



The Friends of London's Transport Museum

NEWSLETTER No. 87 - OCTOBER 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.)

This newsletter is produced by JR Printing Services, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 9AA.

FRIENDS' VISIT TO WROUGHTON

Tony Brereton reports:

There was rather a surreal quality to the initial stages of the Friends' visit on Wednesday 13th September 2006 to the Science Museum's reserve collection at Wroughton in Wiltshire (or, as it prefers to be known, NMSI, Wroughton – NMSI signifying the National Museum of Science and Industry). The huge party of members and partners emerged from the modern environment of Swindon station to find awaiting us the promised 40-year-old Thamesdown Transport (formerly Swindon Corporation) Northern Counties front-entrance double-deck Daimler bus, which conveyed us sedately on our journey south to Wroughton. As the climb up onto the Ridgeway steepened, our progress became rather less than sedate and comments were heard about the incongruity of a Daimler finding the climb so difficult. I was even reminded of my much loved recording of a Castle climbing Dainton Bank, after a station stop at Newton Abbot, scarcely making it to the summit without stalling! But make it we did to the disused airfield, where we were joined by the few members who had found their own way. We then continued on to Hanger D4 where we were greeted by a guard of honour of a dozen top of the range Bentley cars, with 06 and 56 registrations, and inside the hangar by an array of tables with champagne glasses. Sadly this opulence was for a later trade event and not for us!

Our host for the day was Mark Goodall, who welcomed us and acted as an indefatigable guide around two of the hangars: D4, with its display of old bicycles, motorcycles, cars and planes; and, after lunch, L4, which housed commercial vehicles, buses and a huge collection of agricultural machines and implements. Mark explained that the three-runway airfield at Wroughton had been used for engine repair and testing during the war, rather than for operational purposes, and the hangars had been camouflaged by grass and other means. The collection included items from other museums as well as from the Science Museum and its satellites.

In D4, the range of cycles took us from a German hobby horse of 1818, whose features included no brakes and no suspension, right through to the machine which Chris Boardman used for breaking the world record for the distance covered in an hour. (That too, interestingly, had no brakes.) The car collection included steam driven

and electric vehicles; but, in the internal combustion section, the focal point was a Rolls Royce Silver Ghost with its enclosed passenger compartment, complete with speaking tube to the chauffeur who was also expected to operate the windscreen wiper manually. Mark most enjoyed telling us about Wroughton's "exotic failure", the Ford

*The Brighton
Hove & District
trolleybus*
Photo: Barry Le Jeune



Edsel, a huge gas-guzzling limousine which was such a commercial disaster that only 23 were ever recorded as having been stolen!

The air transport collection included the first plane to have flaps, the exotically named Handley Page Gugnunc of 1929, and another biplane, the Hendon-built De Havilland 84 Dragon Rapide of 1933, which flew passengers between London and Paris. But the hangar was dominated by a Lockheed Constellation, erroneously in TWA livery, which had had a colourful career as both a passenger and freight carrier, initially with KLM and latterly around the world, before ending up in Dublin, from where it was crated in bits to Wroughton for remantling.

After refuelling, we were bussed to the other side of the airport to view hangar L4, where the bus fleet lined up included a Guy Arab in Swindon livery, a lowbridge Leyland Titan of 1948, an AEC Brighton trolleybus and a Leyland National. Several of the buses had been in the British Transport Commission's museum at Clapham, before circuitously reaching Wroughton via collections at Halifax and Leicester. The commercial vehicles ranged from a Walls "stop me and buy one" bicycle to 8-wheel AEC Mammoth and Foden lorries and even a larger 235 ton Rotinoff Atlantic road tractor with a 250 hp Rolls Royce engine used by the Swiss army.

Mark explained that Wroughton only provided storage rather than detailed conservation. However, there are plans to develop the site so that there could be greater public access with an educational programme and potential for private companies to contribute and benefit commercially. Those plans are currently being assessed, in competition with other equally worthy schemes, for Heritage Lottery Funding, but, if successful, would enable the site to reopen in its new guise in 2009.

This visit was much appreciated by all its participants who were saddened that its organiser, Richard Meads, could not be present due to the prior need to have a malfunctioning appendix removed. Richard nevertheless took the trouble to contact us during the day to establish that his immaculate planning had indeed been fruitful. We all wish him a speedy return to full health. In Richard's absence, Nick Agnew took on the duty of tour leader with aplomb and we are equally indebted to him for doing this so readily and genially. And, naturally, we must thank Mark for so knowledgeably escorting us all around the hangars for over three hours (with a lunch break) and also ex-Dalston driver Leslie Francis as the chauffeur of our Daimler.



*The Friends' group at Wroughton
- Photo: Nick Agnew*

EDITORIAL

Many thanks to the dozen or so Friends who kindly let me have their views on how we best deal with the recent changes to postal charges. Two Friends thought that the proposal was to produce the newsletter to A5 size – and strongly objected to that. (My apologies for any misunderstanding; the proposal was – and is – to print to A4 and fold to A5.) Balancing that, were other responses (still in single figures) which suggested a change to A5. A similar small number argued against folding.

Most of the respondents – and presumably the silent majority? – said they would accept the “fold to A5” option; so that is the what the Friends’ management committees have agreed as the most cost-effective way forward. However, implementation is delayed by one issue, until January 2007, as we have a bumper 12-page number this time, which is best sent unfolded in the usual way.

In his Director’s column below, Sam Mullins gives a further progress report on the redisplay project, which proceeds apace.

Other important news is that the TfL Board has agreed in principle to the Museum becoming a charitable company, with Trust Status, as a subsidiary of TfL, with a further subsidiary to carry out trading activities. These proposals are now being discussed with all interested parties, including the Friends’ management committees and the Charity Commissioners. Rest assured, however, that nobody envisages major changes to the individual Friends’ organisation or to the all-important volunteering role. These activities will remain the responsibility of the still separate, supportive Friends’ charity.

Oliver Green returns to the debate on the collections policy, with further explanations in response to Friends’ concerns. And we publish a number of contributions from Friends on their travels around the world. So there’s a lot to digest; get tucked in!

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FROM THE DIRECTOR’S CHAIR

The new Museum is now about a year away from opening. The design of the building and the spaces this will create is finished; the exhibition contents are written and being turned into graphic designs; and all object selection has been completed. Our thoughts are now turning to the third major phase of the Project: the design of the organisation and systems to deliver high quality service to all our users.

The new Museum poses a more complex operational challenge than the one we closed in September 2005. We hope to attract 300,000 visitors in our first year; our gallery space is 25 per cent larger; our new shop will have a turnover of at least £2million; we have the expectations of over 50 sponsors and stakeholders to manage; and we have a 121-seat lecture theatre to programme ourselves or hire out to others. The old Museum had around 40 major evening events a year; the new one aims for 100 annually, with facilities for 200 to sit down to dinner or 500 for a cocktail reception. Our challenge is to find the best way of managing the demands this will make on our space and staff.

I have been asked about the future of volunteering at the Museum. Friends should not be unduly alarmed at our decision to suspend our ‘What’s On’ programme until next year. This is simply a response to the huge amount of work associated with both the new Museum and the fundraising for its cost, not an indication of future intentions.

Supporting a public programme at the moment is just a task too far for us. The busy new Museum will need the support of our volunteers more than ever before, in the delivery of gallery and guided tours, in support of the library, collections care, in talks

to local groups and societies, at both the Depot and at Covent Garden. The new Museum and the opportunities for the Friends will be the subject of a joint brainstorming session later this month and we will look at developing further the scope for volunteering.

Back on the building site, the new Museum is beginning to emerge from the scaffolding. The high-level roof works have been completed and photo-voltaic slates are being installed on the hidden areas of the roof. We have taken the opportunity to replace all the original Welsh slates which were life expired and full of holes. Work in the Covered Way is well advanced and we hope to open both the new shop and lecture theatre for business in April, up to six months in advance of the main Museum. Inside the main Flower Market, the steel ramps which give access to the vehicles are being installed and floor screeding has begun. As internal roof works are now complete, the scaffolding is being removed and this gives a good sense of the views within the refurbished building. The trains and tram wait like chrysalises for their hoarding to be removed.

Finally a big thanks to the Friends for their support of the fundraising on-line auction. We raised £27,000 from 42 lots on-line, including £2,250 for the Kings Cross roundel, while the RTL models made £467 each. This suggests we should seriously consider using e-bay for certain of the higher value surplus material we sell at Acton Open Days. If you were a successful bidder, well done and many thanks! If unsuccessful, I hope there will be other lots to bid for soon.

