

# LONDON BUS MUSEUM

1972 Cobham Bus  
Museum  
2022 London Bus  
Museum

# Magazine

The Journal of the  
London Bus  
Preservation Trust

Issue 45 Autumn 2022

£4 to non-members



LBM on the Road  
"On the Buses" Gathering  
Trolleybi Finalé



## Editorial

### Dave Jones

I can well believe that “may you live in interesting times” was meant as a curse, given the current state of almost everything from prices to weather. TfL’s situation is also interesting at present, with politicians again talking money. The side-effects of all this also impinge on our hobby, more expensive fuel for buses, and for travel to the museum, so a massive thanks is due to those who persevere in turning up to open the doors (and let the heat out!).

The Museum has had a busy few months, with warm, sunny weather, which is unheard of, as reflected in the photos contained herein and in Richard Hastings’ excellent E-News.

In this issue we have the last part of Michael Baker’s record of the end of London’s trolleybus operations. I am grateful for his regular contributions,

but now it’s time for others to put fingers to keyboard in order to keep the magazine full of interesting items. The cupboard is looking a bit sparse!

While much has been written about vehicles, it’s the people that made LT what it was, so I especially enjoy personal recollections of former staff, drivers, engineers, whoever. LT will never be the same, so it’s important to gather information on how it was for the benefit of future generations. As a rough guide, 1000 words and five photos will fill two pages. Longer items can, of course, be serialised. And don’t worry about spelling and grammar, my esteemed proof reader, Graham Smith and me, will deal with the full stops and commas. (“me” or “I”, Graham?)

So, read on and enjoy.

*Front cover photo - Three for one at Parliament Square. RTs 1705, 4779 and 1702 photographed by Peter Zabek after taking part in the Victoria Coach Station 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations. Someone decided it would be a good idea to head for Parliament Square - what a good idea it was too!*

*Back cover photo - Peter Zabek has caught a meeting of classics, RT 4779 meets LTA 729, a 1951 Bristol LL6B with a Duple body, new to Western National.*

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## Chairman’s Chat

### Leon Daniels

As I write this we are having another day of 33degree temperatures here at Brooklands. Whilst good weather brings out the visitors, if it gets too hot they tend to go elsewhere. It has been hard work for our volunteers in the heat but we have had some really good days for visitors, bus rides and shop sales.

Another headwind for visitors is the cost of fuel. You won’t be surprised that we are watching the economy carefully. Our most obvious expense is diesel but there is also our own energy bill as well as other consumables. We are in good financial health and we plan to keep it that way.

Our Magazine is an important lifeline for our members and once again Dave Jones has put together an excellent edition. As ever your own contributions, photographs, articles etc are always welcome.

Together with Brooklands Museum we hosted some 60 Ukranian refugees in August – almost all of them mothers and children. They arrived by RT4779 and had a great time on site.

We continue to work increasingly closely with Brooklands – the staging of events, education and marketing, safety and operations all work more smoothly as a result.

Our natural rhythm of preceding our three main event days with a running day is in full swing this year. Our route 81 running day was hugely successful ahead of On the Buses, and we are already in preparation for operation on route 37 on 1 October ahead of TransportFest. Please come and support us at both.

Excitement is mounting as, within a few weeks, we will see the return of D 142 from its hand repaint in the livery of the London Public Omnibus Company. This highlights areas where restoration is really tricky. Hardly anyone is left alive who could have seen a Public vehicle and even if they did the human brain is notoriously unreliable when it comes to colour. There is no colour photography and again, even if there was, the chemical deterioration over the century would render it useless. There are one or two ‘colourised’ items but these are

guesses and in any case a print colour is not the same as a paint colour! We therefore did as much research as we could and chose a genuine 1920s colour. I hope you like it!

Finally, for this issue, I would like to champion the work undertaken quietly and effectively by the Curatorial Team under Ray Thorn. Each week collections of material arrive randomly – from signs to books - and the team sifts through each item and makes some choices. Perhaps the items join our collection; others may be offered to other museums where the items are perhaps more relevant; and in the case of duplicate items they may go on sale to raise funds for the Museum. Our aim is to have material that supports our collection, is of interest to members and visitors, and helps tell the London bus story.

