



LONDON BUS MUSEUM MAGAZINE



The Journal of the London Bus Preservation Trust, Cobham Hall, Brooklands
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Contacting the Museum

Telephone

01932 837994. The phone is manned by the duty volunteers during opening hours but please bear in mind that most of the officers work from home, so it may be a question of passing a message on. Contact by email (see below) will usually bring a quicker response.

Email

londonbusmuseum@btinternet.com If you wish your message to be passed to a particular person, please mention the name in your message.

Post

The Museum's postal address is:
London Bus Museum
Cobham Hall
Brooklands Road
WEYBRIDGE KT13 0QN

Please note that this address cannot be used for visits in person, which should be via the main entrance.

Museum on the Web

Website: www.londonbusmuseum.com

Twitter: [@londonbusmuseum](https://twitter.com/londonbusmuseum)

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The Registered Office of both companies is: Room 6, Tudor Business Centre, Kingswood Station, Waterhouse Lane, Kingswood, Surrey KT20 6EN

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FRONT COVER PICTURE

Our Honorary President
Colin Curtis, OBE, who
died on 18th September
this year.



The views expressed in this magazine are those of the individual contributors. They are not necessarily the views of the London Bus Preservation Trust Ltd., its Trustees, Directors or Officers, Cobham Bus Museum Ltd., its Directors, or the Editor.

ITEMS FOR THE MAGAZINE

Please send contributions for the magazine to the Editor at michaelhcbaker@londonbusmuseum.com, or by post to the Museum at the address opposite.

LAST COPY DATE FOR THE
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15th FEBRUARY 2013

From the Cab

It would seem a shame to change the title of this column which has served us well for many years, so I shall continue with it! Our driver for the last six years has been Peter Duplock and, with a steady foot on the accelerator, he has succeeded in steering us to an immeasurably better position than the one he inherited as incoming Chairman back in 2006. Leaving the bus analogies to one side, it is right to record that Peter has led the team which has transformed the organisation into a world-class museum with a secure long-term future and which provides some 100,000 visitors a year with the opportunity to view an important part of the UK's transport heritage. This success has not been achieved without having to hurdle numerous obstacles thrown in our path in recent years and it is to Peter's great credit that he persevered with the task, stuck to the vision and saw us through to the final destination (sorry, back to the bus theme again). As I said at the AGM last month, the Trust owes Peter a great deal and I'm sure that all Members will join me in expressing our grateful appreciation to him for all his hard work and leadership. We will miss his presence on the board and very much hope that he will retain strong links with the Museum.

Two other Trust stalwarts took 'retirement' at the AGM: Finance Director Bernard Willis and Company Secretary Chris Wheble. Both of these colleagues have been integral parts of the team that has created the new London Bus Museum over the last six years. Chris has been a first-class company secretary, staying in the role for all this time despite only taking it on initially for six months, and carrying out his tasks diligently and competently. Bernard has brought new professional standards to the finance role, keeping the rest of us on the straight and narrow and ensuring that the Trust has met all its statutory obligations. They are both a loss to the Trust but they fully deserve a break and we thank them both most sincerely for all their hard work. We hope that they will find ways of staying involved with the Museum. Chris has unfortunately not been in the best of health recently and we all wish him a speedy recovery.

RMI40 Appeal - a final update

The response to the appeal to acquire RMI40 has been magnificent - a big 'thank you' to all who have contributed. With in excess of £16,000 received as at the time of writing, the Museum has been able to pay the vendor the bulk of the purchase price well in advance of the scheduled dates, in consideration of which the seller has reduced the price by £1,000 to £19,000.

Assuming that those donors who have kindly established monthly payments leave those in place until the scheduled close of the appeal in November 2013 (we hope that you will do so, no further payments will be taken once the final appeal sum has been achieved), then we can regard this appeal as successfully concluded.

We welcome two well-qualified colleagues to their new roles: Stephen Edwards as Finance Director and Peter Larkham as Company Secretary. In a further post-AGM change, the directors have decided to split the executive and non-executive functions of the chairman's role and have created the new positions of non-executive Chairman, to which Guy Marriott has been elected, and Chief Executive, to which my board colleagues have elected me. This change will start to bring us into line with other charitable trust companies in the way that they structure their management.

The directors will be meeting frequently in the coming weeks in order to agree the priorities for the Trust and I will provide more information about our plans in future editions of 'From the Cab' but in the meantime, suffice to say, we find ourselves in a very favourable position with a superb Collection, a state-of-the-art Museum, a substantial supporter-base of individual and corporate Members, a dedicated and enthusiastic volunteer workforce and a valuable partnership with our friends at Brooklands Museum which provides us with an attractive location and a visitor footfall the envy of many transport museums. There will be challenges ahead, not least the need to create a sustainable, viable revenue stream, but I am confident that we have an exciting future. I will do my very best to ensure that our objectives and the aspirations of all our stakeholders are met.

Michael Wickham
Chief Executive

CLEARING OUT YOUR UNWANTED TRANSPORT ITEMS? WHY NOT DONATE THEM TO THE MUSEUM?

London Bus Museum is a Registered Charity and our fundraisers can turn your gifted items into cash that keeps the Museum running. Our fundraising stall attends all our special events, as well as other functions, and raises several thousand pounds each year.

We would welcome your donation of your unwanted transport items and will always consider first what might benefit the Museum's own Collection before putting anything up for sale. We are interested in receiving:

- bus badges, bus stops, enamel signs and plates
- tickets and ticket machines
- transport uniforms, cap badges etc
- maps and timetables
- destination blinds
- bus posters and notices
- bus models
- transport books

- bus photos, negatives and slides

We can also accept other transport-related items. If you are having a clear-out, why not call Melvin Phillips on 01342 177, email: melvinphillips@bailey.bunch16.com or Bob Bailey on 01483 306, email: bailey.bunch16@bailey.bunch16.com?

From the Editor

We don't really want to add to the torrent of publicity which accompanies the latest James Bond film but we cannot help but note that in the newly released 'Skyfall' a NBfL LT bus features in a shot in Whitehall, a location where buses on route 38 do not normally appear. This means that either it was a very lucky one-off occurrence or, much more likely, someone in the production team knew their buses and decided that they just had to have London's latest wonder.