Sam Mullins



KINGSWAY VISITS

Apologies to those Friends who have been eagerly awaiting news of the promised further visits to the Kingsway tram subway. There has been a recent change of personnel

in the relevant office at the London Borough of Camden and we have lost the co-operation of a previously helpful member of staff there. We are seeking to open new lines of communication so that further visits can be arranged.

UP FOR AUCTION

FUNDRAISING BOOST TO CGP

On 20th September 2006, the Museum held a grand fundraising Dinner and Auction in the magnificent Floral Hall of the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. Thirty-eight companies, several of whom are already sponsoring the redevelopment project and are Corporate Members of the Friends, purchased the maximum number of tables that could be accommodated at this venue. Over 400 people attended, representing the wide range of organisations that have business connections with Transport for London, from legal and banking services through to bus companies and rail engineering.

Transport Commissioner, Peter Hendy, hosted this event, with the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, as the special guest. In his welcome speech, Peter stressed the importance of the changes taking place at the Museum to enable it to portray the complex story of public transport in the Capital. This not only needs to be a record of its history, but also has to display key aspects of current transport provision, as well as being a showcase for future developments in moving people around the city. The Mayor spoke of the major role that transport plays in ensuring that London maintains its world-class status, and outlined a number of the transport developments and initiatives that would be taking place over the coming years. These would provide significant opportunities for businesses in the whole of the transport industry.

After dinner, a professional auctioneer led the auction of opportunities, including several donated by companies. Amongst the lots were a corporate box for an international rugby match at Twickenham, tickets to a Royal Opera House performance and dinner, and driving a selection of London’s iconic buses. A lot that captured much interest was to be the face of one of the mannequins populating the new Museum, either riding in the recently acquired sedan chair, which will be one of the highlights of the Victorian gallery, or being a revelling passenger returning home on a bus after a night out in the 1970s.

The function was a great success and many attendees hoped that it will become an annual event. The auction raised over £60,000; with the profit from the dinner table sales, the Museum redevelopment project has benefited by more than £180,000.



Photo: Stephano Cagnoni

100 YEARS OF THE PICCADILLY LINE

The early years – A personal review

Mike Horne was the speaker at the Friends' meeting on 28th September 2006. He built a fascinating talk around an extensive collection of photographs from the early (pre Second World War) years of the Piccadilly Line. These illustrated the original features of the line; the oddities of operating practice on what was a pioneering urban high frequency railway; and some of the extensive works which were later undertaken for the line's extensions.

There is sadly not the space for a more detailed summary of Mike's talk here. The small selection of photos which follows will give something of the flavour. (All are from the Museum's collection except where otherwise noted.) Fortunately, much of the material unearthed by Mike in his extensive research will feature in a new book which he is writing on the history of the Piccadilly Line; this is due for publication in late 2006/early 2007.



A typical, original station exterior. This is Dover Street, now Green Park, which received a new ticket hall in 1932.



Inside the sheds at the Piccadilly Line's original depot at Lillie Bridge. Although vacated by the Piccadilly in 1933, the northern end of the building is still used by Underground engineering trains.



Hammersmith Piccadilly Line platforms on opening, which were separate from those serving the District Line. The station was extensively remodelled 1931/2, to allow for the Piccadilly Line's westward extension.



This poster, announcing the commencement of trial train operation, was discovered at King's Cross in the 1950s, covered up by a sign. Public services began on 15th December 1906.

The interior of one of the original cars, from one of the Piccadilly Line's official postcards. (Mike Horne Collection)



Gloucester Road Piccadilly Line ticket hall, in the 1920s, then a separate building from the District Line. Note the ticket machines in front of empty lift shafts and the ticket window closed notice.



MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Saturday/Sunday 21st/22nd October

Acton Depot Open Weekend. Themes: Family Fun and Recruitment from Barbados. Free entry to Friends. Open 11.00 to 17.00.

Thursday 23rd November

Friends meeting. 1815 hours. 55 Broadway.

"Picture This": A presentation on the photographic negatives conservation project by Tim Smith and Martin Harrison-Putnam.

Following the initial presentation on the project's aims and outcomes,

some of the Friends' volunteers who participated will show a selection of their favourite images. See also report on page 9.

6th to 24th November

Weekdays 0800 to 2000.

"Sporting London": An exhibition from the Museum's poster collection, to celebrate London's successful bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games. City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London, SE1. Free entry.

Thursday 25th January 2007

Friends meeting. 1815 hours. 55 Broadway.

Subject to be announced in January newsletter.

COLLECTIONS POLICY

Oliver Green's update in the July 2006 newsletter prompted correspondence from two Friends, raising concerns that are no doubt shared by others. We publish both letters here, together with a response from Oliver.

Derek Fisk writes: "I know that I am not the only Friend who, on reading Oliver Green's statement, felt some alarm about treating some aspects of the Museum's possessions as closed collections, and about the prospect of disposing of some items. I realise that he is writing to a far larger audience than us, but the impression is given both that the story of London's transport is now frozen in time, rather than one that will continue long into the future, and also that the collections from the past are already comprehensive. They are not, for there are several aspects of London Transport's history and organisation which have yet to be covered, or covered more widely than hitherto. So far, the collection has widened greatly from the early retention of vehicles into a far broader record of the whole story behind the organisation and planning of London's transport. It is this which distinguishes the Museum from a purely preservation society.

This far more comprehensive approach has encouraged many Friends and others generously to contribute time and artefacts from their own sources, and to continue the search for material that would broaden the picture. We all know that, even now, there are still many gaps to be filled in the record of how things were done, and why.

I know that others share my fear that Oliver's remarks will be seen as a statement that the Museum is no longer interested in filling those gaps, or even of keeping what it already has, thereby deterring potential future benefactors from willing or donating material that would yet contribute to a fuller understanding of the Capital's transport history. These remarks might be seen as a snub to the Friends who have collectively and individually done so much to support and fund the continued development of that history.

For these reasons I wonder whether some clarification is called for that would explain better how this Policy might be applied. It would be sad if the interest and support so far generated were to dry up, when so much has been achieved so far."

David Broomfield expresses a different concern: "Oliver Green's remarks - to the effect that the Museum will be taking a very different approach to the period when the LTM was regarded as the house museum of LT - confirm my worst fears. Surely, as demonstrated throughout the newsletter and by the Friends' continuing programme of restoring LT artefacts, it is the history of perhaps the finest public transport system in the world which most of us wish to record, not some trendy heritage industry mish-mash of social history?"

Oliver Green responds:

I have outlined in the last two newsletters the development of our thinking and discussion in reviewing the Museum's collecting policy. We held two extremely productive day seminars on the subject last November and this July.

These sessions involved LTM staff, members of the Friends and TfL Archives, along with colleagues from the Museums Association, National Railway Museum, Museum of London and Glasgow Transport Museum. All these organisations are going through a similar process of review. Our consultation has been wide and open, as it should be. However, just as we are about to finalise the new policy, I worry, having seen these comments, that I may have summarised the proposed changes badly. I hope I can convince and reassure Derek Fisk and David Broomfield that their fears are unfounded and that they are based on a misunderstanding of our plans.

It may help if I start with Derek's request for clarification of how the new policy will work in practice. We intend to set up a Collections Development Group, which will meet four to six times a year. This will set and review collections related projects at LTM, approve new acquisitions by applying an agreed set of criteria and occasionally consider disposals. This process will be led by the Curatorial Department, but the review group will include representatives from other sections of the Museum, such as Education. It will also include advisors from the Friends and, where appropriate, representatives of other museums, TfL Archives and other stakeholders.

Within the framework of the new collecting policy, this group will make the key recommendations about acquisition and disposal. All acquisitions will be taken through this group, but for most small items this will be a matter of record rather than debate. Decisions on whether to acquire most material will remain with individual curators (for example, an offer of an old Underground map or yet another last

*Photo:
Too many signs?*

tram week ticket). These will be reported, but will not require group approval in advance of accessioning or rejecting the items.