This work is hugely important to us and as ever the team would welcome more volunteers to help deal with the items which come our way and become part of our collection. Write to me if you would like to help.

## Membership Matters

To ensure you continue to receive the LBM Magazine, LBM E-news, subscription reminders, membership cards and other LBM communications, please send changes of postal address, email address, bank direct debit details, and any membership queries to:

[membership@londonbusmuseum.com](mailto:membership@londonbusmuseum.com)

or:

Membership  
London Bus Museum  
Cobham Hall  
Brooklands Road  
Weybridge KT13 0QS  
United Kingdom

Thank you to all those members so far contacted who have provided a new Gift Aid declaration. We will be asking the remainder of members during this year in our quest for 100% response.



On loan from the estate of John Marshall, the Mk1 Ford Cortina radio control car now sports an original LT bullseye, as fitted to this and the radio cars that followed. This did rather make them stand out, so the crew of any bus that passed one by the side of the road was no doubt waving frantically at buses coming the opposite way to let them know that the “Gold Badge” was out and about. Roadside control of buses was an art (some would say a dark art) with only a schedule (actually a BRR - Bus Running Record), chinagraph pencil and roadside telephone to assist. Out in all weathers, over many hours, theirs was no easy job, compared to today’s iBus staff, who do a pretty good job too!



## Stockwell Garage Open Day

11<sup>th</sup> June 2022



To mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of Stockwell bus garage (SW), Go-Ahead organised an open day with buses also running on route 77A to and from Wandsworth. The Museum's WV1 just had to go, having spent its entire service life at the garage.

Left: for many years SW was associated with RTLs, represented by 554 and 1163, joined by RTs 1777 and 1702.

Below left: RT 4777 recreates a past era in Wandsworth.

Below right: WV1 returns to home ground, also in Wandsworth.  
Photos-Adrian Palmer



## Model Buses - a Wartime Improvisation

Brian A L Jones

As a young bus enthusiast, renowned photographer Alan B Cross overcame the lack of availability of model buses following the start of WWII.

He adapted matchboxes to provide the basis for representations of the large number of types of buses in London Transport's fleet at that time.

In a recent large donation of items from his collections, Alan included a box containing 61 examples of his work. As can be seen in the photo, he painstakingly drew all sides of the bus bodies and then glued them onto readily available discarded matchboxes. Most buses were provided with route, garage plate and running number details.

Half-cab designs provided a challenge for the matchbox

modeller. This was overcome, far right, by adopting the thin cardboard provided by disassembled cigarette packets, which enabled more complicated shapes to be formed. The single deck T type positioned centre front is painted in a brown livery, reflecting one of the colours adopted when supplies of red paint for full size buses became unavailable.



## Route 81 Running Day

12<sup>th</sup> June 2022



The Museum's third major running day was based on route 81 and its variants, along with routes 237 and A1.

Museum buses taking part were RTs 4779, 3491, RMC 1461 and WV1 seen at the Museum. Photo-Adrian Palmer

Besides the 81, route A1 was also recreated by MBA 539, seen here at Hounslow West Station. Photo-Adrian Palmer

Buses no longer cross Eton Bridge, but RT 4779 seems to have turned the clock back. Photo-Peter Zabek



RM 2208 almost turns the clock back to the late 60s when RMs were allocated to the 81B with some journeys on the 81 as well. Seen just arriving at Hounslow Bus Station. Photo-Stuart Hicks

Below left: RT 3491 also took part, running on the 81B, which served Heathrow Airport, also seen at Hounslow Bus Station. Photo-Peter Goddard.



And now for something completely different! A Mercedes-Benz 0530 with Citaro bodywork. BT09 GOX has been around a bit, starting life with Go-Ahead on Red Arrow routes then moving to City of Oxford and then Thames Travel. It is now with Carousel Buses. Photo-Stuart Hicks





## Flying by on the 81

Phil Jelly

"I will come and pick you up at 6:15", Tony Funnell said. My wife and I were staying in a lovely apartment near Lewes in East Sussex so that we could run as a 'fly-by' bus on the 81 running day. Tony was to drive his RTL 1427 and I was to navigate as I was brought up in that part of West London. Tony has done an enormous amount of work on this very special bus since he bought it two years ago. Recently new moquette has been put on all the seats and the bus looks as good as new. We went to the farm near Sheffield Park where he keeps the bus and by 7:00am we were on our way.

