

LONDON BUS MUSEUM

*E-news
May 2026*



LBM on the road: Part 1



PHOTO CREDIT: EDITOR

On 26 April **XF 3** and **T 23** took part in the East Grinstead running day. The glorious spring weather attracted excited enthusiasts and families alike, enjoying trips to rural locations such as Dormansland and Godstone Green. Thanks to **Keith Bonham**, **Martin Carter**, **Tim Evans** and **Andy Gray** for crewing XF 3 and to the Bromley Bus Preservation Group for bringing T 23.





LBM on the road: Part 2

RF 226 went to Winchester on 4 May to join in the annual **Friends of King Alfred** Big Bus day. A great selection of preserved vehicles convened on the Broadway to offer rides out of the city centre to surrounding villages, through some spectacular scenery. **Graham Bailey, Peter Milner** and your editor were the crew.





PHOTOS (ABOVE, LEFT AND ABOVE LEFT): EDITOR; OTHERS: DAVID BOWKER

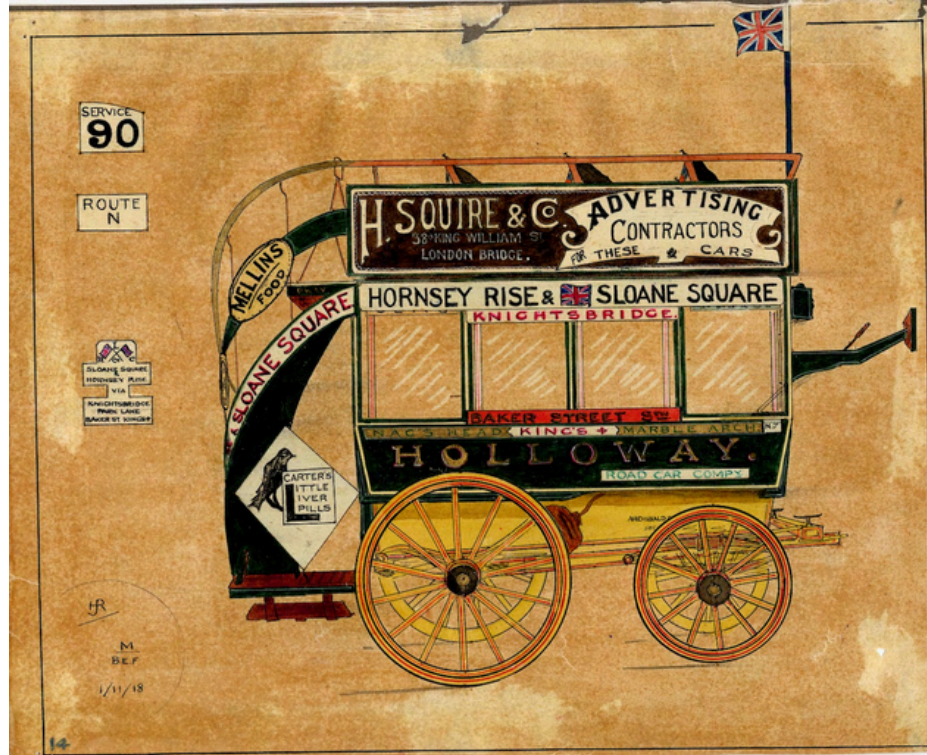
Restoration of the Horse Bus

Alan Gaskell

By the 1890s, London had over 2,000 horse buses and 25,000 horses, with stables and a small army of grooms, blacksmiths and saddlers. One of the largest operators of bus services at this time was the London Road Car Company, which acquired our bus when still fairly new.

Our bus was allocated to London Road Car Company's small depot in north London, next to what is now Holloway Bus Garage. It ran on a service between Hornsey Rise and Sloane Square under the name Holloway. The splendid colours on the buses can be attributed to the fact that a significant number of the population was illiterate, so passengers identified their bus by its colour. A unique feature of the company was the 'Union Jack' flag, which it flew from its vehicles and was also displayed on running boards. Additionally, they were first to introduce forward-facing 'garden seats' which, along with improved stairs, enabled ladies in their finery to use the upper deck. Originally, the wheels on horse buses were painted to match the body. However, to avoid having to keep a large stock of different coloured wheels and for speed of changing them, they all became yellow, also adding visibility of the vehicle to pedestrians.

Our bus was restored in 1988 after being reacquired by the Andrews family. In 2007 the John Andrews Charitable Trust donated it to the London Bus Museum. It was given a thorough overhaul and full restoration during 2024/5, including being fully stripped of paint and then professionally repainted by hand. Hand-written signs and advertisements of the period were added and its new look was ready to present at Spring Gathering 2026.