However, any proposal or offer involving larger, or more valuable, items will require approval by the group. A new vehicle, an item of infrastructure or a collection of posters, for example, will have to meet a number of criteria to justify its place in the Museum's permanent collection. This will include its historic importance, uniqueness, research value, educational and display value, condition and conservation implications, and cost of both acquisition and storage. We need to do this because uncontrolled acquisition of material is simply not sustainable. Storage space and collections management resources are limited and we are now at a point where we cannot provide adequate covered storage at Acton for any additional road or rail vehicles. Nothing that falls within our new collecting remit will be ruled out; but everything of significant size/value/cost will have to go through the same scrutiny.

I should probably not have used the expression 'closed collections' without explaining this further. We are not bringing the shutters down on any area; but there will be some collections where it is highly unlikely that any prospective additions will pass the criteria. We do not envisage acquiring any more large-scale lift and escalator or power generation/distribution equipment, for example. Nor are we likely to add another variant to our collection of five different Routemasters.

In an absolute sense there will always be gaps in the collection; but we have never set out to preserve one of everything. The task would be hopelessly impractical and unrealistic. Our new policy and review procedure is not designed to shut down the Museum's future development, but to establish a clear framework that is open, accountable and not based on individual whim.

I can assure Derek, and other Friends who may share his concerns, that we have no intention of disposing of any of the important material that the Friends have helped us acquire and conserve in the last twenty odd years. The professional museum world works on an important principle that there is a strong presumption against disposal from permanent collections. We subscribe to this at LTM. But the other side of this coin is that we need to be certain that there is a convincing case to keep material before we accept it in the first place, otherwise we will simply store up problems for the future. In practice, we do not envisage disposing of very much material at all; and our policy on disposal will not change. It will follow the same wording and procedure as every registered museum in the country, which lays down a very tight process to guard against any museum authority selling the family silver or throwing out anything on a whim. We simply need to reiterate our policy clearly, so that where there is a case for disposal (clear duplication, extremely poor condition or whatever it might be) we can consider it openly and take all necessary advice. This is not about having a grand clearout.

I am bemused by David Broomfield's comment about LTM becoming some 'trendy heritage industry mish-mash of social history'. We are, and always have been, about social history, just as we are about transport technology, design and urban history. London's transport is about all these things; but as well as preserving the artefacts of transport heritage, the Museum must use a range of techniques to interest the widest possible audience. Engaging more people in the vitally important story of London's transport, and the way it has shaped the city, is absolutely central to what we are doing. This means doing a lot more than recording the nuts and bolts of transport technology, and telling people's stories as well as the facts about machines. Doing this in an entertaining way does not mean we are not serious about it. I like to think that Frank Pick would have approved.

*Recent arrival.
The Waterloo & City
Line car on loan
from the National
Railway Museum,
outside the Acton
Depot in May 2006.*



Gordon Hafter

1921 - 2006

Grizelda Hafter has written this tribute to her late father:

On 1st September 2006, The Depot at Acton provided the backdrop for a memorial to celebrate the life of Gordon Hafter, former Director of Mechanical Engineering at LT and long time friend of the Museum.

Gordon was born on 18th May 1921, the third child of first generation immigrants – his father was Swiss and his mother German. He grew up in north London. From an early age he was interested in transport – and was particularly fascinated by trains.

While at school, Gordon sought the help of his housemaster in making contact with a distinguished railway engineer, W.S. Graff-Baker, who was at that time Chief Mechanical Engineer of the London Underground. Although he felt that he should have spent a further year in the upper sixth and then gone on to Imperial College, the advice he received from Graff-Baker and others persuaded him to leave school to attend Faraday House Electrical Engineering College. At that time, he believed that all senior railway operators had to be engineers so that they could understand the machines which they used to carry on their work. He therefore decided to learn electrical engineering, thinking this was the way railways would go in the future.

When war broke out in 1939, Gordon had just completed his second year at college. He spent his third year as a student apprentice with an engineering firm and then joined the RAF as a Wireless Mechanic in 1940. He was posted to the Middle East in 1941, where he joined the Desert Air Force, in support of the 8th Army in the Western Desert. He was mentioned in dispatches for his work converting captured Italian and German equipment so it could be used by the RAF in desert conditions.

Following victory in North Africa in 1943, Gordon moved to Sicily, and later mainland Italy. Towards the end of the Italian Campaign, when time off-duty became available, Gordon made contact with the Railway Operating Companies of the Royal Engineers and spent much of his spare time with them, eventually learning to drive Italian State Railways electric locos. He was in Veneto and then on the Austrian frontier by VE day.

On demobilisation, he approached both the Southern Railway (which had, at that time, the greatest mileage of electrified line in the UK) and London Transport for employment. Both were very lukewarm about taking on anyone without railway experience. Eventually, London Transport agreed to interview him and took Gordon on as a junior technical assistant on a two-year training engagement - though only after being reminded of the visit he had paid to W. S. Graff-Baker, while still at school in 1935. After a two-year training period all over the system, Gordon's first job was Car Programme Assistant, responsible for organising the cars coming to Acton Works for overhaul. In 1952, he was seconded for three months to the Paris Metro; thereafter

he was always interested in developments across the Channel.

Gordon quickly gained further promotion and, in 1961, was appointed Line Engineer for the Northern Line, with responsibility for Golders Green and Morden depots. In 1964, he was promoted to Divisional Engineer, in charge of the maintenance of all the tube lines' rolling stock. This was an exciting time, with the Victoria Line being built. Gordon had the opportunity to help plan the new train maintenance facilities being built at Northumberland Park.



Gordon was promoted to Rolling Stock Engineer in 1974. When, in 1975, a Northern City Line train was driven into the dead end of the tunnel at Moorgate (killing 43 people) the responsibility for dealing with the tragedy fell fairly squarely on Gordon's shoulders. He was awarded an OBE for that work.

In 1980, Gordon became Operating Manager (Engineering) based at 55 Broadway, under the Operations Director, Charles Cope. Charles had no real interest in engineering matters, unless engineers did not provide him with the service he wanted, in which case you knew all about it! So Gordon represented him at many senior management meetings, and

was fairly quickly re-titled Deputy Operations Director. In 1982 Gordon returned to Acton as Director of Mechanical Engineering. He retired from London Transport in 1985.

However, in one sense, Gordon never really retired. The railways were in his blood and he was fortunately in demand as a consultant right up to his death. Consultancies took him to France, Tunisia, Algeria, India, China, Singapore, the USA, Canada and the UK. Perhaps his most rewarding work was that which he undertook for the Channel Tunnel - a boyhood dream of his. His command of languages – he was fluent in French and German – meant that he worked regularly in France as well as the UK.

Gordon had a long association with the LT Museum. He was at the opening ceremony (in an official capacity) of the London Transport Collection at Syon Park in 1973. In his later years, Gordon continued to work for the Museum. He was particularly involved in projects to preserve heritage rolling stock and made significant contributions to the oral history archives.

Gordon enjoyed a very successful marriage. Just before demobilisation, he became engaged to Barbara Henderson, the daughter of his parents' bridge-playing friends. They had five children, though Giles, the middle one, was tragically killed in a cycling accident shortly after his tenth birthday. Gordon and Barbara are survived by their four children: Russell, Hamish, Grizelda and Kevin, the latter two carrying on Gordon's tradition with LT/TfL/Underground careers.

PRAGUE'S PUBLIC TRANSPORT MUSEUM

Stephen Jolly shares his impressions:

It was open; and it was a sunny day! After many visits to Prague - my wife is a Czech citizen - I finally managed to visit the Prague Public Transport Museum in Stresovice tram depot in the early autumn of 2005. It is open at weekends and Bank Holidays, but not all year round. Prague has a fleet of around 900 tramcars (most working in pairs), as well as feeder bus networks and the Russian-origin Metro.

The museum can be described as a perfect pre-1930 big city tramcar depot with interesting bus, trolleybus and metro sideshows. Located in an atmospheric wooden tram depot, there is a busy tramway corridor outside. The vast majority of the tram exhibits are either pre-1914 or built in the style of pre-First World War tramcars. Imagine the doors of a London tram depot being closed in 1930 and reopened 75 years later; that is the overall impression of Stresovice.

Inside the side door entrance is a small kiosk where my ticket and guidebook were slapped down on the counter. This behaviour is now untypical, but was a reminder of what once was close to the norm in the Communist era. My Czech relatives explained this as an outcome of keeping older people employed. I didn't pursue the point, the language barrier conveniently intervening.

