



The Friends of London's Transport Museum

NEWSLETTER No. 84 - JANUARY 2006



(Registered Charity 285108)

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(Please write, do not telephone, as the office is not open every day, and Museum staff cannot help when it is closed.)

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KINGSWAY EXPLORERS

Dave Taylor records his impressions of the Friends' visits to the Kingsway Tram Tunnel on 14th November 2005:

I was one of the applicants lucky enough to secure a place on the recent Friends' visits to the Kingsway Tram Tunnel. I understand that others were less lucky. (*I'm afraid so; we had over 160 applications for the 60 available places. We hope to run further tours before too long, to accommodate everyone who applied: Editor.*)

The party met at Holborn Underground station, where Mike Ashworth, our guide, gave us a safety briefing. Then came the most hazardous part: crossing the busy roads to reach the subway gates in Southampton Row. Once inside, and on the downward slope, we paused while Mike briefly recounted the history of the tunnel. It was opened in 1906, for single-deck cars only, initially to a temporary stub terminus at Aldwych. Through running to the Victoria Embankment – and onwards into south London – started in 1908. The subway was closed temporarily in 1930 for reconstruction to permit the operation of double-deck cars; it re-opened in January 1931. Plans to adapt the subway again, post-war, for trolleybuses came to naught (though one trolleybus was experimentally built with a wide, doored rear platform to allow off-side loading). The last tram passed through in the early hours of 6th April 1952, replaced by buses which initially followed a routeing via Temple Place, Arundel Street and Norfolk Street, now no longer served.



Photos by Barry Le Jeune

After closure, the subway was used as a bus park for the 1953 coronation, then as a lorry park. It housed the London Flood Defence Centre in the 1970s, prior to the construction of the Thames Barrier. It is now used by the London Borough of Camden as a store for various items of street furniture.

The track and central conduit are still in situ on the slope and throughout the tunnel. As we entered the tunnel itself, Mike pointed out how the adaption of the subway for double-deck cars – relatively easy in some respects – had been complicated by the need to accommodate overhead services such as sewers. The steel shuttering forming the roof of the tunnel (and the road surface in Kingsway above) was clearly visible and showed the evidence of ongoing maintenance.

By way of further historical background, Mike explained how the trams, dubbed "The Gondolas of the People", had been viewed as



"down-market" by the city authorities, who had resisted their penetration into streets in the heart of London. However, the removal of slum housing around Holborn, and the creation of the grand boulevard of Kingsway itself, allowed the LCC to provide a cross-city route by taking the trams underground.

The platforms of Holborn station remain clearly visible, with white-tiled walls still showing an outline of where the station name roundels were originally fixed (at two levels, for lower and upper deck passengers). Mike wistfully observed that no example of these station name-boards had made it into the Museum collection, though maybe one day it would come to pass? The two flights of steps at each end of the platform are also intact, though spare lamp standards and kerbstones now lie on the platform areas where once route 31, 33 and 35 passengers awaited their trams.

Moving further into the tunnel, Mike pointed out the cross-over immediately to the south of Holborn station, with tracks and conduit set in wooden setts - thought to be a unique survival. The party proceeded as far down the tunnel as was possible without crossing the boundary point between the London Borough of Camden (who knew we were there) and the City of Westminster (who didn't). Towards Aldwych, the tunnel roof begins to drop, to accommodate the intrusion of the north-east ramp of the Strand by-pass. In this, part of the tunnel still serves a transport purpose. Mike explained that the current plans for a Central London light rail route, running south from Euston towards the Elephant & Castle, do not envisage use of the tunnel; the cost of adapting the stations for full accessibility with lifts would be prohibitive. A more likely future scenario is the use of part of the tunnel for a subterranean booking hall in the planned rebuilding of Holborn station, mooted in connection with the Crossrail scheme. Mike mused that a disused tram tunnel running directly above a disused Underground line (the Aldwych branch) must also be unique.

We retraced our steps, pausing again on the ramp to examine the inspection cover for the detector by which the tram skate triggered operation of the traffic lights to permit an unhindered exit into the Southampton Row/Theobalds Road junction.

On behalf of all the participants on these tours, may I thank Mike Ashworth for making the access arrangements and for his informative commentary (repeated twice for the three separate parties); also the London Borough of Camden for allowing us privileged access to what is a fascinating and remarkable survivor of London's tramway heritage.

A Very Happy New Year to all Friends and readers.

EDITORIAL

There was a wealth of material for this issue. This arises partly from the increasing pace of Friends' meetings and visits, which we aim to report on here for the information of the majority of Friends who do not take part. Then there is important news from the Museum on the review of their collecting policy, which Oliver Green explains and seeks Friends' comments on. We also have a report on the recent operation of the "heritage" Sprague stock on the Paris Metro. This item, kindly supplied by Brian Hardy, has also appeared in *Underground News*; it is worthy of a wider audience here in view of the Friends' aspirations in respect of the Q stock, about which there is also a further update.

All this has left insufficient space for some regular items, along with other less time-critical reports. They will appear in the next (April) edition. This may appear a little later in the month than usual, as your editor is about to take an extended holiday in New Zealand. So please be patient if your communications are not immediately acknowledged in February and early March. I'll try to catch up as soon as possible after my return.

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MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Thursday 26th January
Friends' meeting at 55 Broadway at 1815 hrs.
Speaker: Hugh Sumner, Project Director, Olympics Bid Team, Transport for London.
"Olympic and Paralympic Transport for the 2012 London Games".

Wednesday 1st February
Friends' visit to the Geffrye Museum.
See separate item below.

Fri./Sat./Sun. 17th/18th/19th February
Friends' display and Museum sales stand at Brighton Modelworld at the Brighton Centre.

Saturday/Sunday 4th/5th March
Open Weekend at Acton Depot:
London's Transport in Miniature.
Free entry for Friends. Please check for engineering work affecting District and Piccadilly Line services east of Acton Town.