Following the route 38 feature in our last issue we came across one of the very earliest pictures your editor took, that of STD 119 at Victoria in December, 1954. By this date all the post-war STDs were concentrated at Loughton Garage from where they were withdrawn in 1955, many being sold to Sarajevo in what was then Yugoslavia. In that issue we also published pictures of the 50th anniversary commemorations of the end of the London trolleybus system. Ten years earlier the first London tram system disappeared and on the 7th July to mark that event the National Tramway Museum at Crich put into service the beautifully restored London United Tramways No.159 of 1902. It is seen here together with three other London trams, LCC four-wheeler No.106, MET Feltham No.331, and former LCC London Transport rehabilitated EI No.1622 although, sadly the iconic LCC No.1 was not able to complete the line-up.

Michael H C Baker



From Behind the Workshop Wall

Progress on UMP 227 moves on apace with the bodywork now in green undercoat. Much research has gone into trying to discover its actual original colour scheme at the time it went on loan to LT from AEC. As there are no plans or specifications, nor are there known colour photographs the livery has had to be copied from remains of the first coat of paint on original panels. These correspond to mid Lincoln green and broken white windows and black mudguards and as such that is where we are going. Coach painting will commence during November.

Internally the floor has been lino covered and the seats are being upholstered and fitted into the rebuilt frames. After some difficulty the windscreen frames have been rebuilt and will be reglazed in the next few weeks. Electrical works near completion and mechanical checks have commenced.

Interior refurbishment of T 23 continues at a controlled pace and completion is hinged around getting and fitting replacement glass to two windows.

Panels are being replaced on RP 90 following minor damage earlier this year and Q 83 is now running again awaiting the end of MoT's to historic vehicles on 18th November before going on road test.

Machined ash components have commenced delivery for NS 174 with the benefit of a legacy from the late Alan

Pursley and erection of the floor to form the basic platform is now underway by the joinery team. There are no less than 14 small hinged hopper windows to overhaul so there is a vacancy for volunteers looking to undertake some work 'at the table'.

With work on UMP drawing to a conclusion, recent acquisition RF 19 will return from Northchapel to begin an internal and external refurbishment. In fine mechanical condition the works required are fortunately not taxing.

Alongside RF 19 we are also intending to refurbish the canteen trailer which has proven to be a significant visitor attraction. URGENT, we need one of those small cylindrical Ascot water heaters, any condition, to put inside.

Despite a few mechanical hitches the fleet has been kept on the road, inspected, serviced and tested at the same time as dealing with the mechanical aspects of the restorations. D 142 was readied for its run in this year's Lord Mayors Show but still lacks an electric starter!

There are now so many volunteers at work on one task or another it would be unreasonable to single out names, as such I offer on behalf of all the membership a sincere vote of thanks to all volunteers in whatever capacity for their unstinting efforts and professionalism.

Roger Stagg,
Rolling Stock Trustee

Colin Hartley Curtis, 21st July 1926 - 18th September 2012

Colin Curtis OBE, our Honorary President, died aged 86 on 18th September this year. Colin was the last survivor of the team that designed and developed the Routemaster. Styling and interior detail by Douglas Scott helped the bus become a symbol of the capital, but it was Colin and his colleagues on the mechanical side who ensured its performance, reliability and remarkable longevity. The result was a bespoke, open-platform bus so robust and easy to maintain that it saw off several generations of would-be OPO usurpers.

Colin was a young engineer at London Transport's Chiswick works when the quest for a new bus officially started in 1951, although the concept had first been mooted four years earlier. The brief was to build a vehicle that could not only compete with the car in terms of comfort - hence, for the first time, saloon heating - but also deliver better fuel efficiency and carry more passengers than its predecessor, the RT. Several innovations were employed to this end. An aluminium body was mounted on a chassis-less structure with sub-frames to save weight. The Routemaster also had power steering, automatic transmission, independent suspension and hydraulic braking, making it easy to drive and smooth to ride.

The project's leading figure and chief mechanical engineer was AAM Durrant, who had designed the Centurion tank during WW2 and had been in charge of bus policy since London Transport was formed in 1933. His links to the London General Omnibus Company (LGOC) went back even further, to 1919, the year when the first classic red double-decker, the pre-First World War B Type, built in Walthamstow, was still entering service. Durrant was a mentor to Colin, who rose fast and was active in testing and improving all four Routemaster prototypes. The first entered service in 1956 and regular production, by AEC and Park Royal Vehicles, began in 1958. "When you're putting in an order for 500 buses, as we did, it gives you a lot of clout with the manufacturers", Colin said. "But our relationship with them was excellent. We had great co-operation". Early problems were ironed out and, in all, 2,876 Routemasters were built, most for London.

Colin Curtis was born in Brighton on 21st July 1926. His father, a telephone engineer, died of tuberculosis when he was seven and his mother, a social worker, raised him and his baby sister with the help of her parents, to whom they were both close. Colin's first memorable contact with buses was nearly fatal. Aged seven or eight, feeling dizzy after a blow to the head during a game of football, he rode his bicycle into a double-decker. "They said either I'd die or I'd go mad or I'd recover, and apparently I recovered", he said.

He spent several weeks in hospital, where he took to wondering what type of bus had hit him. His interest deepened from there and later his headmaster at Varndean Grammar arranged for him to spend evenings at Brighton Hove & District Transport learning about

various aspects of the business.

Colin went to Brighton Technical College on a state bursary in 1944, taking an engineering degree course. A brief apprenticeship at AEC's works in Southall, Middlesex, followed before his long career at London Transport started in 1947.

In his eventual role as vehicle engineering manager, Colin oversaw not just Routemasters but everything in the fleet. Based at Chiswick, he could crop up at any of London's 72 bus garages and sometimes himself took the wheel of Routemasters in normal service so as not to lose touch with the driver's experience.

Evolution, not revolution, was Durrant's ethos, and Colin absorbed it wholesale. It dismayed him that, during cutbacks at London Transport during the Margaret Thatcher era, so much industry expertise, built up over decades, was jettisoned. One victim of the retrenchment, for instance, was the experimental shop at Chiswick works, a large shed where Colin and his colleagues did much of their testing.

After he left London Transport in 1988 Colin ran his own consultancy, keeping in contact with senior figures in the bus world, not just in London and Britain but also internationally. His own Q Master design for a successor to the Routemaster interested some manufacturers but did not get taken up.

Colin was the author of several books: *Buses of London* (1979); *The Routemaster Bus* (1981); *Forty Years with London Transport* (1990); and the co-author (with J Graeme Bruce) of *The London Motor Bus: Its Origins and Development* (1973).

