

COBHAM HALL

# LONDON BUS MUSEUM MAGAZINE



The Journal of the London Bus Preservation Trust, Cobham Hall, Brooklands  
Issue 19

Spring 2016

£4 to non-Members

## 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

Please use the General Enquiries e-mail form on the Museum's website.

### Post

The Museum's postal address is:

London Bus Museum  
Cobham Hall  
Brooklands Road  
WEYBRIDGE KT13 0QS

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](http://www.londonbusmuseum.com)

Twitter: @londonbusmuseum

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/LondonBusMuseum](http://www.facebook.com/LondonBusMuseum)

Charity number: 1053383

Co. Reg: 1061762

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### FRONT COVER PICTURE

**RTL139 heads down  
Whitehall during the  
10th anniversary  
commemorations of  
the end of regular  
Routemaster  
operation in London,  
9th December 2015.**

*(Peter Zabek)*



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, London 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](mailto:michaelhcbaker@londonbusmuseum.com), or by post to the Museum at the address opposite.

**LAST COPY DATE FOR THE  
SUMMER 2016 EDITION  
15th MAY 2016**

## From the Editor

There's nothing quite like riding around London on the upper deck of a London bus. Recently I had to get from Marble Arch to Richmond. The quickest way would probably have been Central Line to Bond Street, Jubilee Line to Waterloo and then South West Trains from there, or maybe Central Line to Notting Hill Gate and then District Line the rest of the way. However not being in any great hurry we decided on the 414 to Putney Bridge, a walk up Putney High Street and then the 337. When I first knew the 414 it ran from West Croydon to Horsham but that's another story. The modern 414 is a derivative of the 14 just as is the 337 of the 37 and going back into the deep past both these routes were operated by the original RTs, the 'pre-war' ones the 2RT2s, call them what you will: bit like not knowing quite what to call the New Routemasters.



Down Park Lane past the assembled coaches from the other side of the Channel, round Hyde Park Corner and into South Kensington our journey took us through the heart of Fulham, which includes Chelsea football ground, no sign of Mr Abramovich nor indeed of Tommy "You Lucky People" Trinder, and we eventually emerged within sight of the Thames where we disembarked. Did you know that Putney Bridge is the only one over the Thames in London which has a church at either end, and ancient ones at that? Trams then trolleybuses were once familiar sights here. Putney High Street was its usual busy Saturday morning self. No sign of F (Putney Bridge) garage but AF (Chelverton Road) is still in business and not long ago I inadvertently paid it a visit when the 93 I was in, sitting at the upstairs front seat of course, turned into it and stopped. As I came down the stairs the driver looked up and began to apologise profusely explaining



that he'd been instructed to cut his journey short and he hadn't realised there was anyone left upstairs. I assured him that it was no hardship to be driven into and alight in a London bus garage. A little while later a number of us made the journey legitimately when RT1 called there on its way back from the 12th April 2014 commemorations posing alongside RT113 after both had worked the 22. Thumbing through my Spring 1950 ABC I see I have underlined just over half the original RTs, 79 to be exact, a total which surprises me somewhat as none ever worked routes which near my home; must have spent more time than I remembered around Putney, which I could reach easily enough on the 630 trolley. If anyone feels like reminiscing about their early bus spotting days please do get in contact, as we'd love to hear from you.

Our ride on the 337 took us along the length of the Upper Richmond Road. This is a fascinating journey if you are NOT in a car and not in a hurry. Part of it comprises the South Circular Road, notorious for its traffic jams at practically any time of the day, and well into the night. Today was no exception but who cared, I was not driving and for perhaps the first time I could really appreciate the great variety of architectural styles on either side of the road. One residence even sported a thatched roof. I wonder if there is another closer into central London? My first recollection of the Upper Richmond Road was Dad and I walking back along to



Putney station to catch the train home after watching the first post-war Boat Race. There was certainly plenty of traffic back then but my chief impression was that it consisted almost entirely of route 37 'pre-war' RTs which were doing a roaring business, each one packed to the gunwales. Checking up I find there were 27 LTs from Nunhead and 29 RTs from Chelverton Road allocated to the 37 in Saturdays but I only had eyes for the RTs. The 337s terminate at Richmond's back street bus station, just as did some of the 37s long ago. Beside it is a delightful little Thai restaurant with an ornate wooden façade; I wonder if it was once refreshment rooms for bus passengers?

Michael H C Baker

Above left: LT494 working route 37 at Clapham Junction in 1947. (Pamlin)

Left: Hammersmith K1 trolleybus No.1273 on Putney Bridge c.1960. (Collection)

Above: RT20 on route 37, Richmond c.1952. (Collection)

## Message from the Chairman

In the Summer 2015 issue (No. 16) of the London Bus Museum Magazine, I commenced my first Chairman's message by paying tribute to Guy Marriott who had retired as chairman of the London Bus Preservation Trust, after taking a major part in consolidating the future of the Trust following the upheaval of the move from Redhill Road. The previous issue (No. 15) had contained an appreciation of Guy's contribution to the Trust.

The publication of this issue will mark approximately the first anniversary of my appointment as a trustee and as chairman, and it is perhaps an appropriate time to record the changes that have taken place during the last twelve months. I start by thanking, and paying tribute to, my fellow trustees and all the volunteers whose efforts have contributed to the success in the museum during this period.

Perhaps the event during the year which may have the most significant effect on our future was the award of accreditation by the Arts Council England. This accreditation provides independent and objective confirmation that our museum is of national standing and meets its high standards, and it is extraordinary that it should have been awarded within five years of the opening of a museum that relies 100% on voluntary support. Few, if any, museums can match this. Accreditation has been hard earned, but is subject to continuing assessment, and the trustees are aware that we cannot relax. We have to maintain, and improve, our standards year on year.

I understand that the inspectors from the Arts Council were 'gobsmacked' when they visited the museum by the quality and quantity of the exhibits, by the building itself, and by the manner in which the buses were displayed and explained to visitors by the volunteers. It is invidious to name individuals who contributed to this success, but I believe that my fellow people will agree that special mention should be made of two trustees. Our Company Secretary, Peter Larkham, faced a herculean task in preparing the mound of paperwork required to satisfy the needs of the Arts Council, whilst Roger Stagg and his team can be proud of the restoration and presentation of the vehicles which so clearly impressed the inspectors.