Sunday 2nd April
It is planned to operate a trip for Friends to the Cobham Bus Museum Open Day, to mark the 60th anniversary of the resumption of Green Line services after the second world war. Cost expected to be about £10, plus Cobham entry. For booking details, please contact Richard Meads:
E-mail: meadsrichard@tinyworld.co.uk
Phone: 01494 771078
Post: 98, Botley Road, Chesham, HP5 1XG.

Thursday 27th April
Annual Members' Meeting
at 55 Broadway at 1815 hours.
Followed by a talk. Expected subject:
East London Line Extension Project.
(Speaker to be confirmed in April newsletter.)

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR



Although you will be reading this in January, it is being written just after the historic date of 9th December. That day started for me at around 6am, when I left home ready to participate in early morning interviews prior to the last run of Routemasters on route 159. After the final trip, and all the sad farewells, I made for 55 Broadway and the volunteers' annual pre-Christmas party.

This latter event, temporarily moved from its usual Acton venue, gave me the opportunity to thank all those present (and the volunteers who could not make it) for their contributions to the Museum over the past year. As Director, I get huge support from the Friends' Committees and from the volunteers' collective efforts, which are so ably co-

ordinated by Joanne Howe. You should all be proud of these contributions, as I am; it earns me the envy of other museums in this country and abroad, few of which are anywhere near as fortunate in volunteers' support.

In the past few months, I have felt more like a director of a building site than a museum director. The interior of the Covent Garden site now stands empty and has taken on, once more, the appearance of a disused market hall. As I write this, our contractors are underpinning the neighbouring buildings and are getting ready to pour concrete to start the reconstruction phase. As we begin shortly to create the new museum on site, I know that the Friends will continue to devote their extensive energies and expertise to help us achieve the exciting goal of re-opening in 2007.

Thank you to you all – and a very happy new year.

Sam Mullins

VISIT TO GEFFRYE MUSEUM

The Friends of The Geffrye Museum (a fellow London Hub museum) have kindly invited London's Transport Museum Friends to a special morning visit on Wednesday 1st February.

The programme starts with coffee and biscuits on arrival at 1050 for 1100. There will then be an introductory talk by a member of the Geffrye Museum's education department. This will be followed by a tour of the special exhibition featuring "The West Indian Front Room", which presents the homes created by post-war West Indian immigrants to Britain since the 1950s. There will also be an opportunity to see inside the restored 18th Century Almshouse in the Museum grounds; this is not normally open to Museum visitors. At the conclusion of this programme, guests will be free to look round

the remainder of the Museum displays and to take lunch (own expense) in the licensed restaurant.

The Geffrye Museum is in Kingsland Road, Shoreditch, and can easily be reached by bus from Liverpool Street or Old Street Underground stations. You need to book for this visit, on which partners and friends are also welcome. Please send name(s) and a stamped addressed envelope to Barry Le Jeune, no later than Monday 23rd January. (For address see editorial: please use Barry's home address and do not send applications to the Friends' office.) It would be helpful to add a contact phone number and email address, if possible. There is no charge for this visit, thanks to the generosity of our friends (The Friends) at the Geffrye.

SATURDAY VOLUNTEERS?

Keen followers of the Museum's events programme may be aware that, in addition to the Depot tours on the last Friday of each month, there are now tours scheduled for the last Saturday of each month in 2006 (excluding December).

The Curatorial Department has suggested that, on these Saturdays, it would be useful to have teams of volunteers assisting with care of the collections. These working parties

would run to a similar format as the midweek events organised by Robert Excell (Curator – Collections Care). Hopefully, the benefits of this would be twofold: making the most of the Depot being staffed for tours on a Saturday and giving people the opportunity to participate in a working party outside of a weekday.

Saturday working parties are currently only a suggested possibility, dependent on the willingness of volunteers to give up their Saturdays for the Museum. It is anticipated

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

The Brunel Engine House has joined the list of venues kindly offering concessionary entry to Friends. Individual Friends will be able to visit the site on a "two for the price of one" basis. The Brunel Engine House Museum is open seven days a week and is situated in Railway Avenue, directly behind Rotherhithe Underground station on the East London Line. Visitors can relax on three new "Brunel Bridges" benches on the square outside the Museum, overlooking the Thames. Inside, a new state of the art display lights up the recesses of the ancient monument, with images of the Thames Tunnel illuminating the whole museum. The dramatic new panels have been funded by London Renaissance & Heritage Lottery Fund.

that the work will involve some lifting and carrying, as well as the usual sorting, cleaning and re-housing of collection items – so plenty of extra "puff" will be required.

If you think that you might like to be involved with this aspect of Museum operations, and would like to know some more, please do get in touch. I can be contacted at the Museum on: 020 7379 6344 ext: 2263 or email: joanne.howe@ltmuseum.co.uk

Joanne Howe

AEC AND THE ROUTEMASTER

Colin Curtis was the speaker at the Friends' meeting on 24th November 2005. This was held in the impressive surroundings of the former Chairmen's office and (later) Board Room in LT's headquarters at 55 Broadway. Lord Ashfield looked down on the proceedings from his portrait on the wall.

Colin explained that he would be talking on a familiar subject, but with a different slant. In preparing the talk, he had drawn on the unpublished biography of Bob Fryers, a Director at AEC; this story of the development of the Routemaster would therefore be told with an AEC perspective.

With the formation of the LPTB in 1933, the LGOC's former bus building subsidiary elected for a separate, contractual relationship with the new organisation. This gave AEC the first option to build buses to LT's requirements. The LPTB could (and did) use secondary sources (initially Leyland and later Daimler); AEC had the corresponding right to decline its "first option" status (though in practice never did).

When Routemaster development started in 1951 (initially under the "IM – Integrally Mounted" designation), AEC had already designed the successful under-floor engined single-deck Regal IV (RF). The company considered a corresponding under-floor double-decker (the Regent IV), but this was abandoned. By this time Leyland were already developing the first rear-engined prototypes, which eventually became the Atlantean.