He was appointed OBE in 1985.

Active in preservation until the last year or so, he was honorary president of the London Bus Preservation Trust and president of the Routemaster Association. In 2004, an event he helped organise in Finsbury Park to mark the 50th anniversary of the Routemaster's debut at the Earl's Court Commercial Motor Show was graced by 100 of the buses.

Colin was always ready to share his knowledge with enthusiasts, often giving detailed, handwritten replies to technical or historical questions. His home in Crawley was a treasure trove of vehicle drawings, scale models and documents, some of which his family is planning to donate to the London Transport Museum.

In the same week he died, Transport for London approved the purchase of 600 so-called new Routemasters, to be built by Wrightbus of Northern Ireland. Perhaps not surprisingly, the name irked Colin, who saw the project as more of a political move by the mayor, Boris Johnson, than a genuine attempt to improve the lot of passengers, although others of course, disagreed.

He was divorced and is survived by his sister, Denise.

(Obituary first published in the Daily Telegraph and reproduced here with permission with adaptations)

The 230 lowbridge buses

- based on a letter from Thomas Jones (503)

As a schoolboy Thomas would board an RT on route 18 at Belmont Circle, Harrow Weald and then change to the 230 which would take him to its terminus at Northwick Park station on the Metropolitan Line. At that time the 230 was still worked by lowbridge STLs of Chiswick 1942 construction. On the morning of 19th November 1952, a dull rainy one as he recalls, getting off the RT he saw in the opposite direction, between the main line railway station and Headstone Drive, a new, bright all red lowbridge bus with 230 blinds.

He realised he was witnessing the start of the replacement of the Central Area's lowbridge STLs by RLHs, 52 being already in Country Area service. He announced his discovery to 'my school friend' (we are not told who) and mates, and so during school lunchtime they watched to see if the RLH would stop opposite at the Northwick Tea House in Kenton Road. RLH 53, for thus it was, duly appeared heading from Northwick Avenue to Wealdstone, and after school Thomas and his friend managed to ride it back home.

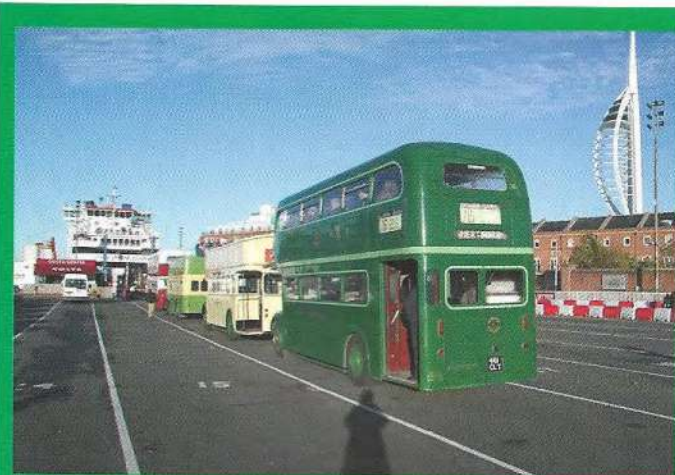
Next day another RLH, 54, put in an appearance, followed a day later by RLH 55, and so on, one by one, until a very foggy 8th December, RLH 67, the highest numbered one, to be delivered to Harrow Weald garage, enabled the entire lowbridge STL fleet to be removed from the 230, the last being STL 1959, DLUI57.



Above: STL 1959 working the 230.

(Collection)

Below: The LBPT's own RLH 53, not yet quite in the immaculate condition in which it entered service, with 230 blind awaits restoration. (MHCB)



RMC 1461 waiting to board the ferry coming back from the Isle of Wight behind Southern Vectis (ex-Brighton and Hove) Bristol K5G CAP234, Southdown PD3 409DCD and Portsmouth Corporation Atlantean BBK236B, and taking a prominent position on board the ferry. The buses were returning from the IoW Bus Museum's Running Day on 14th October this year. (Laurie Mountjoy)

Post Christmas lunch

Sunday 27th January 2013

Inn on the Lake, Silvermere Golf Club, Redhill Road, Cobham, first floor function room

12.00 Take your seats and buy a raffle ticket, 12.30 Lunch starts

Four course carvery including cold buffet starter; choice of two main course meats plus veg, selection of cold desserts, coffee and mints

Vegetarian option available; advanced notice required please

Please contact Steve Edmonds to book your seats by 31st December at the latest, the date for finalising the booking with Silvermere

Cost: £22.95 for adults, half price for children

Cheques payable to LBPT Limited to be sent to

Steve Edmonds, Cobham Hall, Brooklands Road, Weybridge, KT13 0QN

Cheques will not be banked until after the deadline for bookings

Tel: 0208 0745, Mob: 07906 687. Email stevenstef@.co.uk

Please bring a donation to the fund raising raffle; any unwanted Xmas gifts welcome

From TfL's archives

As a regular volunteer at Transport for London's archive department, I often come across interesting snippets of information.

In the early 1950s, the chassis of STL 881 was used at Chiswick for experimental work, including engine-mounting tests. All work was completed by December 1953 and the vehicle was out of stock the following month. In February 1955, the 'Meccano set' STL - 2477 (the body of which used to rattle, according to Colin Curtis) was used on saloon heating and humidity tests on Central and Country routes 6 and 406 respectively. *(But surely this date cannot be correct as STL 2477 ended passenger service on 1st December 1953, ended service as a trainer with London Transport on 29th November 1954 and was sold around September 1956 to Harpers of West Hartlepool - Editor)*

From some archive files, I discovered that early development and experimentation work on the Routemaster was done under the codename 'RT12 Project'. The powers that be clearly did not wish their new babies to have 'OLD' registrations that had been reserved for them and, interestingly, the records show that RMs 1 and 2 were to have the marks SLT 42 and 43 respectively (which were, in fact, used on Service Vehicles 1042/43 AS).

On 13th August 1956, RM 2 visited Chobham Test Track, along with RT 2373 for steering effort tests.

Colin Read



STL 2477 outside Alperton garage.

(Collection)

2013 Events at the Museum

Sunday 21 April: The 40th Spring Bus & Coach Gathering, featuring 80 years of London Transport and now on site at the Museum.

Sunday 30 June: A Sixties Summer featuring the buses, the music and much more from the 1960s.