Amongst the vehicles which wowed the Arts Council were two recent and interesting acquisitions. Low-bridge RLH 48 was purchased by the Trust in April from Richard and Judy Proctor, who had lovingly restored and maintained it for over 30 years, and they were delighted to know that it had come to a good home. The purchase of the green RLH has enabled the trustees to avoid the substantial costs of restoring red RLH 53, but its future has been assured by its sale [to a member] for restoration.

In October, our first trolleybus, on loan (for a minimum of five years) from Sandtoft Museum, arrived to fill a significant gap in our collection. Post World War II Class Q1 No. 1812 was withdrawn by London Transport in 1962 and subsequently operated for a time in Spain, and is already proving of particular interest to visitors who may never have seen a trolleybus before.

Other new exhibits include Dennis Trident TAI, on loan

iding tables

clean the table-tops  
sitting them steady and  
firm legs to legs and  
to tops. If you stack  
up against top then the  
legs get marked.  
Many thanks  
to Helen Green for notes



from Stagecoach London. Stagecoach's Commercial Manager attended with his family formally to hand over the bus. Restoration progress is proceeding apace on RF 19, and on the sole-surviving London Transport canteen trailer, one of 13 custom-built in 1947, to join its Bedford tractor unit. A 'Borismaster' is also now on show, albeit a model loaned by one of our Vice-Presidents, Sir Peter Hendy CBE. We do not have space for a full-sized version, and the need for additional storage space for vehicles is one of the challenges facing the trustees.

Work on the restoration of other vehicles will commence next year, made possible by generous gifts and legacies from supporters. [These include large sums from the Rees-Pulley Trust, from the late Peter Smith and from Mrs. Smith].

Chris Heaps

### THE LONDON BUS PRESERVATION TRUST LIMITED

NOTICE is hereby given that the  
**2016 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
OF THE COMPANY

will be held on  
**Saturday 4th June 2016**

commencing at 2.00 pm

in The Napier Room, Brooklands Museum,  
Brooklands Road, Weybridge, Surrey, KT13 0QS  
by kind permission of Brooklands Museum Trust

# The Story of a Steering Wheel

By Brian A L Jones



In 2014 the Curatorial Section was contacted by Emma Harris, on behalf of her Mother and family, to offer a bus steering wheel which had survived a calamity. As a result of logistical problems related to the mounted steering wheel's location in Norfolk, it was Autumn 2015 when it was eventually delivered to LBM.

The steering wheel was awarded to Bob Newitt, Emma's Father, the bus driver who was driving Leyland Titan T990 on the Aldwych, near the Strand, London, when it was

destroyed by a bomb at 11.38pm on Sunday, 18 February 1996.

The bus, carrying only a few passengers, was operated by London Central on route 171 and bound for its terminus at Holborn Station when an IRA terrorist accidentally triggered the bomb, killing himself instantly. Two passengers were seriously injured, and the driver was permanently deafened by the explosion and also suffered back, chest and pelvic injuries. One of the injured passengers died later in the

year from an asthma attack.

At a subsequent company award ceremony, held at the Green Man, Catford, driver Bob Newitt was presented with the damaged steering wheel from T990 as a token of appreciation 'recognising his bravery and fortitude'.

Bob Newitt, who was 49 years old at the time, had joined London Central, a Go-Ahead company, in 1996, having been a bus driver in Leeds following service in the Coldstream Guards.

After undergoing a pioneering operation at Bradford Hospital to install an implant in his left ear, he sought to help others with hearing problems through the charity LINK Centre for Deafened People in Eastbourne.

Bob died on 7th February 2013. London Bus Museum is indebted to Bob's Widow and Family for choosing to donate to us this sombre reminder of a black day in London's transport history.

The steering wheel is now in a display at LBM organised by Sharon Burton, using a showcase which has had lighting installed by Tony Lewis. Thanks are extended to Graham Lunn, who arranged to pick up the steering wheel from Emma at Carlton Colville, and Sheldon Malcolm of London General, who provided additional information for the display (pictured above).



The remains of T990 after the explosion. (from LT 'On the Move' magazine March 1996)



Bob Newitt, centre, receives the steering wheel from Douglas Adie, former MD of London Central, watched by Martin Ballinger Go-Ahead Group MD.

## Spring Gathering Sunday 17th April

Spring Gathering this year will have the theme 'Celebrating Weymann and Harrington'.

On display will be a wide range of vehicles, with currently about 40 booked to attend - not just London buses, and not just buses and coaches, as both companies built other types of vehicle too.

There will be an indoor exhibition with displays of archive material and pictures. Tours will be run using Weymann-bodied vehicles to the sites of the main Weymann factory and also the special factory, known as J-Building, rented for the RT contract.

**Make sure you have 17th April in your diary!**

# From the Workshop

By Roger Stagg

Winter weather and illness have not been the harbingers of significant progress in the workshop in the past three months. Nevertheless progress continues with the Canteen trailer moving forward with the installation of its window surrounds on the offside and the frameworks of seats and tables being erected in the front section. Whilst it might seem to some to be somewhat advanced in erecting these they do need to be trial fitted before the lino and interior panels are installed after which they will be permanently fixed down.

Originally a small Stuart Turner generator was fitted into an external compartment at the rear providing power for interior lights. Whilst we did have the bare outline of the engine it was very much incomplete and rather beyond salvation. However a new member and volunteer directed us towards a similar set that he knew of in working order and this has now been secured.

With most of the external bodywork panels now fitted RF19 is moving forward to the installation of beadings and strappings. The mainly rotted away outer mudguards have been rebuilt and with completion of the driver's window mechanism these will be fitted shortly. Inside, the crew are looking at lino panels so overall progress is very advanced.

The mechanical end of the workshop has been a hive of activity with RTW29 which we had on temporary loan receiving a lot of attention to bring it up to a good PCV standard. STL2377 is 'sans le moteur' at present but the oil leak from the camshaft has been dealt with and the cylinder heads are about to be replaced. The steering box has been removed and a new top bearing fitted which should assist in curing the steering wander from which it suffered.



