild, the clutch linings were found to be less than paper thin. That explained the following problem that was encountered when leaving Stonebridge Park - on approaching the A40 at Hanger Lane from the North Circular to turn right it was necessary to wait in the middle of the road facing uphill. When it was clear and safe to make your move it was like using a preselect TD - The clutch pedal was depressed the gear then being selected, then foot off the clutch, let off handbrake and accelerate away. The vehicle was used for quite a few years and covered many miles with the clutch in that condition.

During the mechanical rebuild, another piece of equipment equiring reparts was the gear selector rod. Another story is attached to this involving one weekend. As we were booked in to a hotel in Matlock for the three days we had a daily return journey to make. In this particular year we took TD 95 and 738J which is sadly no longer with us.

It was the second day there and time to return to the hotel, using the TD and leaving the J at Crich overnight. The driver on this occasion, it was found out later had no experience of driving a vehicle with this type of gearbox.

All was well leaving the grounds at Crich as only one gear was required. At the entrance a right turn is taken for the downhill journey to Matlock, with some of the inclines being quite steep. The driver attempted to engage 3rd gear with the vehicle gathering speed, but without success. The TD continued gathering speed out of gear, so top was tried, but after a lot of noise and crunching that was abandoned. At this point we saw a viewing point with layby, with the usual old couples enjoying the view on a nice Sunday evening in their Ford Anglia's and Morris Minors. We came to a stop in this area showering the cars with loose gravel.

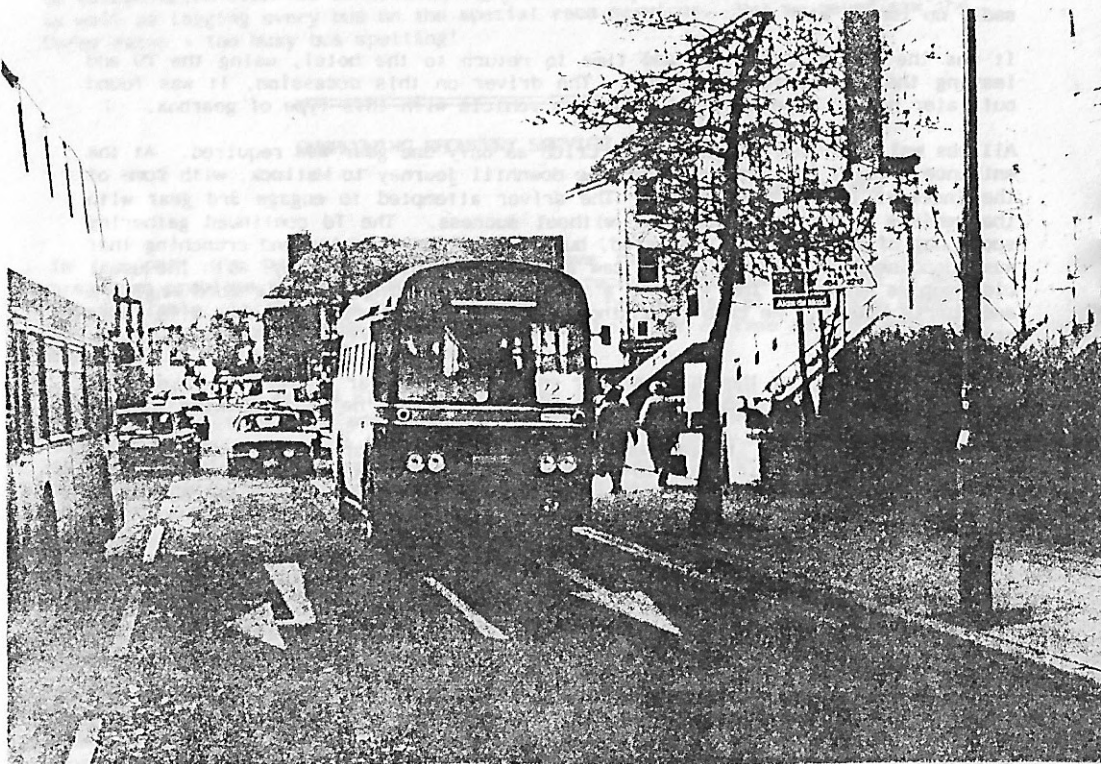
At this point it was thought best for one of the regular drivers to take over, but on getting into the cab and trying to select a gear he found nothing there.