Sunday 20 October: Transportfest 2013 featuring rarely-seen buses plus taxis, commercials, emergency services vehicles etc.

Publicity Distribution Co-Ordinator

I have recently taken on this position and would like to set up a small team to distribute our general and events publicity to local outlets (libraries, museums etc) and heritage railways. If you would like to get involved, please email me at [colinread_86@... .com](mailto:colinread_86@...) or see me at the Museum most Wednesdays.

Membership

Our total Membership stands at 747, just seven more than this time last year. There continues to be a significant turnover from both leavers and joiners; the revolving doors seem to be working well these days. Our membership is made up largely of gentlemen of a certain age and it is inevitable that there will be losses on a continuous basis. I am heartened by the numbers of visitors to the museum who decide to sign up; and a good number are joining as couples and families.

There are a number of reasons why some memberships lapse and if you are one who intended to renew and omitted to do so, please check Debbie Morris's list

of reminders below. A special thank you to Debbie for keeping on top of all the demands made upon her time by members old and new throughout another busy year.

Whilst we shall continue to persevere in our attempts to attract more members, particularly from the young, we are experiencing a new dynamic at work in the shape of our visitors. Members' subscriptions used to be the main indicator of the success and health of the Trust; increasing numbers were also an important revenue source alongside events. Any current financial success we enjoy is largely funded by visitor

donations; those at the recent AGM learned precisely how much.

I believe that membership of LBPT continues to offer good value for money particularly that the Brooklands Museum site is included in the free access for members. Production and delivery of the four magazines takes quite a chunk of the income from subscriptions so membership remains good value for money. I hope that you will stick with the adventure and help us to achieve our objectives in the years ahead, in spite of the subs for many of you increasing one more time from January 2013!

Steve Edmonds

Renewal reminders

Period 3 Oct - Dec

860 David Allwood, 527 Paul Brophy, 744 Haydn Davies, 747 Jack Flowers, 609 Alan Fludgate, 524A Nigel Frampton, 1241 Alfred Hagger, 1503 Malcolm Hart, 916 Robert Humphrey, 1284 C Maynard, 516 Gerald Mead, 1395 Mike Pope, 1238 Michael Selby, 1668 Grahame Skey, 1226 Neil Smith, 248 John Stevenson, 408 Paul Wheeler, 821 Alan Willett

Period 4 Jan - March 2013

29 Roy Adams, 1047 Ian Ailes, 129 Simon Copas, 833 Michael Cross, 50 Les Duplock, 1672 Robert Fleming, 1611 David Lawrence, 979A Geoff Lemon, 982 Bill Miller, 1516 Terry Morris, 1612F Terence Reeves, 825 Malcolm Rickman

If you think you have paid then please contact the museum letting us know when and by which method you paid.

If you do not wish to renew then for Period 3 renewals this will be your last magazine, for period 4 renewals the spring issue will be your final one. Thanks, Debbie

The 'G' Class Utilities of London Transport - Part I

By John Lines

By the outbreak of the Second World War the London Passenger Transport Board was moving fairly quickly towards a standardisation of double deck vehicles that was to eventually end in peacetime with that wonderful family of the RT, RTL, RTW, RLH, RF and GS vehicles. If it were not for a certain little despot in Germany, I have no doubt that the standardisation would have occurred far more quickly than it eventually did!

The classic line of the STL class could still be seen in the new 2RT2 vehicles which were starting to be delivered in 1939 but the war, and the conversion of engineering works to military vehicle production, led to a temporary halt in the production of bus and coach chassis. Sadly buses and coaches were not immune to the bombing and many were totally destroyed or seriously damaged. Also vehicles still wore out due to age. Whilst engineering staff made Herculean efforts to keep vehicles on the road, it was realised that something would have to be done to meet the needs of the civilian population who, for instance, had to get to work in the factories producing items for the war effort. The Ministry of Supply sought to alleviate this problem by allowing chassis which had been started but frozen at the outbreak of hostilities to be completed and released to bus companies with the most needs, London Transport receiving some of these. These became known as the 'unfrozen' chassis but, in truth, did very little to alleviate the problems of the bus companies! Obviously the Ministry of Supply had to do something, so in 1942, after negotiations with the Ministry of War Transport and a committee of bus operators, and probably to the surprise of many bus operators, it authorised Guy Motors of Fallings Park, Wolverhampton to manufacture 500 double

deck chassis to very strict conditions. This meant heavier, cheaper metals than those that would normally have been used, resulting in a rather heavy chassis. Guy Motors founded by Sidney Guy in 1914 had in fact built bus chassis, including double deck, for some considerable time, but not many chassis, if any, had been produced in the years just prior to the war. Although Guy Motors should be given the credit for producing the complete chassis design so quickly, it was in some ways an update of their pre-war Arab double deck chassis. London Transport was to receive seventy-one of those 500 chassis, all of which would be fitted with the Gardner 5LW diesel engine which was renowned for fuel economy but it was not the fastest of vehicles, especially on hills! (Those operators with hilly operating areas were entitled to receive chassis with Gardner 6LW engines and around 100 chassis were so fitted. I have never seen any evidence of any of the London vehicles having that engine.) Add to this a crash gearbox and Lockheed servo hydraulics brakes and one can see that this chassis was very different from what most London Transport drivers had been used to! These first Arabs were given the designation Arab I and had short front mudguards and the radiator was almost flush with the body. On the so-called Arab II chassis the radiator was moved forward to allow for the fitting of the Gardner 6LW if needed; there had been problems with fitting the 6LW engine to the Arab I chassis and the front wings were extended also and turned down at the front. Special permission had to be given for the vehicles to exceed the then permitted length for double deck buses, so thus started the famous Guy snout.

At the same time as authorising the production of the new Guy chassis the Ministry of Supply had authorised a number of bodybuilding companies to complete the bodies. Many of these were either from the north of the country and not well known to London Transport or better known as coach bodywork suppliers. Names that come to mind are Duple of Hendon (The mainly coach building Company), Massey, Northern Coachbuilders (NCB), Northern Counties, Park Royal and Weymann, both the latter having supplied vehicles to London previously. Again the Ministry of Supply issued very strict guidelines on the metals used in the construction of the bodies and the basic outline. In my collection I have a copy of one of the leaflets issued to the bodybuilders. One point that must have been strange to London Transport was that the basic height of the vehicle was to be fourteen feet and six inches whilst I believe most



Northern Counties bodied G 250, delivered in October 1945 is seen at Hornchurch Garage, alongside former Green Line T 273. (Collection)



Park Royal bodied G 354 of Tottenham garage working the 76, one of the only two Guy routes to reach the West End and the only one which crossed the Thames.
(Collection)

London double deckers had been to the height of fourteen feet and three inches. One of my friends, the late John Gillham, told me, whilst out on a trip on G 351 together, that a number of London garages had had alterations made to allow access of the utilities although I believe that the RT and RM family vehicles were built to fourteen foot six inches as standard.