The lower deck panelling in place on NS174. (MHCB)



'Coming and Going'. A last view of RLH 53 which has been sold to a member, whilst in front is the model 'Borismaster' mentioned in the Chairman's report. (MHCB)

Winter would at one time have been the 'out of service' period but we seem to have as many buses on the road now in winter as in summer so regular Class 6 inspections as well as MoT's create a lot of work for the mechanical team.



STL 2377's engine exposed. (MHCB)

Lower deck panelling on NS174 is now complete and beading is being applied. Meanwhile, erection of the first stage of the outside staircase balustrade has taken place and we are faced with the prospect of the installation of 100's of rivets. Later models had a much easier wire rolled edge but earlier models featured a riveted angle edge to reinforce the curve. The brass handrail forms a major part of stabilising the lower section of the balustrade but the current cost is ridiculous and the standard of material is not conducive to bending the curves involved. More headaches! Upper deck side panel support brackets have now been fabricated and the timber for the side panels themselves has been delivered.

ST922 has gone off for work on its AEC 6 cylinder petrol engine which seems to have suffered from the effects of modern, too higher octane, lead-free petrol. When it returns it will feature valve seats more suitable for the petrol we can now purchase. Look forward to a big feature on the vehicle later this year.

Surplus vehicle RLH53 was offered for sale in the last issue and was subject to two offers from members. It is now sold and left the Museum on 24th February for restoration following a check over of its mechanicals and repair to the handbrake to ensure it was suitable for a suspended front end tow. We look forward to seeing it 'in service' in the future.

Well that all for now folks and I'll sign off by looking forward to seeing many of you at Spring Gathering.

## Provisional dates for your diaries - Members' Trips

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Saturday 2nd April                  | Detling Rally  |
| Sunday 1st May                      | HCVS Brighton Rally  |
| Sunday 15th May                     | CPPTD Portsmouth<br>Private Visit  |
| Saturday 21st May                   | Black Country Living<br>Museum – Tram and<br>Trolleybus operating<br>(see page 14 for details) |
| Sunday 31st July                    | Worthing Bus Rally/<br>Running Day   |
| Saturday 20th August                | Imberbus   |
| Saturday/Sunday 15th & 16th October | IoW<br>Beer and Buses Weekend<br>– Overnight stay.   |
| Saturday 5th November               | Thames Valley Great<br>Western Omnibus Trust<br>Private Visit                                  |

Booking forms are available for each trip. Please send an sae for each outing required or email Adrian Palmer, Heathside, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 9YL akpalmer@...net or call 07774 871

The members section of the website will contain details when available

## Faversham Transport weekend 21st/22nd May 2016 Town Centre displays of all types of vehicles

Saturday 21st May 10 am – 4 pm.  
Bus Running Day. Bus & Commercial vehicle on street display.  
Sunday 22nd.  
Car and motorcycle display around the Town Centre.  
Entry forms from Roland Graves.  
Ashkeys, Vigo Village, Gravesend, Kent DA13 0SL  
rolyg@...com

STL2692 at the 2013 Faversham Transport festival. (MHCB)



Corrections: John Lines has reminded us that the picture of RML2346 at West Croydon in the last issue cannot be early 1966 as it bears the legend 'London Country' and must therefore be post 1970.

## 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@...com or Bob Bailey on 01483 006, email: bailey.bunch16@...com?

# Route 159

By MHC B

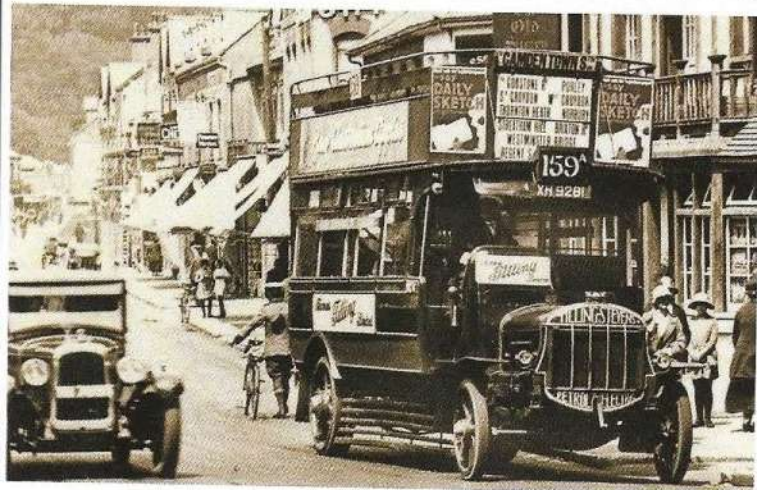
One has to be wary of relying on childhood memories. I'll give you an example. In my primary school days the 59A which ran between Addiscombe and Camden Town, Monday to Fridays and passed the top of our road was worked exclusively by STLs. Some were the older, sit up



A highbridge ECW/Bristol K type, a Streatham (AK) STL2257 and an Old Kent Road (P) LT at the side of Croydon (TC) garage c.1949. (Collection)

house and many others had been built there around 1930.

However I was wrong. Poor Malcolm died long ago. After leaving Winterbourne Primary school the 11 plus took him to Dulwich College, then a job with Wills Tobacco and he died of cancer at the age of 35, not from smoking but, ironically, skin cancer contracted in the tobacco plantations of the West Indies. However I keep in contact with another primary school friend, Clive, who despite living in Australia has a close eye on happenings in London and has contributed more than once to this magazine - our Sydney correspondent. I had e-mailed him about the Trust taking part in the 159 running day on 9th



A Tilling-Stevens petrol electric in Caterham c.1926. (Collection)



RT 160 sets off from Thornton Heath terminus in 1970, by which time it was the lowest numbered RT in the fleet. (MHC B)

December last and he replied, commenting on the 'line of LTs' and later 'OLD registered RTLs' he remembered vividly at the Clock Tower terminus. Goodness knows why I have no memory of this, especially as I had a soft spot for the LT, six-wheels were after all rather exotic and I was always on the look out for them on the 12, the 130 and the 194 'up the town' in central Croydon.