Upon closer inspection it was found that the gear selector rod had broken. This rod should link the gear lever to the gear box. Once the offending rod had been removed, two of us walked back to the tram museum to see if someone could weld it for us. Once it was welded back together again we returned to the TD in an interesting Trojan van. The rod was refitted and we set off but when the next gear was selected it broke again. It was found that the rod should have been brazed and not welded. At this point we were on a fairly narrow country road, with darkness rapidly approaching. We decided that two of us should return to the museum and use the J to tow the TD back there. The fun started when we attempted to hook up the towbar. The bar and axle clamp were there, but no nuts and bolts for the clamp. Whatever we found was either too thin or not long enough. I had the dubious honour of working under the TD, hearing vehicles coming down the hill and round the bend and the squeaking of brakes as they came upon the TD. At any moment I expected to find the TD being moved a few yards down the road with me under it.

After a time a chap in an Austin A30 stopped to see if any assistance was required. We explained to him the problem about the bolts and he said "I've got a good selection at home. Jump in and we'll go and have a look". By this time it was the early hours of the morning. The right nuts and bolts were found amongst a good selection in this chaps garden shed and we were driven back to the TD.

The clamp and towbar were all connected between the vehicles and we started moving. The next problem was turning around but luckily just over the brow of the next hill was a small green with a road round the edge. This ideal. Unfortunately I made the mistake of keeping the J in second and with a short steep hill, she stalled. I then found that the handbrake wouldn't hold the J and the TD. Luckily the TD's handbrake was sufficient to hold us while the J was restarted.

It was a slow grind up the tram museum, past the suprised faces of the people on the gate before we unhitched for the night. We eventually got to our hotel at about 3.30am for a well earned rest.



Tony Peters

The pundits heralded the new Transport Act 1985 as the legislation which would free the bus industry from a restrictive licensing system and near monopolistic operation, resulting in a free, competitive environment in which both operators and the travelling public would enjoy improved benefits. "D" day was awaited with baited breath amidst promises of a great number of new entrepreneurial activities which would bring the travelling public level of service they had long expected.

The "mainstay" of the legislation which would enable this free competition was to be the dismantling and privatisation of the National Bus Company and the requirement for municipal bus operations to be put on a competitive basis. Two years on, had the Government achieved its aims?

Whilst patterns vary in different areas of the country, statistics show that the level of bus journeys made is still in decline. In many urban areas the conventional bus has been replaced by the minibus with its more frequent headway. This change has not however carried favour with the majority of the travelling public. A large proportion of bus users are elderly, women with shopping and or children, who find minibuses difficult to board and find many with no facilities for luggage or pushchairs and are cramped or claustrophobic.

The NBC has been dismantled and all units sold before the set deadline. But to who? Many large groups emerged from the sales and many more are being created by acquisitive groups who either buy or merge. Are we to see the NBC reassembled by its new private ownership? The recent merger between Badgerline and Midland Red West has been referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Committee on the grounds that it has resulted in the largest non Metropolitan County, Avon, with one larger operator and, therefore, little competition. The outcome of the enquiry will be interesting but together with recent acquisition of the remaining shareholding in Western National it gives Badgerline control of an operating area from Plymouth to Worcester.

The travelling public was expected to get a better deal in the free competitive environment. In the some areas this may have been the case, but with the recent announcement that the office of Fair Trading had examined 115 cases of firms believed to be colluding to restrict competition, resulting in initial proceedings letters being sent to 66 firms under the 1976 Restrictive Trade Practices Act, can we believe that this aim has been achieved!