The bodybuilders tried to put their mark on their particular bodywork and it became fairly easy to identify which vehicle was which. Probably the easiest to identify was that from Massey which, in my opinion, was probably the ugliest body, which is sad considering the beautiful bodies that they built post-war! Interestingly, Northern Counties were still allowed to produce metal framed bodies and these were probably the most elegant of the wartime bodies. Other noticeable items were the seats which were often slatted wood instead of upholstery and the vehicles which were not always painted in operators liveries; thus G class vehicles could be seen in brown, grey or red ochre plus normal livery. The majority of the London Transport Guys were bodied by Massey, Northern Counties, Park Royal and Weymann although Duple did supply one vehicle, G 43, and Northern Coachbuilders rebodied G 30 which had had its bodywork destroyed in a bombing raid.

There has always been a bit of a contentious issue about the Utility Arabs with respect to some people calling them Mark I or Mark 2 Arabs. I must admit that I have never seen any brochures, leaflets from Guy Motors that mention Mark I, II or III Arabs; rather they are referred to as Arab passenger chassis. The first brochures I have found referring to a particular mark of Arab are for the Mark IV and V versions. Be that as may, it was popular to talk about Mark I and II Arabs and most enthusiast publications do that in respect of the London Transport Utility Arabs.

Incidentally, the very first Utility Arab had the chassis number FD 25450, an experimental chassis which was eventually dismantled by Guy Motors. The lowest numbered London chassis was FD 25476, on G 2 registration GLF 652, G 1 following with chassis FD

25921 with registration GLL 571. The London total was to grow to 435 which was a substantial fleet and no doubt helped keep London moving in the dark days of war. There was, of course, a G 436 but this was a post-war Arab III and Guy Motors' failed attempt to provide chassis for London Transport's post-war re-equipping of their fleet!

There was also a rumour that Guy Motors built an experimental chassis with a pre-selector gearbox. I have always wondered if that was to gain an order from London Transport; whatever it was the chassis was eventually dismantled by Guys.

To be continued



John's own G 351, the only survivor in original form of all London's utility buses, doing a very good impersonation of a brand new bus in the yard of Crystal Palace station in 1968.
(MHCb)

Saving Private Hire

By Michael Wickham

No, it's not a new film by Steven Spielberg but a project by the Museum to tell the story of the LGOC's and London Transport's private hire and sightseeing operations, epitomised 'in the flesh' by our two classic glass-roofed coaches - RF 19 and RFW 6, in respect of which there is now a fundraising appeal enclosed with this issue of the magazine.

Private hire of London's buses and coaches goes back a long way; from the earliest days of motor-buses, the General and some of the independent companies hired their buses out for private outings. By the time of WWI, the LGOC was ordering specially-built charabancs and motor-coaches with folding roofs for this business and, by the 1920s, open-top buses were being hired for events such as the Cup Final and the Epsom Derby. That decade also saw the introduction by the General of the first organised tours to destinations such as Windsor and Hampton Court and, in 1923, 'Seeing London Tours by Motor Coach' - surely the origin of today's huge sightseeing operations, not just in London but throughout the world. The company now maintained a sizeable fleet of specialised touring coaches and both these early sightseeing tours and the private hire business were now heavily marketed

by means of promotional literature issued by the Underground Group. One could even hire a tram or an Underground car!

After London Transport took over in 1933, these operations continued to be well promoted and, in 1937 and 1939 respectively, the mixture of coach-types used for them was rationalised and enhanced by the introduction of two specially-designed classes: the LTC and TF types. The TFs had glass roof-lights from new, pioneering an important improvement for sightseeing which became commonplace after WW2. That War put an end to frivolities such as private hire and sightseeing - the LTCs were converted to ambulances and the TFs went into storage, where all but one were destroyed by enemy bombing.

After the War, 'Conducted Coach Tours of London and London's Country' resumed in 1946, using the restored LTCs, a few of which were now fitted with rooflights, and the sole surviving TF. With the Festival of Britain approaching, LT hurried into service in 1951 twenty-five 'sightseeing' RFs and fifteen, wider-bodied, fully coach-seated RFWs. Both classes were equipped with rooflights and formed the nucleus of the private hire and sightseeing fleet until the 1960s, when staff shortages



PRIVATE HIRE



caused LT to contract out much of this work. The specialist fleet was then either transferred to Green Line coach duties or sold off and, whilst one could still hire a London bus for a weekend trip to the seaside, it would now be a standard red or green one which had spent the week in normal service.

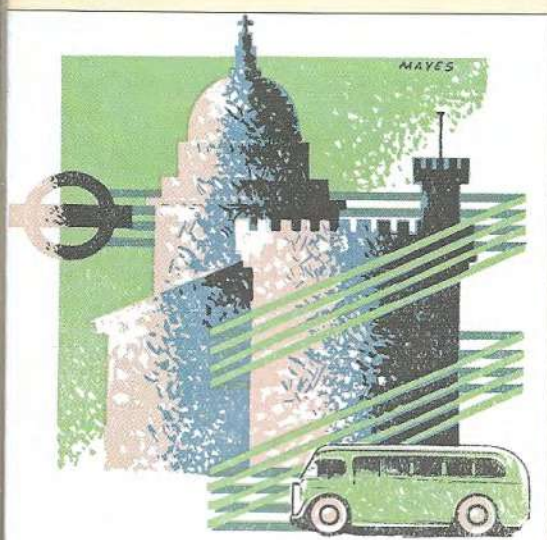


Pictured at Chessington Zoo, probably in the summer of 1939, is LTC 23c, one of 24 Weymann-bodied AEC Renowns specially built for private hire work. Another of these smooth, petrol-engined coaches is seen behind. Both coaches were then operating out of Old Kent Road garage and, after the outbreak of WW2, were converted to ambulances before returning to a mixture of bus, coach and private hire duties in 1947. All were scrapped in 1952/53.