Original painting of the horse bus, C/O London Transport Museum



PHOTO CREDIT: ALAN GASKELL
New upper deck floor



Horse bus restoration

The restoration involved the complete replacement of the upper deck floor and waterproofing, the front rear and side panels and considerable repairs to the seats, but keeping as much of the original parts as possible. A new coachman's seat and leather cushion have been provided, together with a new flagpole and Union Jack.

The rotted rear platform was totally rebuilt and part of the stair replaced. Glazing was replaced to current safety standards.

The front wheels had completely different cambers, so the nearside axle had to be realigned to make them match. As the whole body tipped forward by several inches, the springs were re-tempered and supporting blocks replaced to resolve this.

Before repainting, the whole bus was completely stripped of paint to enable numerous local repairs to the woodwork (both inside and out) to be undertaken.

PHOTO CREDIT: ALAN GASKELL

Above: upper deck sides during restoration



Above and left: wheel and signwriting details, carefully carried out by hand

PHOTO CREDIT (ABOVE AND LEFT): LEON DANIELS

PHOTO CREDIT: ALAN GASKELL

Staircase on the bench for rebuilding



LBM redecoration
 No sooner had the dust settled after Spring Gathering than the next day work began to smarten up the Museum, including the repainting of the roadway. Thanks to Facilities Manager Ian Reddick and his team for carrying out the work and for enhancing the LBM experience for our visitors.

PHOTO CREDIT (LEFT): ANDY GRAY

During the Museum redecoration, we displayed a selection of vehicles outside for Brooklands visitors to enjoy, with stewards on hand to greet them and answer questions.

Thanks to all the volunteers who helped during that week.

PHOTO CREDIT (RIGHT AND BELOW): GRAHAM BURNELL



A new era for the Routemaster?

RML 2646 has been converted to 100% electric power. Nigel Eadon-Clarke took a ride last month. He reports: *It was great ride, so smooth and quiet that you hardly realised you were moving. No doubt other Routemaster owners will be looking closely at this, particularly those that operate in low emission zones worldwide.*

Golden Tours operates the bus and tours may be booked through their [website](#).

Read more about the conversion [here](#).

ALL PHOTOS: NIGEL EADON-CLARKE



In conversation with Geoff Latham: his life at AEC

My late father, Bill, was the owner and operator of Enterprise Coaches of Kenton, Middlesex, a business he ran from 1938 until his retirement in 1970 (apart from for some of the war years). He was an AEC enthusiast and ran many Regal and Reliance coaches, with bodies by Duple of Hendon. He had good contacts in the AEC service department.

As a boy and a teenager, I was always in the yard where the coaches were kept and helped wherever I could, something I always enjoyed. Dad decided I should apply for an AEC Indentured Apprenticeship and, on completion of this (and of my national service), take over the running of the business. Whilst I was away in the Army, the whole coach business pattern changed, and it was decided that I should return to AEC, which I did in August 1957.

What follows is a description of my career which, including my time with Leyland, lasted for 32 years. It was always good to get up and go to work at both AEC Southall and LT Aldenham Service Depot, until Leyland became more involved and, after I had been made redundant, eventually closed down most of the old service depots.

Many AEC employees spent their whole working lives at the Southall factory, which says a great deal about the family atmosphere there. My happiest time was the years I spent in the main Design Drawing Office there.

My AEC Indentured Apprenticeship began in April 1950, when I reported to the superbly-equipped Training School. I spent the next six months learning to use tools and machines. Over the next four years, I worked in nearly every department of the factory and in the offices, moving round on a monthly basis. It was great fun for all the boys involved! There were seven of us in my class.



PHOTO CREDIT (ABOVE): EDITOR; BELOW: C/O GEOFF LATHAM



Above: the AEC Drawing Office in the 1960s



PHOTO CREDIT: COLIN WICKENS C/O CHRIS STANLEY

The works in September 1979. All four buses survive in preservation: RF 10, STL 2692, RT 190 and RLH 29

Geoff Latham

After national service in REME, where I achieved the rank of Leading Artisan Sergeant, I returned to Southall and began my long time in the main Design Drawing Office.

My first position was on the Routemaster production section, where we were putting together all the drawings and listings to enable the assembly of the front and rear 'boats' on tracks one and two, before they were sent to Park Royal for fitment in the bodies. During my time there, I did the underfloor design work for the RM, to be stretched by 2' 6" to become the RML. This was carried out in conjunction with visits to LT at Chiswick Works.

Over a number of years working on many different projects, I moved onto chassis design and was responsible for the new AEC V8-engined Matador. Over 300 of these very fast trucks were built until, suddenly, Leyland ceased production and scrapped the model.