The specification for what became the Routemaster was developed by LT engineers under the leadership of A.A.M. Durrant. The specification (of which a copy is in the Museum library) set out 13 key engineering and operational requirements. These were passed to AEC for their consideration and response. On many of these points, there was immediate agreement: the use of aluminium (to reduce weight, albeit with a cost penalty); 64 seats; and the use of smaller tyres to permit a tighter turning circle.

Other aspects of the specification led to greater debate and some differences of opinion. LT proposed an hydraulic gearbox, for example, operated by electric selection, as had been installed experimentally in a few RTs operated from Turnham Green garage. AEC originally preferred an air-operated gearbox, based on their railcar designs. Problems of adapting this rail-based application to buses soon became apparent and the LT approach was adopted for the prototypes.

LT's specification went for a powered, hydraulic braking system, again as tried on RTs at Turnham Green. AEC preferred air, but agreed to LT's proposal provided LT took the risk, which they did without subsequent regret. Power steering was also raised as a possibility. LT were concerned that, if the Routemaster had power steering, drivers would be reluctant to drive any bus without it. A compromise was reached whereby the power steering "kicked in" once the driver's effort was equivalent to that for an unladen RT's steering wheel effort.

Suggestions were also made about the possibility of using an up-rated smaller engine, rather than a down-rated larger one. This was tested by fitting RM2 with the smaller STL engine. It returned poorer fuel consumption, which confirmed the wisdom of using the larger engine (a lesson later to be learnt with the single-deck AEC Swifts!).

LT were also impressed with the apparent efficiency of the Gardner engine, but investigation showed that this was achieved through a



Colin Curtis is seen here (with RM1) on the occasion of the Worthing Bus Rally in July 2005. From left to right: the Museum's Bob Bird; Colin; The Mayor of Worthing, Nick John; and Friend Jim Hawkins (who is a member of the rally organising Committee). Niel Chilvers took the photo.

"heavy" accelerator pedal which discouraged the driver from "putting his foot down". LT and AEC agreed to maintain a lighter pedal pressure, which allowed the driver to keep his heel on the floor, while moving the rest of his foot between accelerator and brake.

Colin explained some of the psychology that had been used by the LT engineers over the input of design consultants for the exterior appearance of the Routemaster. Overheating of the front brakes was a problem with the prototype design and it became clear that some of the front panelling would have to be cut back to improve airflow to the brakes. The engineers overstated their requirements; the consultants accepted a compromise, which just happened to be in line with the engineers' true beliefs!

Summing up, Colin concluded that the LT and AEC partnership had been characterised by good people relationships. Leyland sought to break some of these close ties after the take-over, but never succeeded in doing so. The success of the Routemaster was based on the fact that the original LT specification had been drawn up by people who knew what was wanted. This showed in details such as the Routemaster's rounded shape, which meant that the overhanging branches of trees were just swept aside, without the need for today's protection bars; and, with no sharp body corners, the Routemaster was thoroughly cleaned, front and back, by automatic washers.

That said, Colin accepted that the Routemaster had now "done its bit". Fatigue was setting in and too many modifications had been made to the original design. The initial construction cost of a Routemaster had been £9000, compared with £8000 for an alternative, standard model. London had had good value out of that extra £1000 over the last 50 years. In Colin's view the future should be with a side-engined double-decker. He himself had developed such a design – the Q Master – in which one manufacturer had expressed interest. Time would tell if others agreed with his vision.

After the meeting, Derek Fisk made a presentation to the Museum of a painting of Elmers End garage, in memory of John Cunningham and other staff who lost their lives in a wartime bombing raid. We will have the full story in the April newsletter.

CORPORATE RECEPTION



The annual reception for Corporate Members was held at the Imperial War Museum on 5th October 2005. Over 350 guests attended. Tim O'Toole, Managing Director of London Underground, acted as co-host. During the course of the reception, Friends' Chairman, Ian Arthurton, handed Sam Mullins a cheque for £200,000, representing a further contribution from the Friends to the Museum's CGP redisplay project. This brings the Friends' total contributions to date to £500,000, with more promised.

WELCOME

We welcome the following new corporate member:

Mayer Brown Rowe & Maw (Silver)

4-Rail Scientific Services have been granted Honorary Corporate Membership, in recognition of their invaluable help and support in identifying potentially hazardous materials in the Museum's collections, so facilitating any necessary remedial work.

THE ALL-NIGHT TOUR

Brian Hardy describes the operation of heritage Sprague stock on the Paris Métro on 29th/30th October 2005:

On the night of Saturday night/Sunday, a rail tour operated on certain sections of the Paris Métro. Participants had the added bonus of not only an extra hour (because of the clocks going back one hour) but, for the first time, an historic train running on Météor line 14.

The tour started from Villette depot, at the northern end of line 7, just after midnight. It ran south as far as Place d'Italie, following a normal service train, crossing over onto 'pneu' line 6. There was a pause of five minutes at Quai de la Gare, which was enough time for photographs and for the organ grinder and monkey to perform – every good rail tour has one!

The next item on the itinerary was the historic 'first' – onto line 14. Access to this line is via the connection east of Bercy, which is 'protected' by a metal mesh shutter, presumably to keep out graffiti hooligans on this wholly automated line. Once onto line 14, the train continued north through Gare de Lyon, reaching Saint-Lazare at 01.35. Your writer was intrigued as to what would happen when the train berthed at Saint-Lazare, especially with the train doors not marrying up with the platform edge doors. Quite simply, those doors that matched were opened (manually) and those that didn't were kept closed. No fuss, no problem – and everyone had the opportunity to get off.