Up through Dorking, a brief stop at Leatherhead and then we took the 65 route to Kew Bridge. I had missed out on the 65 running day last year so this was to make up for that. At Kew, a right turn to get to Shepherd's Bush Green. Now it was time to take the 81 route. As a 'fly-by' bus we could not display route 81 so we displayed route 27. Now, numerically 27 is a third of 81, but we had no intention of just doing a third of the route!! The full route for us. 81B first (now 237) down past Hounslow and on to Heathrow Airport Central Bus Station. My word, we witnessed some dreadful driving from people anxious to get to the central area. From there it was 'fly' through the central bus station

and back to the A4 to head for Slough. Lunchtime there and then off to a very busy Windsor.

We came back on the 81 route and intended to return from Kew on the same route as we came up, but took a wrong turning! We ended up on the A316 so decided to return via Sunbury, Hampton Court and Esher. Arrival back in Lewes was around 6:00pm some 180 miles later!! She may be a 1948 bus, but drives like a dream.

RTL 1427, seen right, known affectionately as "Ellen", is a real credit to you, Tony. She is a lovely bus and we hope one day soon you will be able to take passengers on running days and not have to fly past the bus stops!!!



## Book Review

Michael H C Baker

**The London Q by Ken Blacker, Capital Transport, £25, 128 pages hardback ISBN 978-1-85414-470-6**

For what was, by London standards, a not very numerous class of bus, the Q has probably had more words and pictures published relating to it than any other. So why, you might ask - or you might not - given the conjunction of Capital Transport and Ken Blacker - this 128 page book? The simple answer to that is definitive. Ken Blacker is the ideal author to deal with the subject and Capital Transport remains the publisher preeminent in the field of high quality transport books.

Mr Blacker, in paying tribute to the late Alan Townsin's 'The AEC Q Family' of 1981, points out that it was probably a misnomer to put it in a series entitled 'Best of British Buses' for 'it was far from perfect.' London had 238 of them, no-one else showed much enthusiasm for the design, advanced as it was, which was one of its problems. He remembers the Qs, as does your reviewer, and 'really admired the comfort and modernness of the interior of the 5Q5,' but thought the 6Q6 coaches 'bulky and ungainly.' First into production were the Country Area 4Q4s, with 'small windows and pointless sloping roof line'

two of which have been preserved. There were four double deck Qs. These, being so very non-standard, had very short lives, not least because of the advent of war. But the single deck fleet did well, performing a great service during the war, despite being non-standard, Frank Pick deciding early on to standardise on the AEC Regal.

The Qs were withdrawn in 1952/3, replaced by the RF, a design which owed a good deal to the Q, not least the Central Area 5Q5 with its setback front wheels, allowing a front entrance, from which the RF was so clearly a direct descendant.

Highly recommended.



## "On the Buses" Summer Gathering

26<sup>th</sup> June 2022

This year's summer event was blessed with good weather, although the current financial situation may have had a negative impact on attendance, both by bus owners and the public. Nevertheless, a good time was had by all who attended.

Right: This 1939 petrol-engine Leyland Cheetah carries a Harrington "fin" body. The bullseye on the radiator suggests it ran for LT during the wartime bus shortage. RLH 53 rests in the background. Photo-Michael H C Baker



Above: The event theme was the 60<sup>th</sup> year of RMCs, a number of which attended, 1453, 1477, 1464, 1485 and 1461.

Above right: L 97 represents the pre-lowfloor era. Photos-Phil Hambling

Right: RMC 1485, possibly one of the most travelled of its type, pauses at the end of a trip to Chertsey Bridge. Photo-Adrian Palmer



Above: The first and last (numerically). RT 4825 has ventured out of the LT Museum Depot at Acton and was lined up with RT 1 for the first time at Brooklands. Photo-Peter Zabek

Right: Many buses were liveried to mark the Queen's Silver Jubilee, like RATP Group Alexander Dennis Enviro/BYD Electric E400 BCE47070, with an appropriate registration. Photo-Michael H C Baker





## LBM on the Road

### Museum vehicles out and about



It's been a busy few weeks for events and our buses have been out flying the flag at many of them. Here's a selection of photos to show what's been going on.