No attempt has been made to rearrange the parallel tracks or polish the floor, which remain nicely realistic with a slightly sticky texture. On this warm day there was the aroma of oil, grease, paint and varnish. Heaven! The English language guidebook carefully describes the 15-plus motorcars and a dozen trailers arranged in typical sets from different decades. A lack of space stopped all sets from being coupled in the correct order and I soon lost the thread of the intended accuracy. The museum is to be commended for emphasising the accurate period detailing applied to each set. Simply wandering around was no hardship, though taking pictures of some complete exhibits was difficult.

In broad summary, Prague bought big, two-axle motorcars, during the equivalent of our golden electric tramway age, to which smaller trailers were attached. These combinations lasted until Czech-built, licensed derivatives of the American PCC car replaced them from the 1950s.

Gems within the collection include a green 1900-built car (88) from the era before the 1908 red and cream livery was evidently adopted. I would say that 200, the Mayor's Parlour car, was, and is, simply magnificent. Although described as being used for "round trips" - my wife's translation of the destination board could also get no closer - I suspect this was a Mayor's "perk" - a private inspection car. Finished in 1922 condition, it wears a pale green livery with bold, metallic numerals, fleet names and city crests in deep relief and with ornamental metallic leaf detailing around the headlamps! The car has been restored after use as a children's nursery for twenty years.

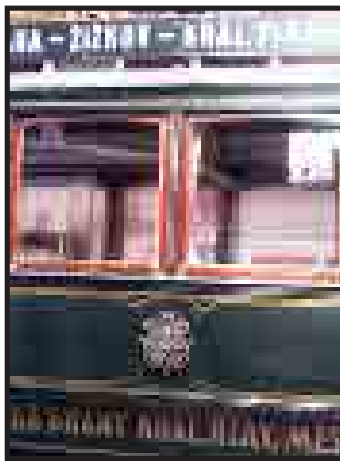
T1- T2- and T3-type trams, one from each of three generations of Czech-built PCC cars, are the post-1945 members of the collection. A beautifully finished trolleybus, 494 of 1959, is tucked into one corner, keeping company with several beefy overhead maintenance road vehicles. A worthy collection of maintenance trailers shares most of one track. There is a trailer generator van and a trailer post office car with multiple serving windows, arranged longitudinally, to further spice the displays. Several buses from the 1960s and 1970s share the depot. These had been driven outside, but were being put back to bed at 3.00pm.

The staff provided notional security but did not acknowledge visitors. Hardly any of the exhibits were open, with doors padlocked, nor were there any convenient viewing platforms. This is essentially a collection in a depot and not a museum by our way of looking at things. The important point is, though, this superb collection actually exists and was appropriately declared a cultural monument in 1998.

Along one wall is a substantial construction of panels and supports that are rather heavy looking for the modest size of pictures on display. Some exquisite models compliment the pictures. One picture shows Prague 180 - the car seemingly brought to Crich just ahead of the Russian invasion in 1968 - working on the experimental surface contact system on the famous Charles Bridge. There is nothing to explain that this car lives in the UK; nor anything to explain its dramatic escape, with long-faced Prague tramway managers, who had to return to a sad and bewildered country, photographed beside George Brown, then Foreign Secretary and local Crich MP. (I had an idea there was more behind the lack of acknowledgement of 180's life overseas and made further enquiries on my return. Because car 180 was used for the surface contact trials on the Charles Bridge c1905, it was apparently thought a good idea to pretend that the gifted car was 180 when the operator came to offer a restored car to Crich.)



5001 - Flying Czechoslovak and Soviet Russian flags is Prague's PCC T1 car 5001, of 1951



Green Car 88 - Built in 1900, motor car 88 wears the pre-1908 dark green livery

Although it seems as if few pictures have survived for posterity, near the entrance kiosk (whose staff had retired outside for a smoke) there were many postcards for sale. There was a high table containing two-dozen transport titles near the kiosk. Czech enthusiasts are writing high-quality books and, as I discovered, they are full of interesting views; but they often seem hard to find. See a book you might like? Don't hesitate, buy it! The books are in Czech and cheap by UK prices. Of the eight or so visitors present during my two-hour visit, four were English-speaking, who muttered, as I often do, "I really must learn the language!" I finished by buying postcards, but nearly half were out of stock. The staff insisted on the stock numbers being called out as they rummaged through boxes under the counter and refused to look at my carefully written list. Hohum...

There were spotless, free, toilets in the museum and there was a café open across the depot yard.

The depot houses cars used on line 91, the historic weekend tram service. This runs hourly, but there are different timetable and route versions in existence. Line 91 is either circular or horseshoe-shaped. I decided to intercept it in typical Prague cobbled streets, loading from the middle of the road, car traffic cutting up intending passengers. A small

part of the advertised route was wire-less. It took me ages to pin down the route and times. I felt I'd never used public transport before. Along came immaculate 351 and trailer and we set off with some vigour, keeping pace with other road users. The route crosses the River Vltava and passes many beautiful buildings, but also provided a small glimpse of another Prague: of graffiti-covered apartment blocks and ugly road flyovers.

The conductor was, I thought, less than helpful, in any language. He refused to try to answer tourists' gestured questions. There were Czech grandparents with grandchildren on board, so maybe the foreign riders don't matter that much? Still, each stop was punctiliously observed with bell codes. And a nice souvenir ticket was issued for 25Kc (25 Crowns - about 60p, the same price as the museum admission). The service terminated in a sylvan wooded setting. At least, I think it terminated here; but I was confused and tired and decided I'd had a marvellous half-hour ride (the whole trip is about 40 minutes) and would return home by Metro.

Stresovice is easy to reach by tram routes such as 1, 2, 15, 18 and 25. It is a reasonably pleasant walk beside a tree-lined, but busy, main road from the Hradcany area (where the buildings representing the heart of the Czech nation are co-located). The nearest Metro station is Hradcanska on green line A. Street signage at Metro stations is not always very prominent. Overall transport museum experience rating? Eight and a half out of ten.

If any Friends would care to send in reports of other transport museums anywhere in the world, I would be happy to publish them. (Editor)



Line 91 - 351 in the Sylvan wooded setting near Vystaviste exhibition grounds.

LET'S GO TO SAN FRANCISCO

Christopher Allen sends this report of recent developments:

A trip to San Francisco always affords a great deal of interest to aficionados of public transport: not only the famous cable cars, but also both modern and vintage electric trams, motor and trolley buses, and two separate metro systems. So it was not hard to find myself talked into travelling there, not for the first time, this past spring. What I did not realize, until after we had booked our flights, was that our trip coincided not only with the centenary, on April 18th 2006, of the great earthquake and fire of 1906, but also with the planned opening of a new, albeit diminutive, transport museum.

The earthquake commemorations were extensive and elaborate, but it suffices to mention that amongst the many events and exhibitions was a display of photographs depicting the destruction and rebuilding of San Francisco's transport infrastructure: the quake brought about the replacement of most of the city's cable car lines with electric streetcars, while many of the cable and horse cars not destroyed by fire were pressed into service as emergency accommodation.

The opening of a new transport museum, however, is certainly topical and so I contacted the new museum's parent organisation, the Market Street Railway (MSR), for further information. Unfortunately, the news was not good. Although plans were in hand to make best use of the 1000 square foot area, located in a new hotel building at the foot of Market Street and which had been donated, rent free for 65 years, by the hotel's developers, delays in fitting out the space meant that the museum's opening would be delayed until at least May - too late to be able to provide a first-hand account!

Fortunately, the new museum is but one part of the non-profit Market Street Railway's efforts to preserve, restore, and operate historic public transport in partnership with MUNI, the public transport authority. I was pleased, therefore, to be invited to visit the David L. Pharr Historic Streetcar Facility, known locally as the Duboce Avenue. Yard. (Pictured above right.) It is here, in a small two-track yard that was once a temporary diversion during the construction of BART and the MUNI Metro (the aforementioned metro systems), that I met a number of MSR volunteers including director Art Michel, who has been involved in the planning of the new museum, and Bill Wong, who is the lead person on the restoration of Market Street Railway car 798, a "white front" car built by the present organisation's namesake company in 1924.

Car 798, like many preserved vehicles, has an interesting history. Sold as scrap when the original Market Street Railway was acquired by MUNI in the late 1930s, it had served as a residence and as a jewellery shop in the Sierra foothills before MSR members arranged to



have it reacquired by MUNI in 1984. Restoration work was begun both by MUNI staff and by prison inmates (as part of a vocational training programme) but the work was not completed and the car was left to languish for a decade in MUNI's shops.

