

THE LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST



NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 1989

THE LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST

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CHARITY REGISTRATION NUMBER: 293319

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

4th & 5th November - CLEAR-UP WEEKEND at Cobham
Bus Museum
4th November - Evening - Grand Bonfire and
Fireworks Display.

THE NEWSLETTER

Members contributions are always welcome. Any material
for inclusion in future newsletters should be sent to
the Newsletter Editor, c/o Cobham Bus Museum.

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

During the newsletter's summer break there has been quite a lot of activity regarding Trust vehicles.

At the end of July, Bill Cottrell and myself took the Dennis to the "Museum on the Move" exhibition at Duxford as part of the Brooklands Museum projects presentation. I know that Bill has an article in preparation so I will not steal his thunder, but suffice to say that the Trust was seen to be supporting the whole scheme.

I am pleased to report that Tim Nicholson has, after a lot of hard work, solved outstanding brake problems on both RM3 and STL441. Both now have passed MOTs and STL441 attended the bus rally at Amberley Chalk Pits Museum - its first rally for some years. The work on RM3 was quite complex since Tim had to re-create a new master valve - unique to this prototype vehicle.

Bill Cottrell has replaced the engine in his Q and next spring should see him in full flight to rallies. RT2775 attended the RT50 event and the Wroughton open day - thanks only to a dedicated band of volunteers who have given the vehicle a face lift over the last six months. A picture of RT2775 whilst at the open day bus service appears on the front of the current issue of Buses Extra.

As mentioned previously, your Committee is currently engaged with accountants, legal advisers and the charity commissioners in the reconstruction of the Trust. The AGM has been delayed in the hope that we will be able to deal with all the necessary formalities at the same time. Matters are still progressing but at a slow pace and therefore at the next committee meeting there will be a reassessment of the position.

I would like to invite you to the annual clear up week-end on 4th and 5th November. On the Saturday night around then will be the usual bonfire and the "Wickens Catering Service" will be in full swing. Please bring along a few fireworks each and make it a family affair.

As a result of the clear up weekends in October 1988, the job prior to open day was a lot easier and this year we hope to hire a JCB to clear more of the back car park. I know that Phillip Millard will be anxious to increase the area for stall holders. Some attention to the gates is also scheduled for this week-end so labourers are required!

I have not received any response to my request for ideas/venues for social meetings. I know that Peter Plummer kindly held an impromptu slide show at Cobham one Sunday afternoon which was well received by those present - thanks Peter. Can I please ask for comments/suggestions for social meetings - in the meantime I will refrain from booking the MRC Hall at Kings Cross prior to Christmas.

The editorial team are currently investigating better reproduction facilities for photographs in the newsletter. If anyone has access to multilith facilities please contact Julian Bowden. (My own firm has just shut down its printing department - hence the "promised" help in this area was not forthcoming).

DAVID HURLEY

OLDE ALAN'S RANDOM RUMINATIONS

(A brief review of the LT S/D Class ("Scooter") between 1948 and 1953)

By Alan Cross

I have a very, very soft spot for the Scooters. Perhaps it is because the first bus number I was aware of was of a Scooter. Before the war I went to school on the 245 route (later to become the low-bridge route 127 of utility D and RLH fame). The 245 was operated with Scooters from Sutton Garage and my favourite seat on them was that on the offside immediately behind the driver. It was fun to look out through the entrance at the kerb rushing by. I also became aware of some small white letters and numbers on the front bulk-head just above the steps and this was how it stuck in my mind because of the date - A.D. 1066 - William the Conk and all that.

To the casual observer the Scooters were 201 identical buses on the AEC Renown six-wheel chassis and perhaps not particularly worthy of consideration. I hope these few notes will help to dispel this impression and help the collector of photographs and the students of the LT class to find more of interest than expected.

The fleet numbers were LT 1001-1050, 1052-1136, 1138-1201 and 1427-1428, a total of 201 vehicles. After the war, during the period 1948-1953, the normal operating garages were A, K, AV, MH, AR, T, EW, TC, ED, TB and D, though they did stray very occasionally to other garages, notably UX, which had a handful for a time. Eleven of them were destroyed during the war, at the Bull Yard, Peckham, leaving 190 intact up to late 1948 when the first few went for scrap. Many more were scrapped in 1949 before the remainder were reprimed as described below.