Because the tunnels are deep on this line, and larger in size than the conventional Métro tunnels, more noise was generated, especially from the Sprague train – the "music" was incredible! On line 14, several trains are stabled 'on the line', not only in platforms (Madeleine, Saint-Lazare and Bibliothèque) but also either side of those stations in the tunnels as well. These trains, of course, had to be moved to accommodate the special train and so we saw several empty trains of MP89 stock being moved about the line. There was no need for extra drivers to do this – it was all done by the click of a 'mouse' from the control centre. It was interesting to note that the tunnels on line 14 have less graffiti in the tunnels than other lines. The physical barrier between line 6 and 14 is very necessary, for the consequences of graffiti vandals wandering along the tunnel to line 14, which has no drivers, is not hard to imagine. However, it is still possible to access the line through ventilation shafts. The negative point, as far as the graffiti vandal is concerned, is that trains on line 14 run much faster than on the conventional Métro and thus it is more difficult for their 'work' to be seen. Having had a 25-minute stop at Saint-Lazare, the tour continued south to Bibliothèque, where it reversed and returned to the line 6 connection at Bercy.

The disused station at Saint-Martin (closed since September 1939) was next on the agenda, which was reached via line 6 to Daumesnil, and then onto line 8, which took us back onto steel rails. By this time it was 03.00, when the time went back to 02.00 as the train was passing through Montgallet. At Saint-Martin, the opportunity was given for participants to visit the disused parts of the station, which still boasts ceramic advertisements in the former ticket hall from the pre-war period. The station served both lines 8 and 9 but, being so close to both République and Strasbourg – Saint-Denis, it was never reopened.

The connection between line 8 and 5 brought the train into République on line 5, but it came to a halt rather abruptly – just before 03.00 (winter time!). In the tunnel ahead were graffiti vandals spraying the walls; sadly, they escaped before the security services were able to act, even though traction current was taken off immediately. This caused a 30-minute delay to the tour and the photo "run-in" at Gare d'Austerlitz had to be cancelled. (Here, it was planned that the train would continue on line to Campio-Formio to reverse, those wishing to take photographs being on hand at Gare d'Austerlitz.) The train instead reversed and continued north to Gare du Nord, arriving at 03.45 for the "champagne" stop (see photo above) and a tour around the RATP's Instruction Centre (Centre d'Instruction).

Departure from Gare du Nord was at 04.20. The tour continued back to République, reversed onto line 8, and then another lively run to Concorde for transfer to 'pneu' line 1. Once on line 1, it was then a run westwards to Esplanade de La Défense for reversal via the emergency crossover just east of the station. The final leg of the tour was to Porte Maillot, arriving at 05.10. Although that was the end of the rail tour, there was still much of interest. The train terminated in



the former 'departure' platform at Porte Maillot, which has been closed to passengers since 1936. The arrival platform at the other end of the loop has been in occasional use as a reception centre since 1992 and has a static five-car Sprague train in its platform. It was here that the tour ended and hot chocolate and croissants were served; to get to this platform, tour participants were invited to walk via the disused loop at track level!

And so ended another very special rail tour, expertly organised and operated by ADEMAs (Association D'Exploitation du Material Sprague), who even had a "plan B" when things didn't go to schedule. The thought of something similar happening in London is perhaps too much wishful thinking – the 1938 stock train on the Jubilee Line Extension, stopping at North Greenwich or Canary Wharf (with platform edge doors) for a station tour, and then a stop and tour around a disused station?

A month or so prior to the tour Brian describes, Sprague stock took part in the Parisian "Open House" weekend programme on 17th/18th September. There were three specific "Metro" events: a display of rolling stock at Porte d'Ivry; Sprague stock operation in public service on line 7; and public Sprague stock rides on a track at a military establishment in Versailles, powered by a diesel generator but still making all the right sounds (according to Brian!).

HUBBING IN DOCKLANDS

At the meeting on 29th September 2005, Friends of London's Transport Museum were joined by Friends of the other three London "Hub" Museums – the Museum of London, The Geffrye and the Horniman – at a presentation and reception at the Museum in Docklands. The introductory talk was given by David Somerset, the host Museum's Adult Learning Officer. David gave an informative, illustrated description of all the various galleries and displays at the Museum, covering the history of trade and life in and around the London dock area from Roman times to the present day.

This whetted the appetite for a full exploration of the museum's galleries, but sadly there wasn't time that evening. However, all participants received tickets valid for a full year, so there will be plenty of time for return visits. The September evening concluded with a wine and extensive "finger buffet" reception in the unique surroundings of Sailortown, a recreation of the maze of lanes, alleyways and shops which backed on to the riverside wharves and docks in the Dickensian era of 1840 – 1850. Thanks are expressed to David and his supporting team at the Museum in Docklands for his informative presentation and hospitality; and to Doreen Walford and Winifred Bindley from the Friends of the Museum of London for organising the catering.

The Museum in Docklands is open every day (except Christmas/ New Year) from 1000 to 1800 hours. Tickets are valid for one year. Remember the Friends two-for-one offer!

NOT A FRIEND?

If you are reading this newsletter, but are not (yet) a Friend, we would be pleased to welcome you into our ranks. Further details of Friends' benefits, and an application form, can be found on the "Support Us" section of the Museum website: www.ltmuseum.co.uk; or contact the Friends office- the address is on the front page.

Q STOCK UPDATE

As briefly reported in the October 2005 newsletter, the Friends have taken a first, but significant, step towards the restoration of four of the Museum's historic Q stock carriages. These previously operated on the District and East London Lines until their withdrawal from service in the early 1970s. Their build dates range from 1923 to 1938.

The Friends hope to restore these carriages so that they may operate as a unit on the sub-surface sections of the London Underground network. The unit would participate in unique public trips, as well as being used to celebrate historic events and for educational presentations. These carriages were operating when the Olympics were held in London in 1948. The Friends' objective is to have them running again for the Olympics in 2012.