(© LBPT, the Bernard Phillips Collection)



TF 2c was the first of twelve Park Royal-bodied 'private hire' coaches on Leyland Tiger FEC chassis with engines mounted under the floor. It is pictured here at Chessington Zoo when new in the summer of 1939, operating out of Old Kent Road garage during its very brief period of service. When WW2 broke out in September, it was sent to Addlestone garage to work as a bus for a few weeks before it and the others were placed in store at the Bull Yard, Peckham where all bar one were destroyed by enemy bombing in October 1940.
 (© LBPT, the Bernard Phillips Collection)



CONDUCTED COACH TOURS OF LONDON AND LONDON'S COUNTRY DURING 1946



Seen when brand new in the Spring of 1951 and allocated to Middle Row garage in Kensington, RF 19 operates a private hire duty along with TF 9, then based at Gillingham St, Victoria garage and the only one of its batch to survive the War.
 (Michael Wickham collection)

Thus ended the original era of private hire. In the field of sightseeing, there was much more to come, with fascinating developments in the 1970s and 1980s including Obsolete Fleet, the purchase by LT of second-hand buses from Bournemouth and the open-top conversions of Routemasters - but all of that is another story.

Now, the Museum needs your help to tell the Private Hire story: firstly, we want to complete the purchase and restoration of RF 19 and RFW 6 so that these two fine coaches can form the centrepiece of the Private Hire display as well as go back on the road to tell the story in motion. We

need to raise £30,000 for that project and your financial support will be crucial. The donation forms are included with this magazine and can also be downloaded from the Museum website. Please support the appeal if you can. Secondly, is there anyone amongst the membership who would be interested in researching the private hire story more comprehensively than the short summary above? If so, David Kinnear, c/o the Museum, would be very pleased to hear from you. As well as being used for the display, the story would also make a very good article in this magazine.



My Life in the Bus Lane

Part 2 of John Wagstaff's canter through his 46-year career

My career in Public Relations came to a fairly abrupt end in 1984 (as did London Transport, I seem to recall), when I was told that in the latest reorganisation my job had been abolished and I was being transferred to a new department, initially entitled 'The Unit for Disabled Travellers' (quite quickly amended to 'Passengers': I suppose today it would have been 'Customers').

I had been quite heavily involved in accessibility issues in my PR role, especially during and following the 1981 International Year of Disabled People, so I suppose it was a logical choice to have me as assistant to the Unit's first Head, the delightful Tony Shaw who had formerly been London Transport's Assistant Secretary. The first few years in this new role I found particularly rewarding, and I made a number of good friends among the disabled lobby with whom I am still in regular contact. Plenty of new ideas, starting with the wheelchair-accessible Leyland National 'Mobility Buses', were implemented in Tony's time and also in the 1990s when he was succeeded by Andrew Braddock, who had likewise started his career with LT but had 'broken away' for a number of years, latterly with the 'Berks Bucks' bus company under Len Wright.

Tony Shaw had generously encouraged me to obtain a PSV (yes, it was still PSV - just! - rather than PCV) licence - a big mistake as it enabled me to 'moonlight' even further, this time driving open-top Routemasters at summer weekends on the 'Original Tour' which was in the throes of a management buyout. By the late 1990s I felt that my useful contribution to what was now called 'Access & Mobility' was approaching its natural end. I also felt that grasping the computer literacy that was now being expected of me was even more daunting than obtaining a PSV licence: like Jeeves the Butler, my wonderful colleague Peter Wright (no relation of Len) would each morning approach my desk bearing a silver tray and uttering the immortal words "Here is your electronic mail for you, sir!". I would read same and then scribble hasty replies for Peter to email back. I was given to understand that this was not how the brave new world of electronics was meant to operate. I knew that I was going to have problems some years earlier when the Typing Pool was abolished.

So I took early retirement from Access & Mobility before anyone could despatch me to a Skills Development redeployment centre or whatever, and having got home very late on a Friday evening after attending a meeting among disabled bus passengers in the

Bexley area (my colleagues at Transport for London having given me a very nice send-off in the pub that afternoon), I rose at 6.00am on the Saturday to start my new full-time job with the Original London Sightseeing Tour. The year was now 2001, and a hitherto fleet of one hundred per cent Routemasters were rapidly giving way to Metrobuses, Olympians and the like. I enjoyed the variety of types, and I remember one particular day when I drove four 1 1/2 hour tours each with a different type of vehicle - Routemaster, Bristol VR (ex-East Kent), ex-LT Metrobus (M-type) and ex-National Express tri-axle ML-type Metrobus which did not take too kindly to pootling round Belgravia after pounding the motorways at full pelt! Generally speaking, with the Routemasters you usually had a 'live' guide (who would pointedly say "We will now drive slowly past St. Paul's Cathedral" or whatever), while the rear-engined more modern vehicles usually had a tape-machine for providing a multi-language commentary via headphones, enabling driver only operation which frankly on the whole I preferred.



John, with his back to the camera, assisting with a passenger alighting from Mobility Bus, LS 396.

The approach of winter in 2002, which would normally have heralded a laying-off of some sightseeing drivers, was fortuitously accompanied by an unexpected temporary contract to provide covered-top conventional Metrobuses for service route 185 (Victoria to Lewisham), the contracted operator having dramatically 'gone under' one Friday afternoon. With my good knowledge of South London in general and the Dulwich area in particular, I volunteered to drive on this service,

and I found that in some respects conventional bus work was even more interesting than driving on the Sightseeing Tour. At that time the typical tour-bus driver was a highly-experienced LT driver who had for years driven crew-operated RTs and RMs, found after a few years that he did not particularly like the direct contact with the 'great unwashed' which promotion to OPO work had bestowed upon him, and was more than happy to return to Routemasters etc. and encountering (mainly) good-natured tourists who actually wanted to be on his bus. Progressing from sightseeing to service work, as in my case, was thus seen as going rather against the grain. Unlike most London service buses by this time, the old M-types did not have assault screens for the driver, but despite trying to do the job conscientiously I never had any real trouble with passengers. Some, indeed, were amused by the fact that despite their covered tops the buses were in full Sightseeing livery (their main purpose being for use in wet weather, contract jobs and so forth) and wags would ask for a commentary as we passed, for example, the Oval Cricket Ground.