With the guidance of Colin Read from a e-mail he sent



A Thomas Tilling STL at West Croydon c.1932. (Collection)

and beg variety, the majority were the later, gently sloping, smooth fronted ones and all oil engined. I always considered the 59A as more or less the twin brother of the 159. This latter's southern terminus, Monday to Fridays was Thornton Heath Clock Tower. At Norbury, just past the boundary between the County Borough of Croydon and that of the London County Council, it met the 59A and the two continued companionably from there on all the way into the heart of London by way of Streatham, Brixton, and Lambeth Bridge, and so eventually to Camden Town. The 59A stayed faithful to the STL until RTs arrived in 1951 and so, I believed, did the 159 for I travelled on it occasionally when visiting with my friend Malcolm whose Granny lived on Green Lane along which the 159 ran. It was, indeed, the only route to serve a road which had been something of a rural byway, the last bit of countryside between London and my home borough until Malcolm's granny's council



The penultimate RTL 1630 of Camberwell (Q) at the Thornton Heath Clock Tower terminus c.1960. (Collection)





Streatham RM 455 in the company of two Catford (TL) RTs at West Croydon in 1975. (MHCB)



Two Silver Jubilee RMs with SRM23 from Streatham (AK) garage turning into Oxford Street, 1st July 1977. (MHCB)

at 3am one January morning, there's devotion to the cause - I discovered that the 159 had been worked by STs and LTs at various points in its history in London Transport days and that the final flourish of the LT was from November 1947 until December 1949. It was Streatham (AK) garage which provided the STLs but when the northern terminus of the 159 (and the 59A) was changed from Camden Town to West Hampstead in November, 1947 - for some reason this change greatly annoyed me for I felt that Camden Town had more of a ring about it than West Hampstead, not that I'd visited either - extra vehicles were needed hence Old Kent Road (P), which shared the 159 with AK, transferred LTs to it. In the event the 159 and the 53A were the very last routes to operate LTs through the centre of London, the type ending passenger service on 11th January 1950 from Upton Park (U). As we noted in the last issue the only survivor is LT165 which as far as I know never worked the 159.

RT family vehicles took over both the 59A and the 159 in 1951. In 1954 Camberwell garage (Q) assumed



For a time Brixton's (BN) Routemasters working the 159 were adorned in a unique red and cream livery. RM1361 is outside the Houses of Parliament in 1994. (MHCB)



Golden Jubilee RM6 heads for Streatham in the summer of 2002. (MHCB)

responsibility, along with Streatham, for the 159 and its RTLs were a feature for ten years until 1964 when mass withdrawal of the Leylands had begun. The long reign of the Routemaster on the 159 began in 1970 and, as we all know, would last until 9th December, 2005 by which time it was the last home of this iconic bus. Over the years, as with virtually all routes linking the suburbs with the capital, it has been shortened and modified and so today runs between Marble Arch and Streatham Station. Three days after the commemoration runs Abellio took over the 159 from Arriva, the buses operating it being the latest group of New Routemasters, LTs 602-640.

That's right LTs have returned to the 159!



On 8th December 2005, the day before the final day of Routemasters on the 159, a wonderful variety of preserved London buses appeared on the route. Among them was the very last Routemaster, RML2760, which is now on long term loan to LBM, and, oldest of all, the Trust's Thomas Tilling outside staircase ST922. (MHCB)

# The End of the Routemaster in London - Route 159 Commemoration

By MHCBC



Drivers Simon Douglas Lane and Colin Fradd pose before setting off from Brooklands. (MHCBC)

On Wednesday 9th December last the Trust marked the 10th anniversary of the end of London's final ordinary Routemaster-operated route, the 159, from Streatham to Marble Arch. Four buses departed from Brooklands early on what turned out to be a cold but brilliantly sunny morning, identical as it happened to that December day ten years earlier. They were TAI, representing the 'new era' of low floor buses but already part of the Museum loan collection, green RT3491, RTL139 and RML2760. The latter, the very last Routemaster, on long term loan from Stagecoach, had also taken part in the events of 9th December 2005. A number of other preserved London buses joined the contingent from Brooklands and some are illustrated here. The 159 is a long established route, closely related to the 59, 59A and the 59B, all of which go back to Thomas Tilling days and were once worked from Croydon (TC) garage. Claterham, deep into what became the Country Area, was once its southern terminus but by the 1940s this on Monday to Fridays was Thornton Heath Clock Tower, extended on Saturdays to South Croydon and on Sundays to Old Coulsdon. The northern terminus was Camden Town. Soon after the end of the Second World War this was altered to West Hampstead. As traffic congestion grew both in central London and the suburbs, so the 159 was altered and shortened. Today it no longer reaches what was the County Borough of Croydon, its southern terminus being Streatham Station whilst its northern terminus is Marble Arch.



The crew of RML2760, Conductor Derek Hanlon and Driver Colin Fradd, discuss the day so far at the Lambeth North terminus. (MHCBC)



RT3491 leads a modern interloper along Oxford Street. (MHCBC)



RML2760 complete with your editor and your IT editor, John Villers, caught in Whitehall by the camera of Graham Smith, the magazine's proofreader.



Late in the evening after a successful day's running in central London, RML2760 is about to head back home from Marble Arch. (MHCBC)



Seen from the top deck of RML2760 are four 159s for the price of one at Waterloo. (MHCBC)



A few weeks after the event, we see the new order on the 159, with LT610 at Marble Arch 6th February 2016. (MHCBC)

# Memories evoked by the Winter 2015 LBM Magazine

By Peter Dann

Living in the depths of Sussex, but with relatives in Middlesex, regular journeys were made in the Fifties and early Sixties to London in a Southdown Express coach, beginning with Leyland PSIs then Commer Beadles and, latterly, the first 36-foot Harrington bodied Leyland Leopards.



A Southdown Express Leyland PSI No. 1348 passing Thornton Heath Granada. (Alan B Cross)

Aiming to claim the whole of the back seat, even though I suffered travel sickness, I would enlist the help of my family in calling out the fleet numbers of the numerous red buses we hurtled past from Caterham on in. If only those numbers were as simple as my local Southdown 'cars' and the coach lighting a little brighter, I would have been able to decipher later more of what I



A photograph taken by the author from his front gate at Blackboys in 1967 of Southdown Leopard 167.

had written down!