Now entrusted, along with several other cars, to MSR volunteers, work is underway again - albeit slowly. Because the restoration yard is outdoors, and the work undertaken by the volunteers is principally cosmetic, little work can be done during San Francisco's wet winters; even on a beautiful sunny Saturday in April, Bill Wong didn't trust the weather to hold long enough to begin repainting work. Instead, he showed us various books, models and ephemera that had been purchased at auction that morning; discussed seat coverings for car 798 with the other volunteers; and examined modifications made to reproduction seat hardware in order to accommodate the new, bulkier choice of seat material.

Even if the weather is favourable this summer, it will be some time yet before car 798 is once again carrying passengers on Market Street, for even once the car body work is done, MUNI's own staff will have to find, restore and fit suitable trucks, motors and controllers. Meanwhile, work has been progressing on the museum: although the opening has been put back again - at the time of writing it was expected to open in July 2006 - the interior of the building was finished in early June, ready to accommodate the artefacts on display, along with, of course, a healthy selection of Market Street Railway merchandise. After all, MUNI is soon to open a second historic streetcar line, and you never know when you might need funds to restore some more vintage cars to run on it...

More information about the Market Street Railway can be found at <http://www.streetcar.org>.

1253 GOES EAST

The Museum's K2 trolleybus has been on loan to the East Anglia Transport Museum at Carlton Colville. In this photo, kindly supplied by Bob Bird, the vehicle is seen on its first public run at the special trolleybus weekend on 9th September 2006.



HERTFORD RUNNING DAY

The Museum's GS64, along with the BN, took part in the Hertford running day on 4th June 2006. Here, Laurie Akehurst is shown presenting the Mayor of Hertford with one of the specially commissioned models depicting the GS on route 386. The full-size vehicle later conveyed the Mayor to her next appointment.



EAST END BY THE SEA

On Saturday 12th August 2006, the Museum organised, jointly with the London Canal Museum, a boat trip and guided walk to Victoria Park. Dave Taylor sends this report:

Our group met at the Canal Museum, where Trustee Mike Stevens gave an introductory talk. This is one of a declining number of regional canal museums – as distinct from three national ones. It survives because it is self-supporting so far as its day-to-day running costs are concerned, receiving capital grants for various improvement and conservation projects. The Museum was opened in 1992, on a site alongside Battlebridge canal basin that had previously served as an ice-house and canalside warehouse. One of two deep ice wells survives inside the building. The ice business was founded by Carlo Gatti, who originally took ice from the frozen canal in winter, but latterly imported ice from glaciers and lakes in Norway. Ice supply was big business in the days before refrigerators. Gatti also manufactured ice cream, which he sought to popularise as a confection for the masses, rather than a luxury item for the rich. When the ice business lost out to refrigeration, the premises became a transport depot from which horses and carts were operated. There are displays recalling these past uses of the site, as well as those recounting the history of London's canal network.

After the introductory talk and refreshments, we boarded our own transport in the form of a "Jason's Trip" narrowboat, which moored, after some deft manoeuvring by the crew, in the basin behind the Museum. This whole area is the subject of comprehensive redevelopment, encouraged by the plans for the transport lands round about and the expansion of King's Cross and St. Pancras stations ready for the arrival of Eurostar trains next year. A concert hall and sculpture gallery are being built alongside Battlebridge Basin, along with the inevitable office blocks and "desirable" (and therefore expensive!) waterfront flats.

We entered the darkness of Islington Tunnel, 960 yards long and one of three on the Regent's Canal. Boats were originally "legged" through, but a steam tug service was later provided. City Road Basin appeared on our right (or should it be starboard?) side. Mike Stevens' ongoing commentary explained that, at the height of the canals' commercial usage, fly-boats completed the trip from here to Birmingham "non-stop" in 56 hours. We navigated the City Road and Sturts Locks, passing the site of the construction of the impressive new bridge which will take the East London Line Extension over the canal. After our third and final lock (Actons) we reached our canalside destination at Victoria Park.

Here Mike Stevens handed the commentary over to David Barnet. David recounted the history of the park, which covers 220 acres in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (on its border with Hackney). In the 1830s, William Farr, a sanitary engineer, proposed the building of a new Royal Park in East London, as a preventative measure against

cholera, typhoid and similar endemic diseases. A preferred site, at Limehouse by the Thames, proved too expensive; so a site on ground known as Bonner Fields was chosen. The park was designed by James Pennethorne, a pupil of John Nash who had built the Regent's Canal. It opened in 1842, though there was no formal opening ceremony and the park never received official "Royal Park" status. Queen Victoria did not visit the park which bears her name until 1873.

Victoria Park was originally not just the broad expanse of open space that it is today. Various visitor attractions were provided, which led to the park being dubbed "East End By The Sea". David's conducted walk took us to the sites of several of these features, to see what now remains. Many features were obliterated by heavy bombing in the war, which also destroyed the park's own railway station on the North London Line. The boating lake is still there, but boating is no longer provided for. Two of the original three islands in the lake survive. Now just a memory are the Chinese Pagoda (moved to the site from Hyde Park), along with the Chinese bridge, waterfall and Moorish shelter. The original bandstand was demolished in 1940, as part of the misguided drive for scrap metal for the war effort. It was replaced after the war by a concrete structure, on which ballet, as well as musical recitals, were performed; Dame Margot Fontayne danced there. This too was demolished after the last dance evenings in 1985 and has been replaced by a more modest bandstand on traditional lines.

The most impressive original structure to remain is the so-called fountain, which looks more like the traditional Victorian memorial. It was erected in 1862, through the generosity of Angela Burdett-Coutts (of the banking family) who later became the first baroness created in her own right. She was a close personal friend of Queen Victoria, though that friendship came under strain when Angela, in her sixties, married her male secretary who, at 29, was under half her age. HRH was disapproving and definitely not amused! It does not seem to have done the Baroness any harm, as she lived on into her nineties!

Close by the fountain was the original bathing pool, which was open to men and boys only from 5am to 9am. After 9am it was used as a boating lake. Separate bathing facilities were later provided for ladies. A modern lido opened in 1936 but, after surviving wartime bomb damage, succumbed to health and safety regulations in 1989.

Other surviving buildings include two semi-circular stone shelters, originally sited on the 18th century London Bridge as refuges for pedestrians; they were removed from the bridge on its rebuilding in 1831, later found in a builder's yard and presented to the Park in 1860.

The London Canal Museum in Wharfedale Road is open daily from 10.00 to 17.00 hours.

A Pictorial History of Victoria Park is published by the East London History Society, and is available from Doreen Kendall, 20 Puteaux House, Roman Road, London E2 0RF, price £8.99 including postage.

BETJEMAN CENTENARY

Nick Agnew sends this report (and photo):

As most people will know by now, 2006 is the centenary of John Betjeman's birth. Amongst the many and varied celebrations, a special train ran from Marylebone on 2nd September, after the unveiling of a plaque celebrating the life of JB and commemorating his love of railways and his role in preserving some of the heritage infrastructure, including Marylebone. The full train included a number of Friends and paused at various locations on the journey to Quainton Road for verse to be read over the train PA! Ample time was allowed for the visit to the site, where former LT items on display ranged from the signs once displayed at Hertford bus station to the stirring sight of 'Met No 1' in steam on the short demonstration line. The return via High Wycombe and (of course!) Ruislip Gardens provided further links with both LT and the much-loved verse. From the chatter on return to Marylebone, it was clear that the day was seen

as a fitting tribute to a great man.

Thanks are due to the generosity of people and organisations in making services and skills available. All cash raised went to support the work of the Parkinson's Disease Society.



Sir John's daughter, Candida Lycett-Green, holds the commemorative plaque, flanked by Chiltern Railways' representatives (Adrian Shooter, Chairman of Laing Rail on the left).

OAKWOOD

Around the Tube (once Enfield West)
Thirties homes are seen to rest
Estates laid out with privet hedge
Abruptly stopped at rural edge.

A landscape of town planners' dreams
(Not for them mock-Tudor beams)
Fresh healthy air – a selling point
New kitchens for that Sunday joint.

This was the Golden Building Age
Semis then took centre stage
When suburbs meant a stepping stone
Escaping roaring traffic drone.

These dwellings were quite up to date
Down Bramley Road and near Southgate
By Underground – so quick and bright
"Curtain Up" – for Theatre Night.