Left: The Bromley Bus Preservation Group organised a running day based on East Grinstead and Godstone on 10 July. WVL 1 went along with Terry Torch as driver and photographer.

Below: BEA 2 finally made it to the Annual Cart Marking Ceremony on 16 July, along with 783J, plus RT 4825 and RM 597. Both photos-Richard Hastings



Right centre and bottom: 738J was out again on 17 July to Anstey Park, Alton, along with RF 19 on which many lucky folk were able to enjoy a ride. Photos-Adrian Palmer & Stuart Hicks

Below: RT 3491 took part in a low-key open day at Fulwell garage on 23 July where route 667 was recreated, sort of! Photo- Adrian Palmer



## Victoria Coach Station's 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

### 24<sup>th</sup> July 2022

The starting point for millions of journeys over 90 years, the famous London Coach Station celebrated in style with buses and coaches running over a number of routes to and from Hammersmith. RTs 1705 and 4779 plus many others took part.



Left: RM 1941 takes a break from working route 11. The bus once worked the heritage route 15, but is now with new owners.

Below right: M 1 recreating Airbus service A1, once served by Metrobuses (Metrobi?) and since replaced by tube and rail routes.

Below left: Long distance travel 1950s style - a splendid 1951 Bristol LLB6/ Duple. All photos-Adrian Palmer



Right: also from 1951 is this Beadle 'chassisless' coach built using components from 1938 Leyland TD5 double decker(s).

Below left: the National Bus era was represented by this 1979 Leyland Leopard/Plaxton Supreme, so typical of the 80s coaching scene.

Below right: It's playtime for RTs 1705 and 4779. A few loops of Parliament Square to recreate a bygone age. All photos-Adrian Palmer





# Bye, Bye, Trolleybi, Farewell - part 12 - The End

Michael H C Baker



It's October 1961 at Fulwell depot and its modern Q1s have been replaced by 1930s vintage L3s, but otherwise all seems normal, with no hint that the end really is nigh. After 31 years, London's trolleybuses were soon to meet a premature demise. Photo-MHCB

'All good things come to an end' is a cliché which, thank goodness, can often prove to be wrong. But it was certainly a sad day, and one which, it is generally now agreed, should not have come to pass, when Isleworth and Fulwell depots finally closed their front doors and handed back the keys. The date was Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May, 1962. At its peak the London trolleybus system was the largest in the world, with a total of 1811 vehicles, working 68 routes. Next highest in the UK was Belfast, with slightly less than 250. The discrepancy is striking. It all began on 16<sup>th</sup> May, 1931, on the banks of the Thames deep in suburban Belfast's City Hall looms over Donegall Place as one of the city's 250 trolleybuses turns into Castle Lane, showing the maze of overhead wiring that opponents disliked. Photo-MHCB



Q1 1838 has just dropped off outside the Venner Time Switches works at Shannon Corner, New Malden. Photo-MHCB

Surrey and Middlesex. Never would the trolleybus reach the hallowed precincts of Piccadilly, Whitehall or Regent Street. Well one, Q1 No. 1768 was actually seen in the latter when taking part on that extraordinary Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> LI 1369 may have just arrived at Fulwell depot to serve until the system closed. Photo-MHCB



RT 2998's trainee driver is about to turn into Chiswick Works as K1 1118 sneaks up the inside. Photo-MHCB

June, 2014, when Regent Street was filled with historic London buses, coaches and one trolleybus, courtesy of our esteemed Chairman and others.

The original vehicles, which soon acquired the nickname Diddler, for which no-one has yet provided a convincing explanation, had looked antiquated almost from new, and eventually were replaced by what, it was agreed, were the finest trolleybuses ever to operate within these islands. There were 127 of the Q1s, delivered in two batches, in 1948/9 and 1952/3, the last when it had already been

L3 1426 circles the roundabout at Hampton Court. Photo-MHCB



announced that the London trolleybus was out of date and, like the trams, would eventually be replaced by the diesel-engined motor bus. The plan was that the Q1s, seemingly secure in south-west suburbia, would be retained for some years after all the others had been withdrawn.