A particularly memorable trip was on the last weekend in 1961, when we stayed in Pinner rather than the usual Eastcote or Ruislip Manor. Unfortunately, New Year's Eve fell on the Sunday and, in pre-New Year bank holiday days, my father had to return to work the next day. We were blessed in those days with an 11pm coach from Victoria right to our front gate. To make matters worse it started to snow heavily so we needed to set out earlier than usual as we foresaw travel difficulties. The Underground was struggling and we were advised to leave the system at Baker Street. We were now at the mercy of route 2, although my first recorded ride on a red Central Area bus should have lifted my spirits. We proceeded like 'a slow boat to China' (my father's words at the time) along the snow-covered roads to Victoria. It was now about 10.50 and we still had to scale Buckingham Palace Road. We flew slipping, sliding and straggling towards the Coach Station. The clock said 10.55. We had made it! But, disaster, as we entered the building our coach was coming out. We recognised the driver, he must have recognised us as regular passengers, but he ignored us. Presumably, all he had on his mind was the drive home to Eastbourne over the Downs and Ashdown Forest along the tortuous A22. The station inspector was sympathetic but inevitably quoted regulations stating that running up to five minutes early was allowed in exceptional circumstances.

I now had an inkling as to how refugees must feel as we headed, cold and dejected, back towards Victoria Station, uncertain that the Underground could return us to Pinner and shelter for the night. We would have had no money for a hotel room even if one was available. But, then, our saviour! As we reached Eccleston Bridge, we looked, more in hope than expectation, at the timetable for Green Line route 703 to Amersham - via Pinner. Unbelievably, the last departure was still to come, at 11.15, but would it make it from Wrotham on such a night? It did, just a few minutes late and we clambered aboard that beautiful RF and gingerly made our way in a north-westerly direction, precisely the opposite to what we really wanted. We saw the New Year in as we passed the Jubilee Clock at Harlesden when the coach was running only 20 minutes late. We passed Stonebridge Park Depot and saw, for the last time, for me, trolleybuses which were coming in for the night. 48 hours later Routemasters were to replace these trolleybuses.

I was 12 years old, and it was not until I was 13 later that summer, that I was allowed to travel to London, always by Southdown coach and armed with my precious Red Rover pass, by which time all trolleybuses had gone. I loved them and pursued them



Leyland National coach SNC85 outside East Grinstead garage in 1975. Behind is former Green Line RF75 downgraded to bus work. (MHCBC)

avidly each time another route was converted. Back to the story and we eventually reached Pinner some four hours after leaving the party, and joy of joys, the party was in full swing. Chubby Checker had recently released his smash hit 'Let's Twist Again', and did we dance!

The next morning, more out of gratitude than expediency, we chose to support Green Line route 703 for our journey back to Victoria. The coach stop and Pinner Underground Station were both in sight of the newsagent's shop in Marsh Road above which we had stayed. Metropolitan Line trains rumbled spasmodically overhead as we waited, and waited, under the bridge, ankle-deep in slush, cold and dejected again, and to add to my woes, a build-up of snow on the coach stop partially melted, fell and covered me. We toughed it out and we were finally rewarded when a trusty RF hove into view at about 1pm, possibly the first of the day from Amersham, and we were on our way.

In 1978 I found myself driving Leyland Nationals for London Country at East Grinstead on Green Line Route 708, which in April of that year became Route 719, coincidentally the number that had previously replaced the Wrotham leg of the 703. The only benefit of this change for the driver I could see was that when we reached Garston Garage running an hour late after a tortuous journey through Central London pre-Congestion Charging the driver who 'swung' your coach to Hemel Hempstead bought the same coach back to you, so you got at least 40 minutes of your hour's break. At Two Waters Garage on the 708, you were scheduled to return with the coach that had run an hour ahead of you the longer distance to Aylesbury and back, so that when you were an hour late and that coach was on time it could already be waiting across the road. At this point, duty inspectors mysteriously disappeared and it was left to the hapless driver to break the news to the passengers on board that there would be a further delay of 30 minutes while you took your statutory break. I did not enjoy my meal break at Two Waters on those occasions!

One problem with Leyland Nationals was the air pipes freezing up. You knew you were in trouble when the 'Handbrake' light came on the dash. I recall one such occasion when travelling North along Gloucester Place.

That light came on, it meant that if you applied the handbrake you would probably not be able to take it off again. I circled Hyde Park Corner and returned to Eccleston Bridge. Hardly without asking what my problem was, the inspector directed me to the sunny side of the street to join a line of other Green Line Nationals. It was then off to Gillingham Street Garage canteen to find the rest of the drivers and to wait for the midday sun to defrost our vehicles. And Leyland Nationals were meant to be so high tech!

On New Year's Eve 1978, guess what? ... it snowed again! I was working a late shift on Route 719, which was due to finish in time for me to get home, get changed and meet friends to see in the New Year. Just short of Kilburn, I started to freeze up. I found a phone box, called for help and returned to the coach to wait. I naively thought assistance might come from nearby Willesden or Cricklewood Garages or, at worst, from Garston. But no, the only available running-shift crew was at Two Waters, and I just knew they would not be too keen on coming all that way on such a night. The way running-shifts reasoned was that, on receiving a call, they immediately took a tea break. The rationale for this was that there was a chance that the driver might return to his vehicle, try again and find all was well, so a wasted journey was avoided. On the other hand, once committed there was no knowing when the next tea break was coming. Some very charitable residents from the flats brought me out hot drinks and I waited and waited. Those fitters must have had a full dinner before setting out, as they took over three hours to reach me. And when they did arrive, the remedy for my frozen pipes was astonishing. They literally lit a small bonfire under the coach using oily rags. The heat generated did the trick and I was mobile again. I later learned that investment in a special anti-freeze could solve this problem. By now, the last coach had already gone through, so I turned around and headed for home 'dead', ie 'out of service'. But it was New Year's Eve and I was determined to celebrate the occasion, so I decided that, wherever I was at midnight, I would stop and find a pub. So what if there were rules. With minutes to spare I reached Purley, where I pulled up and dashed into the nearest pub, 'The Jolly Farmers', grabbed a drink, sang Auld Lang Syne with the assembled crowd, then leapt back into my coach, praying it would start again, and headed for East Grinstead Garage, and on home to Uckfield, a happy man.