As originally built there were two body types; the first having no rear blind box and the second having a rear blind box almost identical to the front box except that it was narrower from top to bottom. (This meant in practice that if front blind was fitted the bottom line of intermediate points were obscured!). Half the bodies were of the first type and half of the second type and the bodies were, by the period under review, completely intermixed. Those without rear blind box displayed a wooden destination board which slotted into two holders fixed on the rear emergency door at the bottom of the window. It was possible to tell which body was carried from the front as those with a rear blind box had a curved radius on each side of the front blind box, which curved down to the guttering.

By the summer of 1948 it was Big Think Time at LTE. What to do about the chronic shortage of single deckers? The Scooter bodies by this time were really clapped out and shaking apart at the seams. True, there were 100 TDs on order, but these were not enough to replace the Scooters and the equally ailing LTIs (T 1 - 50), Tilling Ts and other odd red Ts in the 200 series. So arose one of those anachronisms which make the study of London Transport so interesting.

To meet regulations and restrictions in force at that time, LTE were precluded from scrapping the old bodies and rebodging the chassis with new bodies to a new design. Regulations did permit the "renovation" of old bodies. Thus the outside firm of Marshalls of Cambridge received the contract to "renovate" Scooter bodies, as well as members of the LTI class. In practice they built brand new bodies, but some parts, such as window openers, seats, etc., were used from the old bodies. So late in 1948 Scooters started reappearing on the streets with new bodies to a design evolved 18 years earlier! Externally they lacked the distinctive and attractive protruding panelling at waist level just below the windows. They were painted all-over red with a thin cream line along the dummy guttering at roof level and along the thin strip of beading immediately below the windows.

These brand new bodies retained their original body numbers and, amazingly, if they had no rear blind boxes, these bodies were rebuilt without them as well! So, the bodies retained their original rear blind box arrangements. One would have thought that as a matter of passenger and crew convenience, the opportunity would have been taken to fit blind boxes to all of them on rebuilding, thereby standardising them.

The one way of telling the difference from the front between a no blind boxer and one which was removed in rebuilding by Marshalls, so that one cannot tell from photos which Marshall ones have boxes or not at the rear. As rebuilt the tell-tale curved radius on each side of the front box was omitted.

A change of plan resulted in the "renovation" programme by Marshalls being cut short. Thereafter, the remaining Scooters still to be renovated were dealt with at Chiswick, where the bodies had thorough overhauls, but retained their original appearance, even reappearing in the old red/white livery with brown roof, though at the end a change was made in some cases to an all red livery, with just one cream band along the roof gutter.

Scooters not selected in 1948/49 for "renovation" were withdrawn and scrapped, starting at the end of 1948 and continuing through 1949. Many of those sold off in 1949 for scrap were resold for use as caravan homes, fairground vehicles and summerhouses.

The "renovated" Scooters retained their petrol engines for a period, but during 1950 these and the surviving LTIs had oil engines fitted from scrapped STLs. The change to oil can be seen in photos. On the offside the fuel filler cap was removed and panelled over; on the nearside the autovac pump on the front bulk-head above the mudguard was removed. The Scooters were progressively withdrawn during 1952 with the arrival of RFs in increasing numbers and the final survivors came off the road early in 1953.

LONG BEFORE THE GREEN LINE CAME

John Gillham

Away back in 1845, at a time when the only railway anywhere in West Middlesex was Paddington to Slough and beyond, a Provisional Committee of twelve Gentlemen was formed, to promote a so-called London and Windsor Railway. This was to start at Knightsbridge, on the precise spot where today's Piccadilly tube station stands, and run closely parallel to, and on the south side of, the main road through Kensington, Hammersmith, and Chiswick to the north side of Kew Bridge, and then very closely parallel to, and on the north side of, this same road through Brentford, Hounslow, and Bedfont to Staines, and then via Wraysbury, Old Windsor, and Windsor Park to terminate on the western edge of the town of Windsor at just about the spot where the London Transport bus garage was built 90 years later.