This is the first time that the Friends themselves have embarked on a restoration project, having previously been the provider of funding to the Museum for road and rail vehicle restoration. We have been awarded a £45,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant to assist us with a feasibility study. If this confirms the practicability and affordability of full restoration, the next step would be to apply for a follow-up bid to the HLF to cover a significant part of the restoration cost. The major element in the initial study is the preparation of the conservation management plan, which includes the

technical restoration specification. Associated work covers the development of a comprehensive access, audience and education plan, detailing how it is intended there stored unit should be used, and compliance with the extensive raft of health and safety and other regulations.

Preparation of the specification is being done by a small group of retired London Underground personnel, who have considerable railway rolling stock expertise, with curatorial advice from Museum staff. Early in 2006, the Friends will be seeking expressions of interest from companies able to undertake the restoration work, with the intention of seeking tenders next Spring, to establish the likely cost of a full restoration to operational condition.

The Friends are determined to establish a practicable and affordable restoration project for these historic cars, that will hopefully see them running alongside the already restored 1938 tube stock unit. Exactly what is possible will be determined by the initial planning work and tender cost. If restoring the cars to operational condition proves impracticable, we will explore the alternative of extensive restoration of some of the cars to enhanced display condition.



One of the Q stock cars (4182 dating from 1923) is seen here shortly after transfer from Acton Depot. The other cars provisionally scheduled for restoration are 08063, dating from 1936, and 4416/7 from 1938.

Whatever way forward is eventually agreed, we will have to demonstrate whole-hearted commitment from individual Friends to unlock financial and other support from outside bodies. As always, much of the Friends' support will no doubt come from volunteer expertise and "hands on" effort. But we will need to ask the Friends for financial contributions too. There will be more on this in the next newsletter, when we shall announce a special fundraising programme specifically for this project. So please don't spend all your spare cash in the January sales. Save something for the Q stock!

ACQUISITIONS

MEDALS OF A FIRST WORLD WAR BUSMAN

Thanks to the generosity of the Friends, the Museum has recently acquired a very significant group of medals and photographs relating to First World War bus driver Charles Lee.

Before the war, Lee was a driver at Chelverton Road Garage, Putney. In 1914, the army was desperately short of motorised vehicles and looked to the LGOC to fill the shortfall. Lee was one of the first busmen to volunteer. Together with crews from all over London, he helped man a fleet of 70 D-type Daimlers requisitioned by the Royal Naval Division (RND) in September. The D-types were quickly pressed into service ferrying soldiers from Dunkirk to Antwerp. They were also used for patrolling Belgian villages, where they came under frequent attack. Following the fall of Antwerp, the buses played a major role in evacuating British wounded in what became known as "The Retreat From Mons".



At first, buses and crews retained their London liveries and uniforms. Soon, both were in khaki and the crews redesignated as Royal Marines. Their success in Belgium impressed the High Command and in October 1914 several hundred buses, mainly B-types, were requisitioned for the Army Service Corps (ASC). In total, almost a thousand bus chassis were taken from the LGOC for military use.

In 1915, the original RND busmen, including Lee, returned to England, where he became an army driving instructor at Osterley, before returning to his pre-war job.

The medal group, including 'Mons Star', is extremely rare. Most of the LGOC men who served in the War did so with the ASC, and their medals are inscribed as such, whereas Lee's are engraved as "MT [motor transport] Driver, RN Div".

The medals will be displayed in the new Museum, together with those of another LGOC driver, Walter Cornell, who drove his B-type with the ASC.

WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?

Only two Friends ventured suggestions as to the origins of the bronze plaque featured in the October 2005 competition. Tony Reed wondered whether it might be an identification plate from a service vehicle, as the coding (Z 859 JX) appeared similar to those used for such vehicles (*but not exactly*



so: Editor). Ron Brewer thought the plate might have been fixed to a bus garage, opened in 1937, perhaps Windsor? As there is no clear, convincing solution yet, we'll keep this competition open for the time being.

And so to this time's puzzle. Where was this impressive piece of masonry originally sited and when? And where is it displayed now? Answers, please, by email or post to the Editor's home address (see page 2) by the copy date for the April edition.

LETTERS

Colour or Black & White?

Boy, did I see red when I read the review of "Bus Operators of the 1970s: The South East and Eastern Counties of England" (*October 2005 newsletter*) regarding photographs. "It's a pity not all could be reproduced in colour – more than half are in black and white and these undoubtedly have less impact."

What rubbish! Without doubt, the best pictures in the book are those in black and white. How many picture books have we seen in recent years purporting to cover earlier periods in which third-rate, badly taken and faded pictures are used, purely to bleat that the book is "all-colour", when vast quantities of perfectly taken, pin-sharp and accurate black and white photos are available and have been ignored? Look at any book with colour pictures of LT red, London Country green, Southdown apple green etc. and there are as many different livery shades as there are photographs. Which one is capturing the accurate representation of that livery?

Black and white photography is both an art and a science. Museums surely are concerned with accurate records. Do you really want to consign the superb historical records of the likes of Alan Cross et al to the dustbin in preference to so much third-rate colour? (*Certainly not: Editor.*)

As someone who is proud to still be taking black and white photographs, and who has collected them over many years, I feel sorry for any young enthusiasts starting out today who want to acquire pictures taken over the recent past. Unlike the practice with black and white, very few amateurs lavish care over home colour printing, being at the mercy of commercial companies; and even in this digital age few such pictures are available for sale. There are far more photographers out on the street these days, but it has become a selfish pastime and very few of these views are made available to others. Those that are are generally of very poor quality. In twenty years time, historians will be desperately appealing for pictorial records of the past thirty years!

Malcolm Papes - Ilford

London Bus and Tram Stops

Desmond Croome (Newsletter 83) is correct. There is no published comprehensive history of London's bus and tram stops. The spread of bus stops since the first LCC tram stop signs were installed in 1909, and LGOC 'Queue Sign Posts' appeared circa 1916, is a complex story. A problem is that some records have been disposed of or lost – in particular, those for trams and Country area bus routes.