My last design project was for the Merlin/Swift chassis, the first single-deck rear engine bus, mainly for LT. I was forced by Leyland to use their Panther side members and front end. I immediately saw that there would be body problems with the flimsy design, which became a reality, with roof splitting occurring on some of the early Red Arrows. After all these years - and at 92 years old - I am still saddened by the service problems experienced with these chassis. The blame (as far as I am concerned) is down to Leyland vehicle management rushing these chassis into production long before they had been fully tested and any problems eradicated (for example, the cooling system). Bear in mind that four Routemaster prototypes were on the streets of London for four years before the full build started.

Later, I spent time working as Product Quality Engineer with a small team dealing with production and service problems.

My final appointment at Southall was a Production Manager (Assemblies), mainly trying to keep the two tracks running as we built up to 19 incomplete vehicles per day. In those days, trade unions were very strong across most industries, and I was very happy to be moved to Aldenham as Depot Manager. Sadly, the end came in February 1982 when two young whizz kids came down from Leyland to tell me I was redundant. That was the way it was in those days, but I also have many fond memories.



Above: the four Routemaster prototypes were reunited at Earls Court, September 2014



Above: AEC Matador ESL 132 , May 2025



Above: the Museum's SMS 369, October 2019



A note from our Chairman, Leon Daniels

Saturday 8 August 2026

Members and volunteers are asked to note that Brooklands Museum will be celebrating the centenary of the British Grand Prix which was held there, organised by the RAC.

On this special day there will be no free admission for members of Brooklands Museum or the London Bus Museum. Members of either organisation can purchase tickets in advance online for £19.95. The event is expected to be fully sold out and tickets will not be sold on the day. Book early if you want to come!

Details are available on the [Brooklands Museum website](#).

PHOTOS: C/O BROOKLANDS MUSEUM

All change!

Thanks to **Andy Gray** and **Martin Watkins** for exchanging **STL 441** for **M 6**, so that the Metrobus (48 years young in 2026!) can be checked over in readiness for her appearance at the **Route 213/293 Heritage Day** on 13 June.



PHOTO CREDIT (ABOVE): ANDY GRAY

LEFT: MARTIN WATKINS

LBM Events 2026



Route 213/293 Heritage Day

13 June 2026

Historic vehicles will offer free rides all day between Kingston and Sutton and North Cheam and Epsom

[View more >](#)

Summer Festival

28 June 2026

Our annual summer event returns, with visiting vehicles, bus rides, traders' stalls, food and more for all ages

[View more >](#)



Route 106 Heritage Day

3 October 2026

Our third Heritage Day will see historic vehicles in service free of charge, between Finsbury Park and Ash Grove

[View more >](#)

TransportFest

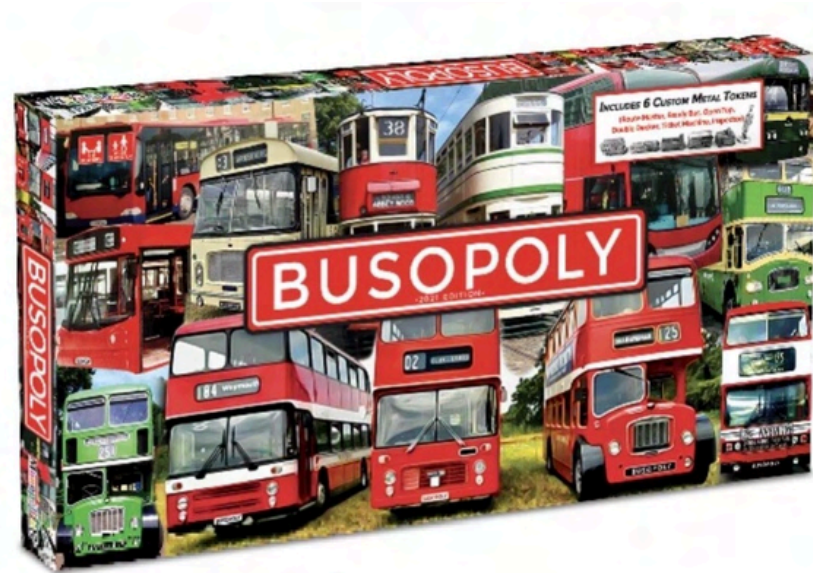
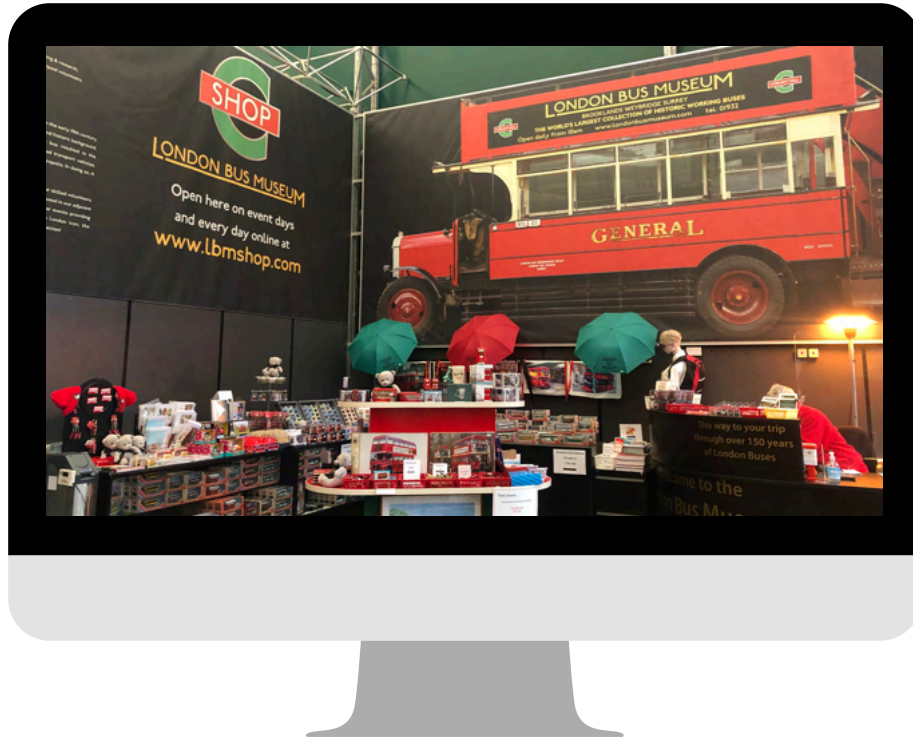
18 October 2026