They published their Prospectus in "The Times" of 12 April 1845, with formal Notice of their intention to promote a Bill in Parliament for this. Some extracts from this state:- "This line of Railway has met with general appreciation, and its importance cannot be questioned, traversing as it will an intermediate locality totally excluded from the benefit of railway communication, through it may be said one continuous Town for a distance of 10 miles and a densely populated neighbourhood, which is open and flat and of a highly favourable character for the construction of a line of railway.

"On the average from 2000 to 3000 passengers a day pass and repass by Omnibuses and other vehicles through the intermediate points between the termini of this railway; this alone would give at an average of 9d each a clear return of upwards of 6% on the invested Capital. It is intended that the line shall commence at Windsor, pass near to Datchet, Eton, Colnbrook, Hounslow, Brentford and the London Road and terminate near Pimlico. In addition to the advantage of a direct communication between the two Royal Residences of London and Windsor, and reducing the time required for the entire journey to 30 minutes, the proposed line will bring the neighbourhoods of Bagshot, Ascot, Sunning Hill, and Egham, all abounding with elegant Villas and a wealthy population, within an easy and accessible distance of the Capital, and from the main trunk road for a direct communication to Exeter and the whole of that vast intermediate district through the south-west of England.

"Independently of this a considerable saving will be effected in the cost of locks, horses, and the other great expenses of a River Conveyance of upwards of transit for heavy goods, avoiding the frequent delay and inconvenience incidental to River Carriage. All usual and proper Clauses for limiting the liability of Bill, and 4% interest will be allowed until completion of the Line.

"Traffic Estimates. There are now 2812 journeys per week through the intermediate districts of Omnibuses and Coaches, with average returns of £771, equal to £40,092 per annum. Adding £13,236 for estimated Windsor traffic, £15,000 for conveyance of goods, and £10,000 for ditto parcels, etc, makes £78,328. Deducting estimated working expenses of 40%, i.e. £31,430, should leave a nett annual profit of £46,898, which gives upwards of 9% on the Capital of £500,000, but according to the usual mode of estimating by doubling the passenger receipts, would show a Return of two-thirds additional".

Well, if they thought the district in 1845 was one continuous town and densely populated, and yet less than 3000 people per day passed through it, what would they think if they could see it today, or even the traffic just on the M4 Motorway alone? Remember too that by our standards today, even Knightsbridge and Pimlico were country villages then well outside of London. And did they really believe that all those 3000 people would use the new railway, and that nobody at all would continue to drive a horse along the road? This railway was never built, indeed the Bill never even became an Act. Nevertheless the established omnibus proprietors of the day were rather worried by it, and they sent a Petition to Parliament, objecting to the proposed Bill, worded thus:-

"London and Windsor Railway. To the Honorable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled. The Humble Petition of the undersigned Proprietors of the several Metropolitan Public Licenced Carriages plying for hire on the Great West of England Road between Windsor Hounslow Isleworth Brentford Kew Bridge and other places on the said Road and London,

"Showeth; That a Bill is now pending in your Honorable House for making a Railway from Knightsbridge Green in the Parish of Saint Margaret Westminster to New Windsor in the County of Berks, to be called the London and Windsor Railway. That your Petitioners have at the cost of large sums of money (some of which has been very recently expended) built and purchased a great number of Omnibuses for conveying passengers to and from the places above enumerated and also purchased the horses necessary for working the said Omnibuses. That some of your Petitioners are possessed as lessees under long leases of premises in the neighbourhood of the said Road and which are now used as Stables for the horses working the said Omnibuses and which Stables and premises have been repaired and otherwise adapted to the objects of the said lessees at considerable expense.

"That your Petitioners are able to and do by their said Omnibuses accommodate the persons residing along and in the neighbourhood of the said Road with conveyance to and from all or any of the places above named and at convenient times and at reasonable fares. That your Petitioners entirely depend for the support of themselves and their families on the profits which they derive from the said Omnibuses and if the said bill should pass into a law not only would your Petitioners be entirely deprived of their present means of subsistence but their property in the leasehold premises omnibuses and horses aforesaid would be greatly depreciated in value. That your Petitioners being proprietors as aforesaid of all the said Omnibuses are peculiarly well acquainted with the amount of traffic on the said road and the profits derivable from it, and believe the traffic calculations published by the promoters of the said proposed Railway in their Prospectus and relied upon by them as an important item in their expected revenue to be grossly incorrect and calculated to mislead your Honourable House and the public with reference thereto.