That winter, the so-called 'Winter of Discontent', saw a lot of snow and treacherous roads, particularly around Croydon, where the strikes by council staff were especially effective. Crucially, this included gritting lorry drivers. One freezing evening, on finishing my shift at East Grinstead at about 7pm, the depot inspector asked me to cover a missing Garston running as far as Victoria. I had a

break then set off with little problem until reaching Croydon, where the roads were literally 'like a skating rink'. The coach slipped and slid through the Borough and I soon sensed something wasn't quite right? Understandably, there was virtually no other traffic, just as well with the coach sliding all over the road, but there were no red buses either. I reached Victoria expecting to be congratulated on getting through, only to be greeted by the duty inspector, who was locking up his cabin, berating my garage, through me, for not heeding a message for all buses and coaches in London to be off the road by 9pm. I was instructed to return 'dead' to East Grinstead as quickly as possible. Now, as I reached Brixton, revellers were just starting to leave the bars and restaurants to catch their bus home. But no buses, so what could be done? I had always fancied myself driving a red bus route, so that evening a wish came true as I operated a totally unofficial, unrecorded, route 109. I charged no fares, I was going their way anyway! That evening I had some of the most grateful passengers I ever saw and the extra weight would have helped on the icy roads.

Just a few days later I was operating the 7am service from East Grinstead, always a busy journey as it was due at Victoria at 8.50am. This morning, however, because of the continuing freezing weather, all Southern Region trains were grounded and that meant chaos, both from the extra cars on the icy roads and from the extra passengers needing to travel. I picked up as many passengers as I could squeeze in - London Country missed a trick by not substituting a double decker, possibly an XF, for the usual SNC. I picked my way through the still untreated roads of Croydon and continued through a relatively clear Borough of Lambeth. By now I was making good progress, but life all too often is not that simple. I do not think I was being over-confident as I breasted Eccleston Bridge only about 40 minutes late, but then what is the duty inspector doing running towards me waving his arms wildly? The 'Bridge' was covered in black ice and any driver knows that is bad news. Suddenly, all I could see in my off-side mirror was the green of the coach coming round - short Leyland Nationals had their batteries in the back as well as the engine, not a stable combination. I steered into the skid, there was no time to pray, the coach straightened up, the wheels ran parallel against the high kerb and miraculously we juddered to a halt in a relatively orderly fashion. The passengers, who were virtually all on their feet ready to disembark, came tumbling forward, I flicked the doors open and, as I came to learn with rail passengers, they were all gone in seconds without so much as a word. The next thing I remember was sitting in the inspector's cabin with a strong cup of tea laced with rum, the recommended antidote for shock!

We survived the winter of 1978, but sadly not the summer. The five routes which once had proudly provided six coaches per hour through Thornton Heath had been reduced to just one unreliable hourly coach, and that was often a bus-seated SNB. It fell to me to drive the last southbound journey, although I was scheduled to operate the penultimate journey, the 'semi-ghost' as it was known, but that had, as was too often the

case, been cancelled due to driver shortage. Whatever did or did not operate before, the last, or 'ghost', bus had to run. A couple of enthusiasts travelled part way with me and, of course, I stopped a few times to allow them to take photos. I noticed a lot more enthusiasts on the last Garston working northbound and have wondered if they took photos and if they were ever published. It was a sad end of to a noble era.

I soldiered on driving the replacement 409 Express between East Grinstead and West Croydon until November, but it was not the same. If I wanted to drive local buses, including the long-established 409, I may as



**A Southdown PD3, These worked into East Grinstead from the south and, indeed, three were actually loaned to London Country and worked into East Grinstead from the north on the 409.**

*(Peter Dann)*



**Reigate Garage's AN181, their only contribution to Routes 409 and 411, when new.**

*(Peter Dann)*

well take advantage of the new agreement between London Country and Southdown on inter-company transfers, after ten years of the National Bus Company, and work in my home town of Uckfield, a traditional bus town. This was a good move as East Grinstead Garage sadly closed on 31st December 1981 and Uckfield outstation, despite many ups and downs, is still operational under Brighton & Hove. I retired from there in 2013 after 34 years.

## Letter



I thought you might be interested in the description I gave a local group recently of a pre-war bus journey from Purley to Old Coulsdon in a country area ST -

A day or so later I am taken to my new school - by 409 green bus. My parents have bought a bunch of pre-paid tickets; I have to give one to the conductor each day and he in return gives me a Child ticket after having punched a hole in it in his belt-mounted punch which gives a pleasant 'ping' as he does so.

Coming back from school is fun. You want to get to the front seat upstairs and as it turns off the main Brighton Road to dive under the railway line you can see as it approaches that the bus will never get under that low girder bridge. But of course it does and then begins the long climb up a steep hill. Before long we are looking down on the railway line we had previously gone under; the bus is getting slower and slower as the driver has to change down to the lowest gear to get the heavily-laden vehicle up the long

slope. We reach Hartley Down where the road levels out for a bit and the driver brings the bus to a stop; he has to - as steam is coming out of the radiator at the front. Clearly this has happened before as there at the bus stop is a watering-can which the driver gets to pour cold water into the hot radiator.

Eventually we reach Old Coulsdon and I get off and scamper down to our new home. The house smells new - of freshly-laid bricks and new plaster and wall-paper.

Best wishes,  
Grenville Williams



A Godstone (GD) Country Area ST1041 outside Caterham station c.1940.

(Collection)

## MEMBERS' EXCURSION

to the Black Country Living Museum with RP90\* Saturday 21st May 2016

Ticket(s) £25 each for the excursion to the BCLM. (Maximum 3 per member initially). This covers travel in each direction and basic admission charge. This outing is to the Black Country Living Museum in the West Midlands. A tram and a trolleybus will be operating. There are plenty of attractions within the site. (note some are extra charge). We should have around 4 hours at the destination. We will leave Brooklands at 08.00 and can pick up/set down at Weybridge station on request. RP90 will return directly to Brooklands by early evening.