After thirteen months the 185 contract ended and theoretically it was back to full-time Sightseeing duties. But once again winter was almost upon us, which meant a glut of drivers at the Wandsworth (back to my roots!) base. Volunteers were duly sought to transfer, initially on a short-term basis, to other London bus garages operated by Arriva, who were now the Original Tour's owners, and as I had seen 'Driver Vacancy' banners fluttering in the wind outside the new Norwood Garage which I had helped to open in 1984 I volunteered - along with three other Wandsworth drivers - to go there: a great 'plus' for me was that Norwood was only half the distance from the Shirley area of Croydon, where I was now living.

As it happened, I was the only 'WD' driver who stayed on at 'N'. I am still there now, and my principal route is, as you might guess, the 176 (Tottenham Court Road to Penge), which shares common ground with the 185 between Camberwell and Forest Hill. Like the 185, it began in 1951 as a tram replacement route, but the northern and southern ends are both unrecognisable from the perspective of sixty years ago. At one time the route reached as far distant as Willesden Garage (hence its dubious honour as being the last-ever RTL route, in November 1968, and operating out of Willesden - AC), but in the south the route now stretches out to Penge, in effect replacing the old 12 beyond Dulwich Library (or 'Plough' if you prefer).

Speaking of the 176 and London's last service RTLs back in 1968, I have to take issue with a certain Michael H. C. Baker, who in his otherwise excellent book *London Transport Since 1963*, published by Ian Allan states that the Willesden RTLs on the 176 were replaced by single-deck MBS's. Not so! I think that my then PRO colleagues and I who rode on that last bus (Michael says quite rightly that it was RTL 543 - subsequently scrapped, would you believe?) would have gone on hunger-strike had we

contemplated replacement by such ghastly specimens. No, the Willesden RTLs - which had also operated local route 226 - were replaced by RTs, and in fact the 176 route remained crew-operated long enough for the RTs to be themselves replaced by RMs in the 1970s, albeit not for very long. I remember that for me one of the few comical sights on that grim November night was, while I was driving back home to Dulwich in my father's trusty 1965 Hillman Super Minx, somewhere around the Elephant & Castle seeing a snake of blindless RTs wending their way AC-wards (it was these buses that were being displaced by MBSs, at Bromley for routes 126 and 138), with a single-deck RF ex-route 227 valiantly trying to keep up as a 'staff bus' to ferry the RT drivers back home! In the late 1960s RTs could still certainly shift, even allowing for the fact that TB's engineers had probably selected the ones they liked least for unloading on Willesden.

Norwood is a friendly garage, with some really super colleagues among the drivers in particular. I remember that in crew-operated days - 'Before my time', as they say - it had a reputation as 'the family garage' because it had so many husband-and-wife crews, working mainly on routes like the 3, 68 and 137. Notwithstanding today's absence of conductors there are still plenty of ladies in evidence - not only as drivers but also as support staff, managers, cleaners and of course working in the excellent canteen. As a one-time PR man, I now occasionally feel 'gamekeeper turned poacher', but my years of experience have been useful indeed when dealing with some of the tricky situations a London bus driver invariably encounters.

The other day I was driving my car through Shirley when I had a glimpse of my old schoolmaster from 1965/66 standing at a bus stop. I suppose, like all good busmen, I should have promptly pulled up, opened the nearside door and offered him a lift. But I didn't, I'm afraid, so I will never know whether, upon gratefully climbing aboard, he would have turned to me and said, "That's very self-sacrificing of you, Wagstaff!"



John today.

(Barry Le Jeune)

Volunteering - Steve Edmonds, John Sullivan and Mike Scott

If like me, you visited the Olympic Park during August, you won't have failed to notice some of the 70,000 volunteers who welcomed and directed visitors to, from and around the site. Very appropriately, the longest and loudest ovation in the two closing ceremonies was given to this splendid group of mostly young people who had sacrificed time and income to serve us in this way. They probably did more than anyone involved in the Olympic events to boost the UK's reputation as a warm and welcoming nation populated by friendly and committed people.

The story is not very different at the London Bus Museum these days. Over one hundred volunteers representing almost 15% of the LBPT membership, regularly freely contribute their time and finances to ensure our continuing success story. It was a pleasure to pay tribute to them all at the recent first anniversary celebration at the museum.

From the front of house stewards and guides, first aiders and the driving and conducting teams to the back room boys in the library and archive, restoration and maintenance, engineering, upholstery, facilities, health and safety, publishing, council of management and events teams; we can all take credit and satisfaction from a job well done. And it is fun isn't it? Well, most of the time!

There is an open invitation to join the various teams particularly the stewarding side where we need to keep topping up staffing levels on a continuous basis. John Sullivan shares his experiences of working 'front of house'. Also we have an invitation from Mike Scott welcoming all those aspiring drivers and conductors among you to join that team; a different aspect of front of house but an essential area given the number of events we run and attend these days.

John writes:

Having been interested in buses since childhood, with a particular interest in London buses, I thought I knew a little about them.

And so I joined LBPT a number of years ago with the intention of volunteering to do something. However, my abilities with a spanner, hammer or paintbrush are woefully lacking and I never got around to choosing an area where I could be useful to the Trust.

Until, that is, the new museum was proposed. I may not be able to fix, restore or drive a bus but by heck I can talk about them. So, after a little mix up about whether my membership had lapsed or not (not, as it turned out) I stepped forward into the breach and volunteered my services.

Training was straightforward as it was based on customer facing issues which I had worked in for years and was knowledgeable about. However, my first day in the museum was anything but straightforward. To be blunt, I never realised how little I knew about the buses until I started to try and talk to people about them.

A lot of my early days were spent asking more questions than I answered, reading and memorising details from the information plaques and the internet and interrogating more knowledgeable volunteers. I also spent a lot of time eavesdropping to hear what other volunteers were saying. With knowledge comes confidence and although I do not know everything, I can face questions from adults and

children alike and more importantly can start conversations with visitors thereby imparting more information than just by simply answering questions.

The best thing about volunteering, apart from the buses, is the visitors. Such a range of people could not have been envisaged and I have had enjoyable conversations with people with so many differing interests but all with a story to tell of their experiences of buses. Particularly common is the story of how they had or saw accidents on the open platforms and how funny those stories are now with the passage of time. Even with these near death experiences they all long for the return of the open platform.

Children are by far the best visitors because they ask the best questions. My favourite so far was the young lad who asked what the yellow things on the wheels of the Titan were for. Having explained, his next question to me was 'why don't all the buses have them'. A logical, sensible follow up question only a child would ask.