Round off the rally calendar at our autumn event with a wide range of vehicles, bus rides and traders' stalls

[View more >](#)

What's in Shillibeer Place, the LBM gift shop

Buy in store or online



Busopoly is a board game created by London bus driver John Rogers, where players buy, trade and manage London bus routes and depots

[In store only](#)



2027 Calendar

Start planning for next year with our 2027 calendar, featuring buses in London, old and new. We ran out last year – a good reason to buy it now!

[Buy online >](#)

BSA Bantam joins the fleet



PHOTO CREDIT: LEON DANIELS

Phil Palmer writes: Just arrived at the Museum is this stunning GPO motorbike, pictured here with its owner, John Stevenson. It is a 1967 123cc BSA Bantam - although the design dates back to 1957. Apparently the GPO were happy with the design and did not want the upgrades.

Although not an LT item, we were pleased to accept it, as it puts our 1960s buses in context, in the same way as the Beardmore taxi does.

On arrival it proved reluctant to start, but hopefully a little fettling will sort this out. Also, we'll need some two-stroke oil!



From the Editor

Thanks to our dedicated volunteers for ensuring the LBM has remained operational over the last month, especially during the busy half term week. New volunteers are always welcome to assist in all aspects of the Museum's life and there are many ways to help. See [our website](#) for details.

Thanks to David Bowker, Graham Burnell, Leon Daniels, Nigel Eadon-Clarke, Alan Gaskell, Andy Gray, Geoff Latham, Phil Palmer, John Roberts, Chris Stanley and Martin Watkins for generously contributing stories and photos for this edition.

Please [email me](#) any content for the next edition.

Richard

London comes to Glasgow!

John Roberts

1986 saw large numbers of Routemasters being withdrawn from London service and being snapped up by provincial operators, principally in Scotland. To mark this, the [Routemaster Association](#) has teamed up with the [Glasgow Vintage Vehicle Trust](#) to organise *London Comes to Glasgow*. There will be a route recreation in Glasgow on Saturday 4 July, followed by an open day at Bridgeton Bus Garage on Sunday 5 July.

A number of vehicles are already down to attend but we have space for more and invite anyone with a vehicle with London connections to book in. It doesn't have to be a Routemaster or even a bus, as we have a London taxi and a fire engine coming.

For those travelling from afar, we're working on securing overnight parking venues along the way, including in Chesterfield. You're also welcome to attend as a passenger to enjoy riding on old buses in Glasgow.

For further information, visit routemaster.org.uk and gvvt.org (includes a link to the entry form) or email us at events@routemaster.org.uk (John Roberts) or info@gvvt.org (Steven Booth).

PHOTO CREDIT: EDITOR

E-news is produced for the members of the London Bus Preservation Trust and sent to those who have supplied an email address.

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