There will be a 15 min. comfort stop in each direction. Please park in the Brooklands Museum public parking by the main Museum Visitor Entrance and wait at the bus stop at Vickers Bridge (close to Concorde). \*Vehicle shown will run subject to availability and may be substituted in case of need.

Please contact Adrian Palmer, 46 Heathside, WEYBRIDGE KT13 9YL. If you have any questions, please email Adrian at [akpalmer@talktalk.net](mailto:akpalmer@talktalk.net) or, in extremis, call him on 07774 859871.

Brian Jones has supplied this mystery RT picture and asks if anyone can locate the setting.  
(Collection)



# Route 2 Road Run

By Graham Smith

The record books show February 1956 was a cold and snowy month in London but its gloomy streets were brightened somewhat on the 8th when RMI entered passenger service. At last, and some 16 months after it had been displayed at the Commercial Motor Show, we the public, could ride on the prototype Routemaster, London's 'Bus of the Future'.

Golders Green bus station was the start point for its debut, on route 2, which in those days ran to Crystal Palace. RMI was allocated to Cricklewood garage and shared the route with 16 RTs (M-F) and a further 35 RTLs from Stockwell.

In his excellent book "Routemaster Volume One 1954-1969" (pub: Capital Transport, 1991), Ken Blacker records: "As was only to be expected for so revolutionary a design, RMI's first spell in service was far from a total success". Passengers complained about its uncomfortable foam-filled seats, the spongy nature of the ride and the noisy downstairs saloon, while there was excessive front tyre wear and problems with the radiator, front brakes and shock-absorbers. Also, drivers disliked the heavy steering. After six months of this invaluable in-service experience, RMI returned to Chiswick Works for extensive modifications which included a complete rebuild of its front-end, reappearing in March 1957 for further service.

Every five years the Routemaster Association celebrates RMI's entry into service with a road run of members' buses over route 2, so this year's 60th Anniversary was not to be missed. The London Transport Museum ensured that RMI would be available and, also, we at LBM were contacted for RML2760 to join in. In both cases, working volunteer members were invited to ride.

By prior agreement both buses called at Cricklewood garage for photographs en route to Golders Green, probably the first time RMI had visited its former home for many years. LTM's Green Line RCL2229, the ultimate in Routemaster luxury, also joined the celebrations.

With TfL's permission - well, we did have Leon Daniels, TfL's Surface Transport Managing Director at the wheel of RMI which helped - all three buses parked inside Golders Green bus station for further photographs and the opportunity for crews and passengers to use the facilities available there. We'd been told Crystal Palace Park was loo-less so woe betide anyone who didn't heed the advice!

Ringling off on time at 10:15 we made our way south, and arrived for a brief photo-stop at Victoria 45 mins later after a fairly traffic-free run. Consulting a 1956 timetable, however, showed route 2's schedule only allowed 35 mins for the same run ... and that's for buses which stopped to pick up and set down passengers! Presumably it's the big increase in the number of sets of traffic lights causing this timing difference.

Then we were off again and soon arrived in Brixton, busy as ever with people shopping in the colourful street markets. We turned left down Atlantic Road and along

Railton Road towards Herne Hill as route 2 would have done in RMI's time, unlike the present-day route which goes via Effra Road (now, there are memories with that name) and Tulse Hill.

Crystal Palace looked bright and sunny when we arrived at the 2016 scheduled time of 11:45. Unlike in 1956 buses no longer lay over in The Parade as there is now a bus station there, but we recreated old times for a few minutes before heading to the Coach Park where the other participants were assembling. Now it was time to get off the buses and meet up with friends old and new. In total there were 15 Routemasters in the display, viz. RM 1, 5, 158, 357, 545, 1397, 1859, 2097, 2116 & 2208, RML 883, 2323 & 2760, and RCL 2229 & 2254, some looking as new as the day they were delivered.

Ten minutes before RMI's scheduled departure time of 14:00, rain started to fall and, as if by magic, all our passengers reappeared enabling a prompt getaway on the short working to Victoria. Most of our passengers alighted there, leaving just a few to journey back to Acton via Hammersmith and Chiswick. Arrival back at Acton Depot was 15 minutes ahead of time, a pleasant surprise.

Thanks are due to all those from the Routemaster Association, LTM and LBM who organised and participated in the day. Now, who's up for the 65th in February 2021?





Opposite page: Conductor Graham Smith and Driver Leon Daniels, Managing Director, Surface Transport, Transport for London at Crystal Palace. (MHCb)

Above: The early morning winter's sun illuminates LT494, RML2760 and RMI at Cricklewood Garage. (Graham Smith)

Right: RMI at Golders Green. (Graham Smith)

Below: RMI arrives at Crystal Palace - where London, Kent and Surrey meet. (MHCb)

Bottom left: RMI and RCL2229 pose for the cameras on Crystal Palace Parade. (MHCb)

Bottom right: RMI backs into position to park alongside RM5 with a glimpse of the stone ballustrades that once graced the Crystal Palace before it burned down in 1936. (MHCb)





## Membership and Volunteering

2016 is beginning to look like being a momentous year for our Museum. Having acquired full accreditation from Arts Council England late last year we have a springboard for enhancing our status and many opportunities to secure improvements in both back and front of house activities. News of future developments appears elsewhere in this issue.

Exciting times lie ahead for us through the potential for increased membership of the Trust and volunteer recruitment. In addition we shall see significant progress on vehicle restoration, IT systems plus educational and other enhancements to the visitor experience.

Our members started the year with the annual New Year's lunch at Silvermere Golf Club. Eighty-seven of us attended an excellent event with

great company and food; said by some to have been the best yet. 13th March saw our third Members' Day at LBM, providing bus rides on rarely used vehicles, talks, and workshop tours.

The Members' bus trips run by Adrian Palmer have continued to be well supported. RML2760 carried members and volunteers commemorating the 60th anniversary of RMI's inaugural journey running on route 2 from Golders Green to Crystal Palace.