Some published items have been incorrect or misleading, or needed more background research. The Euston Road – Seven Sisters scheme is an interesting example because it, and what followed, show how Ashfield and Pick were planning the spread of fixed stops. Almost all of the 50 or so stops involved had been in place since 1927 or before. Since the early 1920s, the Traffic Commissioner had been defining places where buses must, or must not, stop. On some major sections of bus route, especially those parallel with tram services, the right of bus passengers to 'stop on demand' had become a dead letter.

In March 1935, there were already about 4,000 bus and coach stops in and around London. The Euston Road – Seven Sisters scheme was the first full-scale trial of Hans Schleger's designs for stop flags, using the roundel as the dominant element. The exercise was then repeated in 1936-37, with the new standard flags, on twelve corridors which had had bus stops installed in 1927-32 and needed only a handful of additional stops to complete the "set". The LGOC stop flags along these routes were replaced by the new roundel flags. Trolleybus routes, including 654 only months after it had been flagged with pre-roundel types, were also flagged as they were converted (but Fulwell routes 601-605 kept many of their LUT flags until the late 1940s).

The Orders for extensions of the Fixed Stop Scheme, as it was known from January 1936, seem to have been a formality. Not until October 1937 was it reported to the Board that the 900-plus stops involved in the twelve corridors had been an "experiment".

The Scheme was extended area by area between 1937 and May 1939. The programme was then all-but halted by emergency work, but in 1942 and 1943 about 5,000 stops were installed, this time route by route. This was despite shortages of materials; it was sanctioned, not because of the blackout, but in order to save fuel and tyre and brake wear.

David Lawrence's *A Logo for London* (Capital Transport) has a good introduction to flag history; readers can also work through the photograph backgrounds in various London bus histories. As to the bus stop network, I have been researching its history with the Omnibus Society's London Historical Research Group. The first definitive text went into the OS archive and to the Museum in 2002. Publication is still some way off, and some questions of fact may never be resolved; but, as a useful result of research, I have been able to identify some suitable posts for the Museum before they were lost in the great concrete stop-post purge.

Laurie Mack - Hayes, Kent

Bus and Tram Stops 2

I have been following with interest the correspondence in the newsletter about bus and tram stops. I thought readers might be interested in two photographs I took of the 1935-8 period "rectangular" style of bus stop signs still in situ in the early 1990s, by which time they were very rare. One of these (right) was in Stoke Newington, Church Street, and the other not that far away in St. Paul's Road, Islington, near the junction with Essex Road (below). The former was



supported by a contemporary concrete post and the latter by a "Birmingham Guild" type metal pole.



I wonder whether either dated from the experimental scheme referred to in Desmond Croome's letter (Newsletter 83). Euston and Tottenham were, and are, linked by route 73, albeit only Tottenham Garage journeys would have proceeded beyond Stoke Newington in 1935. This route serves the stop in Stoke Newington, Church Street. The St.

Paul's Road stop is just off the 73, but is on route 30 which also runs to Euston (but not Tottenham).

I do not know when these signs were removed, but I'd like to think that they are in the Museum's collection. Does anybody know?

The history and manufacture of road services street furniture is, as Desmond Croome says, poorly recorded. Perhaps one of the Newsletter's readers might have been employed in this part of London Transport's operations and could shed some more light on the subject?

Andrew Colebourne

Friends' Visit to Crich

I was very pleased to read the report in the October 2005 newsletter about the Friends' successful visit to Crich tramway village, and the complementary comments about the London trams in the Crich collection.

The workshop at Crich carried out the restoration of MET car 331, as well as a large part of the work to complete LPTB car 1662. Restoration of LCC car 106, and the lower deck of 1662, was carried out by the London County Council Tramways Trust at its "Bonwell Street" workshop in Bethnal Green that functioned from 1971 to 1995. Although the Trust had to cease practical work on London trams, it is raising the substantial amounts of money required to fund the restoration of London United car 159. This task has now started in earnest and is expected to take about four years to complete. The material costs will be contained to some extent by a grant of £20,000 made by the PRISM Fund of the Libraries and Archives Council, but further contributions towards the restoration would be very welcome.

The Trust has also started to collect funds specifically for the eventual restoration of LCC experimental car No. 1, although timescales for this project are very vague at the moment.

Any Friend who would like to make a contribution to help with these projects, either as a single donation or on a regular basis, should contact our Treasurer, Alan Bertram, at 2, Sanctuary Close, Kessingland, Lowestoft, NR 33 7SX.

Ian Ross
Chairman and Trustee,
London County Council Tramways Trust

FUTURE COLLECTING

The Museum is currently reviewing its Collecting Policy and is consulting on this both with the Friends and with colleagues in the wider museum sector. Our existing policy was developed in the late 1990s, when the Museum was part of London Transport. Transport for London is an organisation with a very different remit; it is not simply a bigger version of LT. LTM's collections now need to fulfil a wider and more ambitious purpose than simply to reflect and record the history and heritage of the former parent body.

LTM is committed, under the national Museum Registration scheme administered by MLA (Museums, Libraries & Archives, the Government's advisory body for the sector), to reviewing our policy at least every five years. Registration is now being replaced by a new national standards scheme called Accreditation. As part of our application for Accreditation by MLA in 2006, we are required to submit a new Collecting Policy which has been endorsed by the Museum's governing body, (TfL).

A major inquiry into the future of museum collecting and collections in the UK by the Museums Association, called *Collections for the Future*, was published in June 2005. LTM's approach needs to take appropriate account of the findings and recommendations of this important study.

Most importantly, the Museum's experience in planning and preparing for the Covent Garden Project has suggested a need to change the focus and nature of future collecting, better to meet the vision and priorities of the new Museum. We decided, at an early stage of CGP, that the new Museum at Covent Garden must have a wider and stronger collections base than the old, but that the collections on display had to be made to work harder. They

need to inspire and inform stories that have relevance and interest to our current and future audiences.