But it was not to be. A dislike of overhead wires, the inability to operate without them and, above all, it might be suggested, changing fashions, plus the opportunity to cut losses by selling the Q1s to Spain, saw them replaced, as the end approached, by Leyland K1s and K2s and AEC L3s. The condition of these, removed from their original homes, sometimes more than once, poor things, varied but

it was certainly my experience than none was ever as shabby as the very last RTs eking out their passenger carrying days in the late 1970s.

Isleworth, which was home to the Ks, had always maintained high standards, while those of Fulwell were more varied. As were its vehicles, for although officially all



C class trolleys 137 and 147 wait at the Staines Road, Hounslow turning circle. Photo-MHCB

were L3s, a few rogue others managed to sneak in. Fulwell had always made any orphan or oddity welcome and no-one seemed bothered to challenge enthusiasts poking around in its interior, being careful not to trip over the tramlines, which most remarkably were still embedded in the cobbles.

Perhaps inevitably, and not surprisingly, the trolleybus had never generated the affection and, in some cases, the scorn, surrounding the tram, either with the general public or the enthusiast fraternity. But clearly the very end of this once cutting-edge form of transport would not disappear without some ceremony. For days K No. 1274 had been almost engulfed in bunting and decoration inside and out by the staff at Isleworth. The original No. 1 was brought out of hibernation at Clapham Museum and taken to Fulwell where special guests were invited aboard and it covered part of the network before being returned. Almost the end, "Diddler" No 1 at Fulwell, having been released from the Clapham Transport Museum for the last rites. Photo-MHCB





## Bye, Bye, Trolleybi, Farewell - part 12 - The End



No. 1 is being towed through Kingston back to the museum at Clapham. Photo-MHCB  
protected from the grasping fingers of possible "souvenir" hunters. It was accompanied by L3 No.1521, officially the last working London trolleybus when it returned to Fulwell depot early on the morning of 9th May.

Routes 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 657 and 667 disappeared and were replaced by 281- Twickenham to Tolworth alongside the Kingston by-pass, 282- Dittons, Kingston Hill Loop and back to Dittons, 283- Tolworth, Red Lion, Kingston Loop (clockwise, not Sundays), 285- London Airport, Wimbledon, Haydons Road Station (not Sundays), and 267- Hampton Court - Hammersmith. Existing routes 81B, 116, 117, and 131 were extended. A number of London trolleybuses have been preserved, including, fittingly, No.1, the first, and No.1521, the last in service.

The end is nigh. A reproduction notice at the EATM 2012 anniversary event. Photo-Dave Jones



Route 667 was one of those replaced by buses from 9th May 1962, in this case, by the 267 for which Fulwell's RM 1113 was provided. In 2001 route 267 was much the same and London United's M 1271, also from Fulwell garage, is passing the Waggon & Horses in Brentford. It's somewhat apt that London United, who ran the first trolleybuses, were still running one of the original routes. Photo-MHCB



The 50th anniversary of the end of trolleybus operation was celebrated at the East Anglian Transport Museum in May 2012 where No. 1 and 1521 were reunited. Photo-Dave Jones



## Introducing Adrian Jones

### Health & Safety Manager



I retired from FirstGroup at the end of May 2022 having been their Safety Director since 2015. In that role I had responsibility for safety across the five Group Divisions in the UK and North America (First Student, First Transit, Greyhound, First Rail and First Bus).

My career with London Transport began in 1977 in the Publicity Section of the Bus Schedules Office as a Clerical Assistant before gaining promotion to roles in the Traffic Office and Personnel Office (Bus Operations). In 1987 I was selected to join the Higher Control Grade Training Scheme. On successful completion of training, I started my first garage management role at Orpington Buses (Roundabout) and went on to manage Bromley and Catford Garages before joining CentreWest in 1997 as manager at Alperton Garage. After undertaking many

### You Write

I would like to ask two questions. First, is it possible to let us country-folk have a list of all bus rallies featuring LT buses, especially north of the Thames? Second, more features on the green LT buses, especially TG, MA, HH, WA and routes Green Line 706 and 707 and LT 301 from gas buses to the ex-red London RMLs painted in the awful colour of London Country pastel green which didn't last long for Arriva to take over. A very sad day for us all. No real complaint really you are doing a good job of great interest.