New volunteers are taking up posts in the workshop and other areas with the possibility of more in the pipeline. Welcome to Malcolm Gent, our newly appointed Fundraising Manager, who has been plunged in at the deep end working on grant applications and the appeal for funds to restore Weymann bodied T357.

Our three main annual events

promise to be rather special this year, particularly the Trust's 50th anniversary celebrations at TransportFest in October. Spring Gathering will be particularly challenging to staff this year. We shall need a lot of volunteers to ensure that incoming vehicles are correctly directed to their display area, visitors' cars are sent to the appropriate car park and Brooklands staff on revenue collection and site security are adequately supported.

If you haven't volunteered at this event before now is your chance to make a difference to this most important occasion in the bus rally calendar. Please email me through the LBM web site or leave a phone message on the Museum number and I will get back to you. I wish you all a successful year; onward and upward!

Steve Edmonds

## Bromley gets the UMP

By David Bowker

Christmas shoppers heading to Bromley on Sunday 13th December had a pleasant surprise when an RF turned up instead of their normal low-floor bus. It was the annual Bromley running day, organised by the Red RF group in which several of the type ran on route 227 between Crystal Palace and Bromley North. In attendance were RFs368, 429 and 486.

RMI397 and RT1702 were also out on route 94, recreating the former route between Petts Wood and Lewisham/Brockley Rise, via Bromley (which was withdrawn in September 1982) but did not run north of

Grove Park.

For those who like newer vehicles, former Metrobus Dart No.334 and former First Bus DMS356 were running in the area on a private charter and were not part of the Bromley Running Day. However, the DMS was a Marshall-bodied Dennis Dart and not the double-deck bus of the 1970s.

London Bus Museum had intended to send TD95 but it could not be started in the morning. Instead Robin Helliar-Symons and Colin Read took UMP, which performed duties on route 227 in the afternoon. It was the first time this had been used on a Central bus route and was very popular with enthusiasts. Whilst 'normal' passengers were quite ready to hop on to an RF, they needed a lot of persuasion to get on board an un-blinded green bus, but the offer of a free ride soon changed their minds. Full credit to the crew for getting the bus out in the first place, who could just as easily have given up and taken nothing. However, the route number was in the registration plate UMP 227.

For me, old buses running in normal service is the most enjoyable part of being a bus enthusiast and it is great to see people who know nothing about buses enjoying the rides on well-kept vehicles.



UMP227 in Bromley.

(David Bowker)



Left: RTL 1411 on route 78 crossing Tower Bridge c.1963.



(MHCB)

Right: With its paint scarcely dry, a brand new Arriva Enviro400H City, which uses ADL's hybrid MMC chassis, at the same celebrated location on 24th February 2016.

(John Villers)

## Membership Renewals

For Members who pay by cheque/BACS this is a reminder that your subscription is due in the next 6 months, the month of your renewal has been included.

The following subscriptions are due between April - June 2016

If payment is not received by June 2016 then it will be presumed that you do not wish to renew and this will be your final magazine but many thanks for your support.

906	David Aldridge	May	98	Anthony Evans	April	1218	Ewen Pring	May
1898	James Burton	June	442	Alan Greenwood	April	1899	Brian Rosher	June
1440	Brian Chaplin	April	292	Christopher Hart	May	1693	David Rowbotham	June
20	Alan Charman	April	1746	Mark Jameson	April	1238	Michael Selby	June
1894	Wayne Collings	April	1642F	William Jones	June	1888	Robin Spalding	April
1147	Peter Comfort	June	2646	Edwin Knorn	May	1696	Cyril Theobald	June
96	Peter Cousens	April	956	Anne Letch	April	676	Allan Thompson	April
1765	David de Wilde	June	101	John Lines	April	1748	David Thrower	April
1893	Michele Terrence		1549	Grahame Lockyer	April	1220	Donald Whiting	June
	Devino	April	1834	David Munkenbeck	May	325	Robert Williamson	April
						1749F	B Withers	April

The following subscriptions are due between July - September 2016

367F	Graham Baker	July	1566	Stephen Dooley	July	1844	Steven Morris	July
1906C	Jeff & Neelima Bower	July	1778	Paul Furze	July	1907F	Ray & William	July
1573	Sydney Brown	July	1900	Harold Greatwood	July		Osborne	Aug
607	Michael Cheney	Aug	1901	John Happs	July	903A	Ultan O'Sullivan	Aug
1853	Geoffrey Cumbers	Sept	1777F	Eric & Sandra Jones	July	1586	Roy Spurgeon	July
			503	Thomas Jones	Sept	1645	Mike Sutcliffe	July

My apologies if you have renewed and please ignore these reminders.

Completing a Direct Debit will save both you and us considerable time. The form can be downloaded from the website under 'join us' or you can write to me and I will send you one. If you wish to pay by cheque, please make it out to LBPT Ltd and send to the Museum.

NB the following members pay by Standing Order please remember to check your standing order has been changed to the current subscription rates - see below

377	David Christian	1022	Herbert Rogers	489	Eric St C. Stobart
950	Peter Dann	1372	Ivor Seymour	242	Richard Summers
1165	John Hicks	243	David Spratt		

### Current Membership Rates:

Individual - £33

Couple - £50

Family - £65 (2 adults and 3 children under 16)

Any queries then please write to me c/o London Bus Museum.

For members who pay by Direct Debit or Standing Order between January - March your card should be with this magazine if not then please contact me. Please check the envelope - **it's a small card in a large envelope.**

If you want your membership card early then please send a SAE marked for my attention and I will send you your card.

Debbie Morris  
Membership Manager

# LONDON BUSES



## A LIVING HERITAGE

### Fifty Years of the London Bus Museum

Graham Smith



1966-2016

A book celebrating 50 years of the London Bus Preservation Group/Trust is currently being written. It shows the development of the London Bus from the horse-bus to the present day; vehicles in LBM's and other major collections, and ones that got away; the determination, energy and humour of the founders, and of those who have followed in their footsteps; and much more besides. Silver Link Publishing Ltd are known for their many nostalgic books on road and rail transport. They plan to offer the book in two versions, a softback with 128 pages and 200+ illustrations, and a hardback Subscribers' edition with 160 pages and 250+ illustrations, due for launching at LBM's TransportFest event on 23rd October 2016.