One disappointment for me is that my personal situation has meant that I cannot do as many days at the museum as I would like. I should like to get involved with other activities at the museum work but am not sure what. I would like to get behind the wheel of a bus but appreciate that there are many more people with the same ambition ahead of me in the queue. I think time will tell and in the meantime I will continue to do the work I am enjoying.

In conclusion, I have to say I have no regrets about volunteering at the museum whatsoever; I cannot think of a nicer bunch of oddballs to spend my spare time with.

John Sullivan

Volunteer steward and guide

Mike writes:

As a bus museum, we do not leave our vehicles inside gathering dust. Frequently many of them do what they were designed to do, go out onto the streets, and people travel on them. But they don't go out on their own; they need drivers and often also conductors. Have you ever thought of volunteering as a driver or conductor? What is involved? As a driver you will need to have a full PCV (Passenger Commercial Vehicle) licence, and ideally some experience of bus driving. Whatever your knowledge, one of our senior drivers will take you out to assess your skills, and you will be 'type' trained on any vehicle that you will be likely to drive. As a conductor, no formal qualifications are necessary, but you must be fairly fit, and numerate. Courses are run three or four times a year at the museum for trainee conductors. You will learn about the Law's requirements, and there are quite a few on safety of your vehicle, how to ensure the safety and comfort of your passengers, how to use a ticket machine and keep any records necessary. At the end of the course you will be given a practical test on a bus and assessed as to your abilities. All this is before you are allowed as a driver or conductor to be in charge of one of the Trust's vehicles on the public highway.

All the arrangements for driver and conductor volunteers are made by email, so it is important that you have email access. The sorts of jobs that you may get are taking a vehicle to an event, or operating a service based on the museum. Sometimes the bus is just on static display, when you will be required to take the bus to the event, and stay

with it, answering questions about the museum and the bus, and generally acting as the public face of the London Bus Museum. On other occasions the bus will take part in a 'running day', when you will be operating a service, frequently over old routes, with a type of bus which was once common on those routes. Here your skills and professionalism will be put to the test, as many of your passengers will be ordinary folk having a day out with their families, although some, of course, will be enthusiasts. Usually these are 'free' services, and no fares are charged, although most passengers, especially children, do like to be issued with a ticket. Some events will be based on the museum at Cobham Hall, but similar arrangements apply here. During the school holidays in summer and autumn, we operate 'bus rides' at Brooklands. This usually involves one of our double deckers doing a circular tour of about 20 minutes around the Byfleet district every half hour. We do ask for a donation, usually a minimum of £1.00 per person for this, and the conductor is responsible for collecting the donations, issuing tickets in the traditional manner, and

accounting for the cash taken. Here again the vast majority of the passengers are families having a day out at Brooklands, and the bus ride is part of that day out.

Unlike the bigger companies, we do not have fitters to prepare a bus for service, or cleaners to sweep it out afterwards, so before and after service there may well be some work to do. For drivers this can mean checking oil and water levels, ensuring that there is sufficient fuel for the job to be undertaken, and checking that lights and indicators etc are working correctly. For the conductor this can mean checking that blinds are correctly set, and that bells and interior lights are working correctly, and at the end of a day may also mean giving the bus a light sweep out.

If all this hasn't put you off volunteering for driving and or conducting duties at the museum do please contact Steve Edmonds, who will be pleased to hear from you and make sure that you are put in touch with the right person to get you on the list of approved drivers and conductors.

Mike Scott
Conductor trainer

Book Review

The London ST by Ken Blacker, Capital Transport, £30, ISBN 978-185414-363-1

When your reviewer was growing up in Croydon in the Second World War years London's double deck fleet consisted of three types, the STL, the LT and the ST. There were others, of course, notably the RT and the STD, but these were exotic specimens never seen south of Brixton and anyhow only, together, totalled around 250, whilst each of the other three types exceeded well over a thousand. Long ago, in 1984 to be precise, Ken Blacker brought out the STL history, followed, two years ago, by that of the LT. Now we have the ST's history. It is THE definitive story, like its predecessors, of this bus which was such an everyday feature of the streets of London and the Home Counties from late 1929 until the early 1950s. As Mr Blacker says in the introduction that having written the LT history, "I could hardly avoid writing about the other (ST). Not that, in my young days, I liked them equally". I know just what he means. In Croydon and particularly my bit of it, Thornton Heath, STs were ten a penny. The LT had six wheels and was highly impressive whilst the STL was, with some early exceptions, 'modern'.

Yet there was a time when the ST was the very latest thing. The standard London General ST had, unlike the earliest LTs, an enclosed staircase, very comfortable seats and internally was a huge advance on its predecessor, the NS. It was admittedly soon outmoded when a longer chassis resulted in the STL class which was still an AEC Regent but over the years was steadily improved as was the body

designs. There were many variations, which included the Tilling ST which DID have an outside staircase and looked fairly archaic, Country Area buses and lowbridge ones. All of these are faithfully recorded and profusely illustrated with an astonishingly varied and superbly reproduced selection of photographs.

It hardly needs to be said that, being a Capital Transport book the quality of layout and the pictures is second to none. The written detail matches this, it is totally comprehensive. There are a few relatively minor criticisms. Although not many there are some colour pictures of STs at work in London and it would have been nice to have these. Mr Blacker writes that 'it has not been possible, within the space available, to give detailed information on chassis, registration or body numbers'. He notes that the PSV Circle and the Omnibus Society published this 30 years ago, but 30 years is a long time back. Similarly introduction and withdrawal dates and would have been appreciated. However those criticisms aside this is a wonderful book, doing justice to a perhaps somewhat overlooked and

yet once so familiar London bus. Just two examples remain, the green standard Country Area ST 821, which is reproduced in colour, and the LBPT's Tilling ST 922 which, as we all know, is the only operational example of the class.

MHCB





To mark the entry of RFs on their first Central Area route 60 years earlier in September 1952 on the 210 Finsbury Park to Golders Green, RF 395 and TD 95 are seen at Hampstead Heath. (Peter Zabek)



Two vehicles from Brooklands took part in the Lord Mayor's Show this year, on 10th November, one of the horse buses and former 'Pirate' Dennis D 142. Accompanied by members of the Tallow Chandlers Company and seen here in Queen Victoria Street, they will, hopefully, have considerably raised the profile of the London Bus Museum amongst the general public. We hope to feature more on this event in the next issue. (David Kinnear)