Ron Jeffery

*Ron has been directed to a suitable source of rally information, but is anyone ready to accept Ron's challenge on country bus articles? All contributions welcome. Ed.*

I was one of the participants in this most enjoyable event last May. It coincided, remarkably, with a lengthy article I

different roles across CentreWest and First Capital I was appointed Regional Managing Director of First London and Berkshire in 2007 until it was sold in 2013 when I then took up the reins as Managing Director of First Essex Buses. The variety of management positions in both operations and safety has given me a sound understanding of the sort of challenges that are faced in the transport industry.

I have undertaken board development training at the Institute of Directors, completing both the Certificate and Diploma in Company Direction before achieving Chartered Director status. I am a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport and the holder of a National CPC. I also hold National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health accreditation and am a member of Institution of Occupational Safety and Health.

Having recently left FirstGroup I was delighted when Leon approached me about volunteering at the London Bus Museum. I have a passion for safety and appreciate the legal, moral, and financial benefits of good safety performance. I was enormously proud of the safety culture we had across FirstGroup which developed through our Injury Prevention and later our Be Safe programmes. We had a familiar strapline across the Group "If you cannot do it safely – don't do it" which empowered everyone to take responsibility for their own, their colleagues' and their customers' safety. I hope I can use some of my experience to continue to build on the good safety record at the museum.

was writing on the Interstation Bus Service, which I hope to offer to your worthy columns.

Meanwhile there is a little anecdote connected with the temporary bus stop installation at Waterloo. Now, not realising that we would be travelling up to town on another vehicle (the RMC), I had hoped to photograph C111 alongside my car bearing its original CLX registration, which I had deliberately chosen with its LT connection, back in 2017. Of course, this was not to be.

Back at Waterloo, Leon had placed a Keep Britain Tidy bus stop poster thereto (visible in the photo on p10 of the Summer issue), the lower portion of which was blowing about in the wind. Brainwave: use the Blu Tack in my bag, which I had intended to use on the car to attach the old registration plate temporarily for the intended photograph!

Colin Read ('Blu Tack man')



# Brooklands Remains

Colin Read



The stretch of banked racetrack behind our museum (the Members' Banking) and the portion opposite Tesco's/M & S (the Byfleet Banking) need no introduction, but there are some other surviving stretches, possibly lesser-known, one of which I only discovered a couple of years ago, having spotted it on Google Maps.

There is a very rough section behind the Brooklands Industrial Park, leading along to the portion behind Brooklands Hotel (the former Railway Straight) now in use as a car park, but the quite lengthy section I discovered (also banked) and which is well hidden behind trees, is on the far eastern side of the Community Park (off Sopwith Drive) and would have crossed over the River Wey. This was known as the Outer Circuit and is quite easily accessible, being popular with walkers (see photos). A section between this and the Byfleet Banking was removed in 1951 to allow Valiant V bombers to use the new runway in its aircraft days.



An aerial view indicates that Staniland Drive (off Wellington Way) follows the exact course of the track and I would venture to suggest that the entry to The Heights marks the location of The Fork, where the track formerly divided to join the (now restored) Finishing Straight.

To continue on in the same direction, there is yet another surviving portion to one side of the approach to the private car park (see photos) which leads off to the right as you descend from Brooklands Road to the Campbell Gate entrance. These survivors might be worth mentioning to passengers on Bus Rides.

Many of the road names in the area are, of course, named after those involved with Brooklands, including racing motorcyclists C. S. Staniland and E.C. Fernihough and racing drivers Kaye Don and Parry Thomas.

We are truly surrounded by history!



Above right: from the guide sign at the south end of the community park.

Below right: a well kept section of banking near the Brooklands Industrial Park.

Above and below left: sections of the banking close to the community park.