It became apparent, as we planned the CGP content, that a good deal of the existing collections acquired in the 1990s had little display or interpretation value. CGP is about redeveloping LTM to become the leading urban transport museum in Europe, by explaining, exciting and educating our visitors about London's past, present and future transport. We seemed to be risking Citizen Kane syndrome, collecting and warehousing large numbers of items for no obvious purpose. If the collections could not contribute to the Museum's mission, what was the justification for acquiring and preserving them?

We kicked off our collecting review with a full day seminar and brainstorming at the Depot in November. Every department of the Museum was represented, along with the Friends, TfL archives, the Museums Association and two key museums that are currently reviewing their own policies: the National Railway Museum and Glasgow Transport Museum.

One of the concerns voiced in our discussion was that, by tightening up our collecting criteria, we risk excluding challenging and ambitious acquisition projects. However, the real value of a new policy will not lie in restricting future acquisitions, but in ensuring that they are made only with a defined outcome and purpose. The policy should not be either a wish list or an exclusion list, but a framework to guide actions and process.

It needs to take account of both long- and short-term resource implications for storage, conservation and sustainability of the collections. Inevitably, this means taking a responsible approach to disposal, as well as acquisition, and working in closer partnership with other museums and TfL archives.

Ten years ago most of our acquisitions came from within London Transport, particularly through station modernisation on the Underground. Our policy now is to recommend the retention of heritage features *in situ*, wherever possible; we do not wish to keep expanding our very comprehensive collections of enamel signs, tiles, train describers and the like. We also have quite enough passimeters, lift and escalator equipment, signals and electrical switchgear.

In the next five years, our acquisition of large objects will diminish considerably. This is not just because we are running out of space to store them; but also because the hardware alone says so little about people's experience of transport in London. If we want to excite our audiences with the idea that public transport really is the lifeblood of the city, our approach to collecting in the future has to take account of their interests, as well as the expert view on what is technically or operationally significant. Oral histories, on video as well as tape, the passengers' experience as well as the staff's, the unofficial accounts and the urban myths will all become as important in our future collecting as equipment and vehicles. We will continue to collect; but it will be more active, selective and targeted than in the past, with as much emphasis on virtual and digital material as on traditional museum artefacts.

The new policy will be finalised for approval by the end of March; once agreed, it will go on to the Museum's website as a public document. In the meantime, I would welcome any comments or suggestions about our future approach to collecting; but please remember that this is about the Museum's *policy*, not about drawing up a list of inclusions and exclusions. I look forward to hearing from you!

Oliver Green - Head Curator
oliver.green@ltmuseum.co.uk



BOOK REVIEWS



London Transport in the 1960s.

Michael H.C. Baker.
Ian Allan Publishing. £15.99.
ISBN 0 7110 3072 3 0.

This is the third volume in Michael Baker's ongoing review of LT operations decade by decade.

The 1960s saw great social change, with rising car ownership and alternative employment opportunities impacting on transport operations. Both bus and Underground fleets saw extensive, standardised replacements; and other infrastructure was updated.

Chapters in Michael's book focus on: trolleybus decline and replacement; departures of charismatic fleet veterans such as Met. Line T-stock, "standard" tube stock and T and TD buses, along with RTLs and RTWs; celebration of the Met. Line centenary; the rise of the Routemaster in all its guises (Michael expresses the personal view that there were too many of these); the opening of the Victoria Line; and the early experiences with one-man (the acceptable term then) buses. There is an interesting final chapter on bus preservation by LT itself and

by voluntary groups such as LOTS and the Cobham Bus Museum.

Much of this agenda is familiar ground, of course, though Michael's approach of recounting the transport developments alongside personal recollections of the times gives the story a social context. Just occasionally, he hints at less well-known aspects, such as the "abandoned notion" to absorb the Country Area fleet into the Central one, about which one would have liked to know more. A few errors have crept into the text. Surely the original flat-fare on the Red Arrow services was an easily-collected sixpence, and not the multi-coin 4d; and the Merlin prototype XMB 15 worked on route 387 out of the local garage at Tring and not Garston?

The book is extensively illustrated with black and white photographs. Some, particularly those of the Victoria Line, are familiar, official shots; a few others, notably those taken at Neasden, seemingly in poor light, have reproduced poorly; but there are some gems too. This reviewer's favourite is an unusual, but evocative, shot of an RTL (or, more accurately, part of one) caught on Tower Bridge against a background of dockside cranes. (BLJ)

We have had to hold over, until next time, reviews of the following books:

Underground Maps After Beck: Maxwell J.Roberts

Tramway Memories – London: Paul Collins

Rails to Metro-land: Clive Foxell

IN COMMITTEE

Amongst the items discussed at recent Friends' committee meetings were:

- Agreed in principle a further contribution of £100,000 to the Covent Garden Redisplay Project, bringing the total Friends' contributions to £700,000.
- Agreed funding for repair work on the radiator of B340, with the intention that the bus would be roadworthy in 2006.
- Noted that volunteers' work on the conservation of the Museum's photo negative collection was nearing completion, with thanks to those involved.
- Noted that planning was proceeding on an active programme of Friends' meetings and visits for 2006.
- Noted with pleasure the success of the Acton Miniature Railway on Depot Open Days, resulting in receipts of £1,325 in 2005.

SHOP NEWS

Firstly, may I, on behalf of myself and the Shop team, wish all the many Friends and their families a Happy and Healthy 2006, and thank those of you who are our customers, occasional or regular, for your continued patronage.