And even now they have a charm
Unending rows of urban calm
From Ossidge Heights to Arnos Grove
Oh fascinating treasure trove!

Steve Glason

A LABOUR OF LOVE

Patrick MacDonald explains his (and other Friends') involvement with "wrapping" the Museum's glass plate negative collection:

In January 2002, the call went out for volunteers to re-wrap the Museum's collection of glass plate negatives. What did this task involve? Each individual negative had to be removed from its old cardboard box and glacine sleeve. It then needed to be dusted and cleaned, as necessary, and re-wrapped in acid free paper. Information about the glass negative was then recorded on a sheet. The data recorded covered features such as its size, its date, its condition (oxidised, scratched, blemished etc.) and any other noteworthy characteristics. In all, there were just over 59,000 plates, spanning some 25 years, from the early 1930s to the 1950s.

Wrapping started in early 2002. At that time it was thought the project would take six years to complete. In fact, it was completed in February 2006, some two years earlier than anticipated. The main people that were involved with this project were: Eric Bailey, David Berguer, Ron Bristow, Antony Davey, Terry Harrison (Antony and Terry are both sadly now deceased), Fred Ivey, Richard Moules and myself. Many others contributed their services on a less regular basis. The teams met generally on a Friday. The number of volunteers attending a negative wrapping session varied between one and six. From experience, it was found that a team of three was the most effective for accomplishing the tasks involved. By and large, about 100 glass plates per person were wrapped in a session.

What was the content of the glass negatives? Were they interesting to look at? Well, the content of the negatives was highly varied, both in terms of interest and of content. In the animate images, there were many photographs of sports events, parties, people wearing uniforms, parades. There were also photographs of people testing objects such as bus seats, staff wearing new uniforms and many photographs of persons (some obviously dignitaries) who were unknown to the wrappers. Many of these negatives are of great social historical interest, as they show just how widespread were the social activities of London Transport and how much they provided for their employees.

On the inanimate side, there were images of varying degrees of interest to the wrappers. At the unidentifiable (and low interest) level were many broken rails. It is surprising just how many there were and how many variations there can be in the art of photographing broken



Three members of the negative wrapping team enjoy a well-earned cup of tea on the last day's work at the Depot - 3rd February 2006. From left to right: Ron Bristow, Robert Excell (Museum Curator), Richard Moules and Fred Ivey. Photo: Patrick MacDonald

rails. There were also photographs of brick walls – some with an obvious location, but others simply as a brick wall. Obscure technical equipment featured in many negatives and buildings –some identifiable, others not.

But then came the real gems for the wrappers - images of buses, trams, trolleybuses, trains, street scenes and stations. These always reduced the speed of wrapping. Productivity slowed right down, as we passed the negative around, admiring and reminiscing on how things used to be when London Transport was real London Transport and buses were real buses. These images really made the project worthwhile and compensated for the large number of less interesting images.

Taken all in all, it was a most enjoyable project and it was a privilege to see the images and also to work together with such knowledgeable and pleasant colleagues.

There will be a presentation on this project, and the chance to see some of the favourite images of the "wrappers", at the Friends' meeting on 23rd November. For further details, please see the "Meetings and Events" column on page 2.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

The Friends agreed to fund the purchase of a number of posters for the Museum at a recent Christies' auction. While some of the choicer items went well beyond reach, six attractive LCC Tramways posters were obtained for the collection; details are as follows:-

Putney Heath Tram Services 26, 28 & 30 and Wimbledon Tram Services 2-4;

Strand on the Green Tram 26 to Kew Bridge;

Tramway Services 3 & 5 to Hampstead and 7 to Parliament Hill Fields;

Christmas Shopping Travel by Tramway;

Highgate by Services 7, 11 & 15;

Ruskin Park Tramway Services 56, 58, 62 & 84.

Other recent purchases were a pair of LNER suburban carriage route diagrams for the ephemera collection and, for the ticket collection, a choice South Metropolitan Electric Tramways scholar's pass and a quantity of LNER suburban season tickets from the 1930s. These season tickets include some unusual examples of second class travel, which survived in the London area on LNER ex Great Northern and ex Great Northern services until 1st January 1938.

Graham Page

EXPLORING 20TH CENTURY LONDON

This is the title of a pioneering new website, which has been developed as a London Hub Museum partnership, drawing on the collections of London's Transport Museum, the Museum of London, the Jewish Museum and the London Borough of Croydon's Museum and Heritage Service.

The site (20thcenturylondon.org.uk) was launched in late September, after two years' development work. It enables users to explore aspects of 20th century London, by drawing seamlessly, through one site, on the collections of the four museums initially involved. Other museums are likely to join later, further enriching the database. The site material includes not only images and descriptions of over 8,000 relevant artefacts in the museums' collections, but also oral history clips. It is hoped to add video clips later.

Visitors to the website may access the database and images through selected themes – the are 15 on offer, including Transport, London at War, Public Services, Sport, Leisure and Work; or through places (using a Borough-based map) or "timelines" of each 20th century decade.

ALAN CROSS "CHIT CHATS"

Friend and renowned photographer Alan Cross has made a detailed study of the London bus scene since the early 1940s. Alan circulated copies of his photographs with detailed notes or "Chit Chats", as he called them, covering vehicles, routes, garages, liveries and general comments on London's public transport scene.

The Omnibus Society has gathered together these sixty-or-so notes and published them for the first time to a wider audience. The notes are accompanied by over seventy photographs, mainly Alan's, many previously unpublished.

The book – "London Bus Recollections" – is due for publication at the end of October. It should be available in the Museum Shop and at the LOTS Autumn Transport Spectacular in Harrow on 4th November. In case of difficulty, the book will be available by post from the Omnibus Society (to whom cheques should be made payable) at 57 Bluebridge Road, Brookmans Park, Hatfield, AL9 7UW. The price is £14.95, plus £1.50 postage and packing.

LETTERS

Green Line Route Boards and Liveries

I am very pleased to see the "model" Green Line boards shown on page 4 of the April 2006 Newsletter, as this confirms the colour change from black to green in the second half of the 1930s that seems to be apparent in photographs of the period.

I note that the green colour is described as Lincoln Green. Given that there is no surviving official record of pre-war Country bus and Green Line liveries, it would be prudent of the Museum to analyse the actual colour to confirm whether it corresponds to original samples of the colour known by that name (or at least one such, as I understand that there was some variation).

It is with some trepidation that I would correct some of what Laurie Akehurst has written. The route boards with two colour backgrounds were surely black and orange originally (not yellow) and the matching wheel centres were also orange. The latter were applied to various types of vehicles, both bus and coach, and not just the 7T7 and 1/7T7/1 AEC Regals. However, it appears that more modern types new to London Transport always had green wheel centres, matching the main livery colour. It is possible, of course, that the black and orange boards were later changed to black and yellow.

I do not think it is correct to say that the three tone green livery with dark green roof first appeared on the 9T9 coaches, except perhaps if one was used to try it out. I believe that all of the 9T9s, which were taken into stock between May and October 1936, were delivered in the livery style introduced c1935. For the purposes of this letter I shall describe that style as mid green with apple green window surrounds, black mudguards and black lining out on panel beading at the colour divisions (older vehicles in this livery also had "silver" roofs, as did double deckers, and sometimes the orange wheel centres described above).

The 6Q6 coaches, taken into stock between September 1936 and January 1937 were also delivered in the c1935 livery style.

I believe that the first coaches to have dark green in their livery were TF1 (taken into stock in July 1937) and the LTCs (taken into stock between September 1937 and February 1938).

TF1 did not have a dark green roof but does appear to have had dark green in place of black in the c1935 livery. It also appears to have had green and (presumably) yellow route boards when it entered service. In a picture of it taken at Eccleston Bridge with these it appears that the lettering on the yellow sections was black, as it is clearly darker than the green sections of the board.

I have a copy of a Weymann picture of LTC6 (which was taken into stock in November 1937) showing it in the c1935 livery without any dark green, but as far as I can tell from other pictures all of the LTCs entered service with dark green roofs, mudguards and (uniquely) skirt panels.

A further vehicle new with a dark green roof, mudguards and lining out was CR1, taken into stock on the last day of 1937. This, I believe, was the only bus, as opposed to Green Line or private hire coach, to be painted in this livery.