The provision of totally accessible service has been slow to be achieved. With the pressure, supported by the Dtp, for operators to comply with the new Diptac code to ensure that bus travel is accessible to as many groups of disabled persons as possible, will the provision of such services be left totally to local government subsidise? If this is the case, either these services will not appear, or other local non commercial services will suffer as a result of lack of funds.

In introducing the 1985 Transport Act, the Government wished to crack the "nut" of large monopolies receiving 95% of subsidies available on a blanket basis, without accountability. It seems they used to large a hammer and could be embarrassed by the make up of the bus industry at the beginning of the next decade.

Shopping for double-deckers became a serious business in 1987 following deregulation of the bus industry. One moment Ensignbus, in Purfleet, Essex, had 1,000 buses in its yard, and the next it had practically sold the lot.

"Every Tom, Dick and Harry with a PSV licence who could point a bus in the right direction came down and bought one. It was like opening up a supermarket and giving everyone two minutes — we couldn't sell them fast enough," said John Grayland, the managing director of the engineering division. The company takes in old, tired double-deckers and turns out buses for executive entertaining, buses for discos, buses for offices, buses for anything.

Both the Tory and Labour party "battle buses" in the last election were the work of Ensignbus. Under the shadow of Tilbury power station, the cockney mechanics in the company's workshop spend the day parrying each others' verbal daggers and doing to double-deckers whatever blows the customers' frocks up, with a collective grin that suggests something intoxicating in the filth belching out of the Tilbury chimneys. "How many people work here?" I asked. "About half of them," they replied.

Ensignbus benefited from the unpopularity within London Regional Transport of the Leyland Fleetline, buying 2,600 in one go.

"We pulled our digits out and shifted them as best we could," said John Grayland. Shifting them involved exporting up to 200 double-deckers a year, particularly to America, where double-deckers painted in London Transport colours are popular tourist attractions.

Ensignbus also sold 70 to Saudi Arabia, to be used by Muslims doing the haj pilgrimage to Mecca. The engines of these vehicles all had to be tropicalised to cope

with the heat ("a normal bus would have boiled its bollocks off 20 miles down the road," said Grayland) but they also took off the roof so the pilgrims might make the journey properly bare-headed.

The Purfleet yard has its own weekend pilgrims who come in search of double-decker memorabilia. These enthusiasts are what the bus industry unkindly nicknames "spinners", so called because they stand with their notebooks in the centre of roundabouts and rotate slowly as buses go by.

RT front road springs - new.
RT rear road springs - new.
RT silencers, reconditioned. (by LT).
RT or RF rear brake drums - new.
RT or RF brake linings - new.
Exhaust tail pipe repair section for RT.- new.

Used RF spares.

Road springs.

Front axle complete with steering linkage.

Engine. Only suitable for parts.

Control box.

GS window sliders (top), with glass.

GS front nearside corner glass.

RMC various seat frames.

MB & SM various body panels.

Phone 0932 64078, Tony Peters, for further details and prices.



PHOTOGRAPHS IN THIS NEWSLETTER

ST 1104 on Epsom Downs on 4th June 1949.- A.B.Cross

LT 45 on Epsom Downs on 5th June 1948.- A.B.Cross

GJ 2085 (ex ST 909) at the Derby on 5th June 1948.- A.B.Cross

RF 202 still in PSV use in Bromley in January 1989. J.J.Bowden

The STL line up at the Open Day at Cobham.- J.J.Bowden

Shopping for double-deckers became a serious business in 1967 following deregulation of the bus industry. One reason: Englishman in Portland, Essex, had 1,000 buses in his yard, and the rest of the country practically sold the lot.

"Every Tom, Dick and Harry with a PSV licence who could point a bus in the right direction came down and bought one. It was like opening up a supermarket and giving everyone two minutes — we wouldn't sell them that much — enough," said John Grayland, the managing director of the engineering division. The company takes in old steel double-deckers and turns them into for example entertaining buses for clubs, buses for offices, buses for anything.

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