2005 has been a remarkable year. The planned rundown of the Museum shop, in preparation for the Museum rebuild, commenced in late February; and the detailed planning for the post 2007 shop was completed in June. As already recorded, the saga of the temporary shop, despite the ten months of planning, was only resolved at the last possible moment, due to endless legal issues. The final closure and moving of the shop into stores and Unit 26 was accompanied by a full stock-take and the reluctant relinquishing of five full-time and five part-time staff (reflecting our reduced circumstances). And, of course, there were the Routemasters.

The final few days of the 159s led to some extra-ordinary scenes, both on the road and here at the temporary Shop, particularly for the models of the 159 RMLs. The models of RML 901 and 2759 were, as many of you know, delivered (mostly) just in time. The final few boxes arrived after the event, once the inevitable production quality problems associated with vinyl stickers had been resolved.

Separately, and somewhat earlier, Arriva had commissioned us to produce a model of RM 2217, limited to 500 pieces. 150 were earmarked for a Staff Awards event and the other 350 were allocated to us to arrange production of a variation at a later date. It was to be very much later that TfL and Arriva decided that RM 2217 was to perform the very last journey of all. Augmented production of an RM model was by then no longer possible to meet the 9th December deadline. We have commissioned Exclusive First Editions to produce a final version of RM 2217, with the precise branding as carried on its last journey on Route 159 (which was changed, late in the game, from that originally intended to wording promoting the Heritage Routes); this should be available for the Open Weekend at Acton Depot (4th/5th



Pictured here is one of the Museum's two specially commissioned models of the final RMLs on route 159. This one is RML 901. The companion model carries the RML 2759 fleet number. The extra-rare models of RM 2217, which are the subject of the Friends' competition, carry the same external message.

March 2006). We have been able to secure around 1700 pieces of this model; the casting is now to be rebuilt and upgraded. One last RML standard release from the existing casting is scheduled from EFE for later in Spring 2006. Details of this are not available at the time of writing.

A few highlights of the year need recording. My favourite book has to be *London Transport Green Line* by Laurie Akehurst (published by Capital Transport), which has continued to sell really well, a testimony to the author's diligence and the excellent picture and graphic content. If you don't already have a copy, its purchase will delight. Another Capital book to savour has been *Slam Doors on the Southern* by Michael Welch. This book captures really well the last days of a largely unsung icon – the erstwhile Southern Region suburban and regional electric units.

Models have been too numerous to mention, but my award for the best, and most interesting addition to anyone's model shelves, has to be the Sunstar RMC coach. My award for the most unlikely, but thoroughly satisfying, model has to be Britbus's Alexander bodied Dennis Loline. Happy childhood memories of these ugly, but distinctive, vehicles have been rekindled.

What of 2006? We have plenty of plans to keep the Friends engaged. The shop is the principal source of cash generation now that

the Museum is closed, and we are committed to innovation and new ideas. The priority work for me is to develop an extensive range of new merchandise for the reopening of the Shop in 2007.

I hope you continue to patronise us in our small, but perfectly formed, temporary home. I am usually available to see Friends (without appointment) on Saturdays.

And finally...

The existing EFE model of RM2217 on Route 159 (with the original advertising reading "Thank you Routemaster for over 50 years service") is exceptionally scarce. A large part of the production was secured by Arriva and I am left with very few to distribute. After much discussion, I have decided to allocate 24 of these rarities to the Friends.

I am inviting those interested in purchasing one of these models (at £24.99) to send a postcard, giving one choice of a special commission you would like LTM to produce for the re-opening of the new Museum. This must be from an existing or announced casting from Britbus, Creative Master, Corgi OOC or Exclusive First Editions. Your ideas are, as always, invaluable.

Please send your (single) entries to: Friends' RM2217 Competition, London's Transport Museum, 39 Wellington Street, London WC2E 7BB (noting your name, Friend's number and daytime telephone number).

Closing date of the competition will be 28th February 2006. No multiple entries will be accepted.

A public draw will take place at the Acton Weekend on 4th/5th March 2006 and the winners and successful 'bidders' notified shortly afterwards. **The first 3 entries drawn will receive the model with our compliments.** The remaining Friends whose names are drawn will be entitled to buy one of these rare models. If a selected 'bidder' decides not to purchase, another entry will be randomly selected in his (or her) place.

Thank you again for your continued and vital support.
Michael Walton

ROUTEMASTER FAREWELL

Laurie Akehurst shares his thoughts on conducting the Museum's RM1 on some of the last Routemaster trips on route 159. (Barry Le Jeune took the photo.)

It all started with route 8 on 4th June 2004 – RM1 running in public service on the last day of Routemaster operation on that, and later other, routes; and now, on 8th December 2005, it was the turn of guest vehicles to run on the 159, the last-remaining, exclusive RM route. Graham Page was my driver (with a guest appearance by Leon Daniels for one return trip). We were in good time on arriving at Marble Arch for our first scheduled working; but, through no fault of our own, we left about 30 minutes down. Due to this, we ran light via Victoria to start work at County Hall. In the best tradition of running light, I laid the front blinds down on the front seats. When did anyone last see this done?



We had a fairly quiet run to Brixton Garage; but on our next three journeys were extremely busy. RM1 has a large enthusiast following and, as soon as it appears in

service, fills up quickly. My emotions on this last day? I was really too busy to have any. Checking how many, if any, passengers I could take at the next stop, giving my driver three bells and issuing complimentary Gibson tickets took all my time. It was really good to run up Brixton Hill followed by ST922, conducted by Graham Smith of Cobham Bus Museum.

Every time we got to a terminus, it was becoming increasingly difficult to clear the bus of passengers; when we reached County Hall on our last journey, we had our photographs taken by some of the many photographers, before being allowed to run back to Acton. All in all, a day never to be forgotten! I felt privileged to have played a small part in London's farewell to the Routemaster. On the following day, it was quite rightly the turn of the regular crews from Brixton Garage to be in the spotlight. Was it really the end of the RM? Well there are the heritage routes; and what about the 8th of December becoming an annual event?

Final copy date for the April 2006 issue is: 10th March 2006