# Curatorial Corner

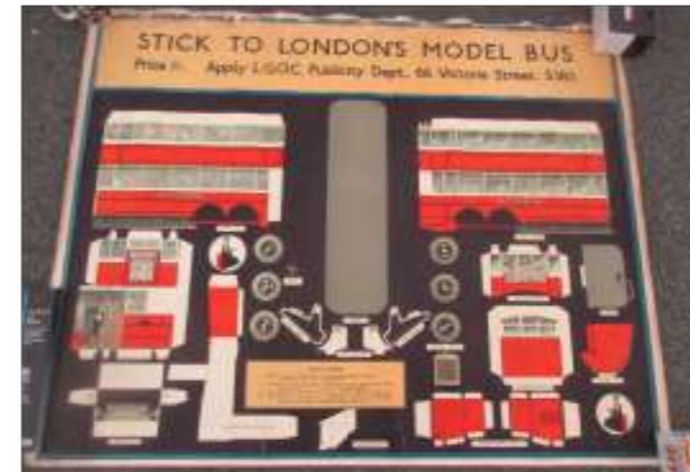
Colin Read

Our Curatorial Team are rarely unoccupied in their dutiful cataloguing of the Trust's numerous assets. Among a considerable number of posters and other paper artefacts, an occasional gem will leap out.

Such was the case with these items, which include a remarkable cardboard model bus cut-out "toy". Perhaps someone will make a copy and try to assemble it! A number of posters are also illustrated, two for local stores in the Watford area. Dating from the 60s, Traceys is now a health

shop and Polypets is Cash Converters! One wouldn't have imagined a pet shop giving Green Shield Stamps, nor another guaranteeing that their budgies would talk.

Green Line has experienced decline over many years, but an attempt was made to revive its fortunes in 2008 with new double deck buses from First Bee-Line, in a retro-styles poster. Finally, our own ST 922 features in publicity aimed at encouraging tourists to ride on route 100. Our Chairman can no doubt tell many tales of that operation!





# Railway Owned Buses at Watford Stations

Brian A L Jones

Some time ago, I was given a small collection of photos by David Scott, a good friend, that included three of those reproduced below.



An obviously posed photo of five London and North Western Railway (L&NWR) buses at Watford Junction Station. The three buses to the right have signboards showing destinations of Boxmoor, Garston and Watford Junction. The finger signs fixed to the elaborate lamp standard read left "Callowland" and right "Clarendon Road". Via David Scott

While L&NWR had already introduced motor bus services in Wales to complement their railway operations, Watford was chosen by them to be the first area for similar services in England.

With buses in chocolate and cream liveries and staff outfitted in blue serge, the first route was started on 23 April 1906 between Watford Junction Station and Croxley Green, replacing a horse bus service.

On 30 July 1906 a more ambitious connection was started linking Watford Junction Station to Harrow and Wealdstone Station via Bushey Heath.

It is perhaps relevant to note that until the L&NWR Act was passed in 1909, the Company had no authority to operate the services.

In 1909 further expansion of routes provided a connection from Boxmoor (later renamed Hemel Hempstead) Station to Hemel Hempstead on 9 August and, additionally, to Callowland (later known as North Watford) as an extension from Croxley Green to serve emerging new housing estates on 6 December 1909.

The significance of the Watford bus services to L&NWR was recognised in 1912 when it established its Road Motor Engineering Department's headquarters in the town.

Further development of Watford was covered by extension of the Callowland service to Garston on 12 May

1913.

Over the years the double deck fleet, which had originally been largely composed of Dodson bodied Milne-Daimlers, moved to buses of mainly Leyland manufacture.

Bus operations were seriously reduced after operating staff were called up and vehicles impressed into military service during the Great War (subsequently known as World War I) and, by April 1915, only Watford to Boxmoor and Boxmoor to Hemel Hempstead services were in operation.

No doubt due to competition from other operators which emerged after the War's end, L&NWR never returned to the level of pre-war operation, although it did purchase three single deck Thornycroft J type buses for the Boxmoor services.

The formation of UK railway companies into four mainline groups on 1 January 1923 resulted in the disappearance of L&NWR and its bus routes when it was absorbed into the London Midland and Scottish Railway.



Having learnt how to decorate buses for the Opening, Watford Shopping Week produced this completely over the top response. Imagine the drivers' delight in having that lot flapping as they drove along! (Borough of Watford)



Finally, a photo of a "naked" Albion. The bus drivers with splendid shiny boots, with, probably, a young trainee porter. The Station Master and a property developer (?) stand in front of the rear wheel. (Borough of Watford)

The second photo is located at the Metropolitan Railway's Watford Station, which had opened on 2 November 1925. As the station, built in an Arts and Crafts Country House style, was some distance from the town centre, the Company decided, uniquely, to operate a bus service, that commenced on the opening day, which traversed the suburban hinterland in a circular route using Cassiobury Park Avenue, Cassio Road, St Marys Road, High Street, Church Street (adjacent to the High Street market area), Vicarage Road and Queens Avenue. Fare for the service was set at one old penny.