"That your Petitioners humbly submit no sufficient public necessity exists either on account of readiness of local accommodation, economy of time to be effected, or of expense, to compensate the superseding of the present system of Omnibus Conveyance along the said road and the interference with and destruction of the property and welfare of your Petitioners and their families and the interests of the numerous persons connected with the establishments of your Petitioners. Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray your Honorable House that the said Bill may not pass into a Law. Signed by William Hannon, Thomas Powell, Robert George Durham, William Blackwell, John Swait, and Joseph Limpus".

As I said, this Bill was not passed. But two years later, in 1847, the Windsor Staines and South Western Railway Bill was promoted, for the construction of a railway from Windsor to Richmond, as an extension of the railway from London (Nine Elms) to Richmond which had been opened to traffic in 1846. This time, a disgruntled bus driver who had been given the sack presented his own Petition to Parliament objecting to this Windsor to Richmond railway. He wrote:-

"William Dean, of 5 Tomlinson's Buildings, St Lukes, Omnibus Driver, will prove, that he drove from the 5th of October 1846 to the 26th of December 1846 the omnibus that ran from the town of Staines to the station of the South Western Railway at Richmond, passing through Ashford, Feltham, Hanworth, and Twickenham to Richmond. The object of the busses (sic) was to meet the Morning Express train, and to await the arrival of the evening train. Witness will produce the original notes of the Way bills made by him from which such Way bills were daily made and returned, and will show the average number of passengers going from Staines to the Railway and returning, etc. That the South Western Railway Company paid a bonus on each passenger brought by the bus to the Railway of 4d in order to enable the proprietor to keep such an omnibus on the road.

"That the loads carried by Witness were very light and the omnibus was so great a failure, notwithstanding the assistance afforded by such Railway Company, that the proprietor was obliged to discharge Witness and to drive himself, as he could not afford to pay Witness for driving. That he told Witness at the time he discharged him that the route taken by the omnibus Witness so drove was the best populated and most flourishing from which a passenger could be expected. That there was not one parcel per week on the average carried between Staines and Richmond. That the principal support derived by the bus was from the travelling of the same individuals on matters of business. The Ashbys were the principal persons who went with Witness. That there was very little general passenger traffic for the Railway from Staines or the intermediate towns. That there was scarcely ever more than one passenger picked up by Witness either on his journey to or from Twickenham. That the traffic from Feltham Witness should say would not during his experience average more than two persons per week. There was no parcel trade from Feltham. The same average will apply to Hanworth. That the number of passengers from Egham to Richmond Railway were also very few".

This railway also was never built. Not suprising, if the buss loadings quoted by William Dean were accurate. Or was he prejudiced? I don't know whether there were also any other operators on this or a similar route, otherwise it looks as if there was a total of one buss per day each way, in 1846. However, in due course London Transport did find it necessary to run a frequent service of double-deckers on routes 90, 290, and 117.

Henry Thumwood, who had worked the Windsor-Staines-London route 100 years before Green Line did, also objected to these and several other similar proposed railway schemes at around this time. He supported an 1846 proposal for a railway from Windsor to join the GWR at Slough, where the station had opened in 1840. His petition to Parliament objecting to the railway via Staines suggests there was no shortage of omnibus passengers at any rate at Slough. One assumes that he himself did not operate the Windsor-Slough service and he was only worried about the Staines route. Extracts from his Petition state:-