As stated by Laurie, the 10T10 coaches (taken into stock from February 1938 onwards) perpetuated the three tone green livery with dark green roof until the mid green

was replaced by dark green on new was replaced by dark green on new deliveries. I am pleased to see that this change has been narrowed down to August 1938. Thus I believe the three tone livery was only current for just over a year if TF1 is included.

I believe that the 9T9 coaches were reliveried into the three tone green style with green roof as they became due for repaint. One other vehicle to carry this livery (presumably also after repaint) was 1/4Q4/1 Q100, but I do not think that any of the 6Q6s were so painted. However, photographs do show that some 6Q6s had been painted in the post-August 1938 dark green livery by the time the War broke out. This all makes sense if first repaints took place two years after delivery. Twenty eight of the fifty 9T9 coaches entered stock between May and July 1936, so would have been due for repaint during the three tone green period if this was the case; but no 6Q6s would have become due until after August 1938. Confirmation of contemporary repainting intervals would be helpful to substantiate this theory.

The dates used above are those quoted in Ken Glazier's "London Bus File 1933-39 Single Deckers", which I assume is the best available information (they do not always agree with the PSV Circle fleet histories, which were published earlier).

I stress that the above is based only upon examination of black and white photographs, which can be misleading, plus some correspondence I have had with others on the subject. If any Friends do have memories or records of pre-War Country bus and Coach liveries they should make them known as the subject is poorly recorded. One aspect that I have not managed to convince myself of is whether the post-August 1938 dark green livery with apple green window surrounds was applied to buses as well as coaches. The variability of photographic emulsions of the period makes me cautious about pictures that seem to suggest that it was.

Returning to the model route boards, it is curious that a pair of identical (or near identical) boards were produced for each route. It is also notable that there are inconsistencies in the treatment for each route. The route "K" boards have "VIA LONDON" at the centre, whereas the "Y3" boards only have "LONDON". The "Y3" and "Z" boards only have the outer terminals and London on yellow sections, whereas the "K" boards, lacking outer terminals, are divided into alternate green and yellow panels. Logically, they should have been all green apart from the centre "VIA LONDON" panel. I wonder whether the "K" boards were actually produced full size, as the contemporary method used where there were route variations was to have holders on the main boards for slip boards showing the alternative final destinations and route numbers. There were certainly such boards for the K1/K2, but the only pictures I can find immediately are of the previous black and orange (or yellow) versions.

Andrew Colebourne

Laurie Akehurst replies:

I was pleased that my piece on the above subject initiated a response from Andrew Colebourne, as it seems that little had been documented about pre-war liveries.

I used the term Lincoln green to describe the dark green. Andrew is quite right to question if it is the exact shade of green that we grew up with in the post war period. I accept that my use of the term yellow is incorrect – perhaps amber would better describe the shade which is depicted in a rare pre-war

colour photograph and a coloured drawing in Green Line Guide No. 3 of 1937. I used the term yellow to distinguish it from the dark orange found on the route boards of TF77. Having had the opportunity to closely examine these boards, it is my belief that they are not originals and were probably recreated in 1950s or 1960s, with the shade of orange being based on surviving memory at the time.

I agree that the official photographs of 9T9 class T405 show that the coach did not have a dark green roof. However, the view of T449 taken at North Finchley shows that it has a dark green roof. The vehicle was taken into stock on 25th August 1936 and the fact that there is a tram in the background would date the photograph as being taken prior to the trolleybus conversion of 6th March 1938. The question is: would the coach have undergone a repaint within eighteen months of entering service or was it delivered in that livery?

I agree with Andrew's other comments and always prefer to take Ken Glazier's dates rather than those published in other sources. The boards for routes K1 and K2 did show the final destinations, as Andrew points out, and can be found in various views of 9T9 vehicles on the routes; but the revised arrangements from 9th February 1938, when the workings became very complicated, probably necessitated the need for simplified arrangements.

Mystery K

I refer to Andrew Colebourne's second query on the life and times of K424, published in the July 2006 newsletter. (*The query related to a photograph of this bus, "boiling over" in Queen Caroline Street, Hammersmith: Editor.*)

I think the answer to the circumstances in which the photograph was taken is the 1949 Lord Mayor's Show, which took place on 9th November. I have a photograph of S742 taking part in the parade. I believe B340 was also there and that K424 would have been there as well; but, due to the "boiling over" incident, it was withdrawn from the parade.

Now for some dates. The Museum buses had been dispersed to the Country Area garages at Tring, Hemel Hempstead, Staines and Guildford at various dates in 1941. They were all moved to Reigate in 1946. This 1949 outing may have been the first move they had made since then. The records show that the status of B340 and S742 changed from unlicensed at Reigate to licensed at Chiswick on 1st November 1949, although they were operated from Hammersmith. Perhaps K424 did not become licensed due to the engine cooling problem? The B and the S reverted to unlicensed at Reigate on 16th November.

Sorry to say, I am unable to give any help on Andrew Colebourne's first query (*relating to another photo of K424, showing it dressed with Thames Valley route 28 destination boards*).

John Winteridge
Pulborough



LETTERS Contd.

B-type Memories

The "B-type Back on the Road" article in the July 2006 issue of the newsletter brought back some B-type memories of my own.

An amusing little episode took place sometime in the mid-1960s, when a B-type bus attended a gala or fete in Westerham one Saturday afternoon. If, as the previous article suggested, B340 was off the road then, I guess the bus could have been B43 ("Ole Bill") from the Imperial War Museum. On its return, possibly via Polhill rather than Westerham Hill – the steepness of which had encouraged Thomas Tilling to terminate buses at the top rather than the bottom, until East Surrey commenced climbing it circa 1921 – the driver, who looked considerably older than the bus, had called into Bromley Common garage for tea, before the long haul into London, or wherever the bus was garaged.

As was common in those "golden days", the ever-persistent staff shortages had caused a long gap in the service towards Bromley (routes 47, 61, 199 and 402 at the time), and "Ole Bill" appeared in the doorway of the garage to cross Hastings Road. A dozen or so people gathered themselves together to board and were left open-mouthed and dismayed when the bus, snorting, puffing and

steaming, drove straight past them. As I was the only uniformed presence, standing there, they all glared at me! Although even Routemasters were to remain a very rare sight for another ten years in that part of Kent's countryside, I thought that the public could at least tell the difference between a "B" and an "RT". Clearly not!

Terrence Uden
Woking

The top of the box made a handy cupboard for a phone and redundant feeder boxes were often used for this purpose.

An even earlier box, embossed "London County Council Tramways – 1928", that housed a bus phone, is still located in Upminster Station Yard.

Ron Brewer
Wanstead.

Feeder Box

Kim Rennie, in the July 2006 Newsletter, asks how a Trolleybus Feeder Box found its way to Wilmer Lee Close (previously named Lett Road) Stratford. Two possibilities occur to me:

(1) It may be that, 'during the war' (as Uncle Albert said), the Lett Road/Carpenters Road/Stratford High Street triangle was wired up and needed power for emergency turning of trolleybuses, as were other roads e.g. New Road, Stepney, when bombing brought down overhead wires. But I was around then and do not recall this.

(2) It is also possible, and perhaps more likely, that in the post-trolleybus era there was an emergency bus turning point here and an Inspectors' telephone was needed.

Sir Peter's limousine

May I make one small correction to your tribute to the late Sir Peter Masefield (January 2006 Newsletter)?

Sir Peter's car was a Coleman Milne Minster, and not an Austin Princess. It was based on a Ford Grenada. The extra length was gained by cutting the vehicle in half and adding an additional centre section. The work was carried out by a firm in Wigan specialising in hearses! The rear seat was raised to provide the correct alignment with the full-sized desk in the back. The front seat had a fold-down table.

Michael Clark, formerly LT Distribution Services Manager, Ashwellthorpe, Norfolk.



BOOK REVIEWS



The Greater Genius?

A Biography of Marc Isambard Brunel
Harold Baguet. Ian Allan Publishing. £24.99. ISBN 0 7110 3175 4.

The question in the title explains an objective behind this book. By recounting the many achievements of the father Marc, it is to build a case for regarding him as a greater genius than his more lauded son, Isambard Kingdom. There are no comparisons as such; readers are left to come to their own conclusions, having read this detailed account of Marc's life and works. It is certainly a tale of the triumph of perseverance over adversity. Born in 18th France, he was forced to flee the revolution when his royalist sympathies almost cost him his head. Initially in America, and later in England, Marc applied his inventive genius to a wide range of engineering and manufacturing processes.