Though carrying full Metropolitan Livery the four 28 seat Albion PK26 buses were, in fact, quickly transferred to the North West Land and Transport Company, set up by Metropolitan, as they did not have authority to operate under their own name. In 1929 the local Lewis Omnibus Company took over operation of the buses. That Company was subsequently absorbed into London Transport in 1933, but it appears that the Albions had been disposed of prior to that takeover.

After the Opening Ceremony, at which guests included the Metropolitan Chairman, Lord Aberconway, Lord Farrington, Chairman of the LNER and the Mayor of Watford, Alderman M A Thorpe, who had arrived by the Rickmansworth branch line, the buses were used to carry them to the Oddfellows Hall for the official lunch.



Reproduced from an example in David Harman's collection, the face and reverse of a Metropolitan Railway ticket. The cheap daily return fares advertised are, of course, for rail travel.

It is perhaps interesting to note that, initially, the Watford branch was linked to both Baker Street by electric services and Marylebone by (LNER) steam. The latter was short lived and never restarted after disruption during the 1926 General Strike.

The Metropolitan Railway was, of course, closely identified with housing development along its lines, providing revenue from sale of land and then sustained income from commuters dwelling in the houses. The air of razzmatazz that the decorated buses portray is, no doubt, also linked to trips around the local estate developments then underway to provide a soft-sell initiative to passengers arriving on inaugural services.



The busy market day scene (late 1920s/early 1930s) The bus in the foreground is a Guy BB (R04574) of Watford Co-operative Mutual Omnibus, a company formed by bus drivers displaced during the 1926 General Strike. It operated, not too successfully, between 1926 and 1930. Watford Library/Watford Museum (via David Scott)

Finally, David Scott provided me with a third photo that shows Watford High Street (which the Metropolitan had originally intended would provide the terminal point for the Watford Branch and had proposed a site at Hempstead Road for that purpose). Note the similarity of the lamp standard to the one at Watford Junction Station in the first photograph. Though not railway related, it shows a Watford scene contemporary with other services discussed above.

**Thanks** to David Harman, LBM Member and Editor of the Transport Ticket Society Magazine, who kindly provided the sample Metropolitan ticket and information regarding the Guy BB.

## References

- The Metropolitan Line - Mike Horne – Capital Transport (2003)
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- Railway Motor Buses and Bus Services in the British Isles – 1902 to 1933 – John Cummings – Oxford Publishing (1978)



## Donations Received

5<sup>th</sup> May 2022 to 27<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Thank you to donors.

The museum is pleased to acknowledge, with grateful thanks, the gift of objects from members and others who may be downsizing their collections or from families of those no longer with us.

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**ROUTE 37 HERITAGE BUS SERVICE**

**FREE!**

**SATURDAY 1 OCTOBER 2022**

As part of the London Bus Museum's programme of bringing heritage buses to the roads of London, our latest event sees RT buses dating from 1939-1954 running alongside the normal daily service on route 37, Putney Heath to Peckham.

London's RT type was developed before the second world war and by 1954 formed the largest standardised bus fleet in the world, designed and built in London for London. It was the forerunner of the world-famous Routemaster.



Buses will run every 15 minutes between Putney Station and Peckham Bus Station, serving all normal 37 bus stops. Rides are FREE and each bus will carry a conductor to answer questions. We thank TIL and the owners joining us with their buses on the day. More details, times, map and history at [www.LondonBusMuseum.com/RTs-on-route-37](http://www.LondonBusMuseum.com/RTs-on-route-37)

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**TransportFest**

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> October**

**10.00 – 17.00**

Buses, coaches, military, commercials, emergency, taxis and cars – all sorts welcomed

Bus excursions, free 462 shuttle bus and Traders Market

[brooklandsmuseum.com/tickets](http://brooklandsmuseum.com/tickets)

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**Contacting The London Bus Preservation Trust**

**Telephone:** 01932 837994. The phone is staffed by 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 e-mail (see below) will usually bring a quicker response.

**E-mail:** 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 the above address cannot be used for visits in person, which should be via the main entrance.

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