"Mr Henry Thumwood Will Prove, That he has resided in Windsor 20 years, That he was the largest Coach Proprietor in Windsor prior to the construction of the Great Western Railway, That during the last 3 years he has had one Coach running from Windsor to Staines to meet his Coach from Yateley, That the Coach proceeds from Yateley through Bagshot and Staines to London, That he now employs Waggon to carry Goods from Windsor to London, That he is intimately acquainted with the general traffic of the district both for Passengers and Goods, That the present means of conveyance for Passengers between Windsor and London" (by bus Windsor to Slough and railway Slough to Paddington) "is very little superior in point of time to travelling by the old 'Tagliom' Coach from Windsor to London in consequence of the time consumed in going from Windsor to Slough, That the number of Passengers at Slough is frequently so great that large numbers are compelled to walk, That parties rush to occupy places in the Omnibuses and they are immediately filled and are covered on the roofs and steps with Passengers, That in wet weather this is especially inconvenient, That in the Conveyance of Goods the proposed Windsor to Slough line would be a great Advantage and saving to the Public, That the time now occupied by Passengers proceeding from London to Windsor and Vice Versa is 30 minutes from Windsor to Slough, 40 minutes from Slough to Paddington, and 30 minutes from Paddington to Charing Cross, total 76 minutes, That a great feature of advantage to the Windsor Railway is its Central Windsor Terminus, That the South Western Line proposed to terminate at Datchet would be useless both for Passengers and Goods, That by this route it would take 30 minutes from Windsor to Datchet, 65 minutes from Datchet to the terminus at York road near Hungerford Bridge, and 10 minutes over the Foot Bridge from York Road to Charing Cross, total 105 minutes".

From John Gillham, with acknowledgements to the British Railways Board Historical Records Centre.

HYDRAULIC BRAKES

Tim Nicholson

Apart from all Routemasters and some other relatively modern vehicles using high pressure hydraulic brakes, the braking systems of some postwar and prewar buses use a vegetable oil fluid to specification DOT 3 used in conjunction with natural rubber seals.

The disadvantage of this fluid is that it absorbs water and this can cause corrosion to wheel cylinders, master cylinders etc unless the fluid is changed often. The fluid is also corrosive to paint work.

A new fluid has been developed recently, which is-silicon based and conforms to DOT 5. This fluid is synthetic not hygroscopic (ie does not absorb water) and is fully compatible with hydraulic systems using the old vegetable brake fluid as used on most of our old Buses and on most cars on the road today.

Whilst expensive, about £18 per litre, the oil had none of the disadvantages of the old DOT fluid, and is particularly suitable for vehicles that may have to stand around for long periods of time.

STL 441 The hydraulics of this vehicle have been overhauled and the new fluid to spec. DOT 5 has been used. To obtain full benefit for this treatment, only fluid to this specification should be used for replenishment.

OTHER TRUST VEHICLES In time, in conjunction with hydraulic component overhaul the new fluid to spec DOT 5 will be used on all the appropriate trust vehicles.

List of sale items.
Newsletter.

The Autumn tidy up session has revealed the following items which are available for sale;

For RT. All items are NEW unless otherwise stated.

O/S lower rear corner panel in metal. Both types (RT3 & RT8).
Metal stair treads, all types.
Rear & front wing plastic sections.
½ round shaped moulding for rear wings.
Front nearside wing - front section.
Front O/S scuttle & cab side panel.
½ round moulding for above.
O/S headlight bowl casting.
Floor coving panels.
Front inner dome.
Rear inner dome.

For RF. All items are NEW unless otherwise stated.

Front detachable access panel.
O/S detachable engine panel by fuel pump.
N/S rear metal lower corner panel.
N/S rear metal waist corner panel.
Rear route box, outer housing panel.

For RM.

RMC: N/S/F headlight/wing panel in metal, with cut out for brake cooling grille. New
RM, N/S/F headlight/wing panel in metal, with cut out for brake cooling grille.
Used, slight damage.

Vehicles:

RF. Restored to mid 60s Central Area livery. New MoT. £2000.
1962 Bedford petrol coach. Just finished PSV work. No MoT. £2500.

Details on all the above items from Tony Peters, 0932 64078.

PHOTOGRAPHS IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Front Cover: LT 1172 (GT 5046) in unrebuilt condition in 1948 at Kingston. Note the sagging cab canopy.

Back Cover: Two differing styles of LT 'Scooter' rear ends. GT 5077 and LT 1427 (GX 5337) at Penge 'Crooked Billet' in 1949.

All photographs by Alan B. Cross.

CLEAR - UP WEEKEND

4th 5TH NOVEMBER

There will be a break from the
clearing up on the Saturday
evening for a **GRAND**
BONFIRE & FIREWORKS DISPLAY

THE MORE WE CLEAR? THE MORE WE BURN!

FOOD WILL BE PROVIDED

PLEASE BRING SOME FIREWORKS

PLEASE BRING YOURSELVES AND FRIENDS TO HELP OUT

ALL ARE WELCOME