The author has undertaken extensive research amongst the surviving contemporary accounts and with Marc's many patents (which are reproduced in detailed appendices). These inventions ranged from ships' blocks, marine engines, through sawing equipment, boot and shoe manufacture (this a way to facilitate the making of left and right handed shoes) to tinfoil manufacture. All of these processes were used in industries in which Marc at one time had business interests. These were not always commercially successful. Marc, accompanied by his wife, as was the practice in those days, spent time in Southwark Debtors' Prison. His biographer makes clear that Marc chased new, challenging projects to the neglect of previous ventures, putting his trust in business partners who did not always repay it loyally.

The work for which Marc is most usually remembered – the tunnel under the Thames, on which he worked with his son and which earned Marc his knighthood - is described in detail, along with its many crises. A small detail illustrates Marc's devotion to the task. Confined to bed during one of his many bouts of ill health, a box was suspended from Marc's bedroom window, so that he could check soil samples taken from the tunnel works at two-hourly intervals. This

arrangement lasted for four years and resulted in Marc, and his ever-supportive wife, Sophie, sleeping in two hour shifts – a habit which they later found difficult in breaking.

A genius? Yes. The greater? Maybe not. But the book is an excellent biography of Marc's undoubted achievements, which are perhaps inevitably overshadowed by those of his son. Marc would probably not have been unduly worried by the apparent injustice. From this biography, he seems to have been content with his own challenges and achievements, and equally supportive of his son's own endeavours. (BLJ)

Streets of the City,

by Judy Pulley. Published by Capital History. £16.95.
ISBN 1-85414-294-1.

This book, a diversification from Capital's transport-focused publications, recounts the history of City streets, recalling local events, buildings and personalities. 18 individual chapters deliver on this aim, each for a main thoroughfare (or two), including adjacent streets and alleyways. The text generally ends with World War 2, though later references are sometimes included to put recorded events into context. There are also a few contemporary pictures to show what remains of historic buildings and other features of the earlier street scene.

The selection of historical photographs and prints is extensive, many drawn from the City of London Guildhall Library. As always, much of interest is to be found in the detail. As just one example, the photo of the construction of Holborn Viaduct in 1869 includes hoardings advertising the "new" St. Pancras station which opened the previous year. Transport does not dominate, but many of the street images inevitably include contemporary road vehicles, including buses.

The author is a registered City of London and Blue Badge Guide, and draws effectively on fifteen years' personal research into London's history. (BLJ)

ELMERS END

Mick Stretten was reading the back page of the July newsletter and saw the photograph of the Elmers End memorial plaque and the request for information on its current whereabouts. Mick says that this plaque is now located in the foyer of Norwood Bus Garage.

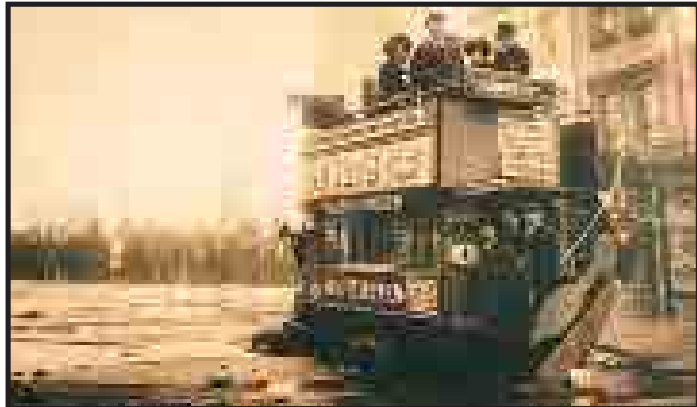
NOT A FRIEND?

If you are reading this newsletter, but are not (yet) a Friend, we would be pleased to welcome you. Further details 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.

WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?

Chris Sullivan's name was first out of the hat with the correct answer to last time's puzzle. Chris correctly identified the location of the "1929UD" hoppers as being on the downpipes to 55 Broadway. Chris wins the book prize kindly donated by Ian Allan Publishing.

Now for this month's puzzle picture. The "Union Jack" bus is obviously in a spot of bother. But do you know the circumstances, location and date? Answers please, by email or post to the Editor's home address, by the copy date for the January 2007 issue published below.



ROUTEMASTERS IN CANADA



Graham Thompson kindly provided this photo of two of the fleet of Routemasters used to convey visitors on sightseeing tours at Niagara Falls. It was taken in July 2006, in seemingly unseasonable weather!

SHOP NEWS

Summer has passed and, as the nights draw in, it is already difficult to remember exactly how we spent those hot summer days and evenings. The new shop works proceed on schedule, and we should be opening the new shop in the Covered Way in April 2007. Announcements will be made nearer the time.

Books

It has been a relatively poor quarter for new books, although several new titles of note are expected to be published in November.

Among the minor titles is another "Glory Days" book from Ian Allan. The formula is applied to the Devon General fleet (and its erstwhile Grey Cars coaching division). Those old enough to remember the pre-1970 company in its heyday, in its smartly applied maroon and cream livery, will be rewarded by a good picture selection of the key types operated by this typically BET fleet. The book is priced at £14.99. Happy holiday memories!

Also from Ian Allan, at £14.99, is the hardy annual *Buses Yearbook 2007* edited by Stewart Brown. Filled, as usual, with articles about buses old and new from around these Islands, the articles are usually well written and the pictures usually not published elsewhere. A good read.

Capital Transport has published an updated Docklands Light Railway handbook at £7.95. The publication includes details of the new King George V extension and is an excellent overview of operations on the ever-growing and ever-heavier Docklands Light Railway.

Models

It has been a busy few months for model collectors.

Corgi Classics

A new 'sight and sounds' Routemaster model has been announced. It is lit, the lights flash and make (it is claimed) authentic Routemaster noises. The casting is an adaptation of the traditional 1:50 casting and should be available for Christmas. Expect to pay around £80.

Although, as I write this, I am bound by commercial confidentiality, I can reveal that there is a rather wonderful London Bus casting being released next year. This, I hope, will be much admired (and popular!). Details should emerge in early November and the shop will have some details as soon as the information is released.

The long awaited RTW was launched (to us) on 14th August, and we were very fortunate to be offered RTW467 to stand in the Piazza that day from the group which owns the vehicle. Free seats for a tour of London by the RTW were offered to purchasers. Unfortunately the initial release is now sold out. Many thanks to our customers, RTW 467 Group and Corgi Classics Ltd for making the day possible.

Exclusive First Editions

It was good to see so many Friends at Duxford for the annual Showbus; and yes, how fortunate we were with the weather!

The big news was the announcement of the RLH lowbridge double deck bus as a significant new casting for next autumn. Judging from the feedback, this is a very popular choice for collectors. The splendid new Bristol RELH coach made its appearance at Duxford for the first time in the guise of a typical United example. This was quickly followed by National Express (Crosville) and the (ever popular) Royal Blue models. The price of most standard release EFE models has now risen to £21.99. Please remember to show your Friend's card at the shop to claim your 10% discount.

Britbus

The first two of many new Britbus models of the AEC Merlin (MB, MBA and MBS) have been received. Our own commissions, MBA 582 and two Garston green MBs, are due shortly. Also available are our own two versions of Uno's Scania Omnidekka on Route 614, featuring either Queensbury or Hatfield as destinations.

Creative Master Northcord

CMN have introduced both the Alexander Dennis Enviro and Scania Onmicity models, and the former in Stagecoach 'Spirit of London' colours has been especially well received. We may still have a few left as you read this....

Sunstar

The marvellous 1:24 Bedford OB model has been released in Yelloway livery. This is a masterpiece of modelling and the next version available is Southern Vectis. The price of this will rise slightly to around £85.

Bachmann

As Transport for London inexorably moves to add operation of suburban railways to its portfolio of responsibilities, it is pleasing to report the announcement of a 4-car BEP and CEP Southern Region electric multiple unit to the manufacturer's catalogue. Expect the first release in about a year's time. We, of course, will stock this item, along with a growing selection of high quality London related railway models.

We are actively engaged in commissioning special models. Please e-mail me mike.walton@tmuseum.co.uk, or send me a postcard, with your favourite idea for a Bachmann commission. Just one thing – the suggestion must be from existing or known future castings. Best idea wins a £20 voucher from the shop. Get thinking!

Michael Walton

Final copy date for the January 2007 issue is: 15th December 2006