



IN THIS ISSUE

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at its creation

A tribute to
Alan Oxley

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with BATS

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In this issue, we look at the creation of London Transport, 90 years ago. For many, the epitome of the London bus is not the Routemaster but the RT and in this photograph we see the very first of the type, on demonstration before entering service.

(Photographer Ernest Masterman, copyright The Bus Archive, ref. EM03/039652).

Alan Oxley (1937-2023)



He developed his own printing house, Robin Hood Publishing, to produce many of these and he extended that facility to others, both transport enthusiasts and local historians. The bookshop was sold in 1998 and Alan retired.

Alan was very active in the local community; he was a vice president of Attenborough Cricket Club, a former captain of Attenborough Village Bowls Club and a lifelong supporter of Notts County Football Club.

It is with great sadness that we report the sudden death of Alan Oxley, for many years the photo archivist for the Omnibus Society.

Alan was the fifth generation of Oxley born in Chilwell and it is therefore no surprise that Barton Transport was his primary interest. He worked in the building construction industry at Long Eaton, training as a cost surveyor before rising to become personal assistant to the managing director. His National Service (where he served as a hygiene assistant) was spent in Scotland and Cyprus, and he married Barbara Hayes in 1966.

In 1972, Alan had a change of career when he became a partner in his father-in-law's bookshop, Walter Hayes, in Beeston – just by the station. He and Barbara had three children, Richard (who tragically died at three years of age), Catherine and Jonathan.

He was a quite prolific author, with a comprehensive three-volume history of Barton and other books on West Bridgford, South Notts and Midland General.

He also scanned thousands of images and ran the OS Zenfolio website which now offers around 55,000 images for purchase. Right up to his death, he was working hard on behalf of the Society.

Alan's passing leaves a void in all our lives and in the activities of the Omnibus Society. Our thoughts are with Catherine and Jonathan; Barbara died in 2014.

We have lost a dear friend. Both a gentle man and a gentleman, always cheerful and buoyant, always ready with a quip and above all always welcoming and helpful.

He became OS photo archivist in 2010 and curated and grew the collection which was housed in an industrial unit close to his home before its transfer to Walsall. In that capacity, he assisted literally hundreds of OS members and other enthusiasts in tracking down images – he was always helpful and always cheerful. One member comments: "Alan assisted me tremendously when I was writing a book. He was always able to give advice, having been a publisher and bookseller himself."

Barton ordered 40 Leyland Titan PD1 double-deckers, most of which had this distinctive and attractive style of Duple lowbridge 55-seat bodywork. Delivery was in 1947 and 1948 for most of them and several have been preserved. (Photographer Charles F Klapper, copyright The Bus Archive).



Facebook Most Popular

We post three times each week on Facebook, where we have over 5,500 followers. Find us at @TheBusArchive and remember to 'like' or 'follow' us.

Here are the most popular half dozen photographs from the last quarter – a mixed bag this time.

For our May cover we were topical, awaiting the coronation of King Charles III. This suitably be-flagged Southend Corporation I (CJN 786) was a Dodge VK62B chassis new in 1941 to the Royal Canadian Air Force with a body built by the operator upon acquisition in 1946. It was one of eight acquired although only four entered service. It was rebuilt to this open-top configuration in 1956 and withdrawn in 1958.

(Photographer Derek Giles, ref. DG02/04988)



BCK 100, an all-Leyland Titan PDI was new in 1946 to Viking Motor Services, passing to Scout Motor Services in 1953 in whose livery it is seen here in Starchouse Square, Preston.

(Photographer David Dodds).



An interesting line-up at Hemel Hempstead Bus Station. From left is 554 DNK, a Bedford SB1 with Thurgood body new in July 1958 to Knight (Bream's Coaches) of the town; London Transport RW3 (497 ALH) an AEC Reliance with dual-door Willowbrook body new in 1960; and UBH 697 a Bedford SBG with Duple Midland body of Dell (Rover Coaches), Lye Green near Chesham. The Reliance was one of a trio in the Country Area fleet; they had a short life with LT, being sold to Chesterfield Corporation in 1963. RW3 survives today, restored to its original condition (Photographer Reg Westgate, ref RW03/020013).



A very late example of the Leyland Tiger Cub was WTX 334H of Brewer of Caerau, a 1969 Willowbrook-bodied model.

(Photographer Bob Smallman, ref. BS01/04189).



Facebook Most Popular

Our cover photo for March was this rather fine 1949 Duple-bodied AEC Regal III of York Bros., Northampton. It had the powerful combination of 9.6 litre engine and preselector gearbox; it is seen here in use as the team coach for Northampton Town FC, playing at Gillingham. (Photographer Frank Wright, ref FW02/00338).



The most popular photo was this imposing Duple Viceroy-bodied Leyland Leopard in the famous fleet of Wallace Arnold Tours. It is signed for a Panoramic Lochs & Glens Tour but is looking a little battle scarred. FUB 479K was new in March 1972 and was on loan from Stanley Hughes, the Gomersal, West Yorkshire-based dealer, for the five years it was in the WA fleet. After withdrawal it didn't stray far, being purchased by Black Prince of Morley. (Photographer Harry Hay, ref. HH01/05525)



Who owned whom?

The structure of ownership of the bus industry was far more complex than is sometimes imagined, as is clear from these documents that the Archive holds from the 1940s and 1950s, decades when the Thomas Tilling, British Electric Traction (BET) and Scottish Motor Traction (SMT) groups were the dominant forces in much of Britain.

Part of the complexity was because the Big Four railways created by the 1923 grouping — the Southern, Great Western, London Midland & Scottish and London & North Eastern — took advantage of powers granted in 1928 to buy stakes in many of the regional bus companies, the majority of which were owned by Tilling, BET or SMT. Further complexity arose from 21 of these companies being owned jointly by Tilling and BET's British Automobile Traction (BAT) subsidiary from 1928 until the Tilling & BAT company was wound up in 1942, with Tilling taking ownership of 11 of them and BET ten.

A diagram, in *The Bus Archive*, published in *Modern Transport*, setting out the effect of the 1942 structure, shows that any notion of a simple divide into Tilling and BET is misplaced with the Tilling empire being split into three parts. The diagram can be downloaded [here](#).

Thomas Tilling Ltd directly owned or held the majority of shares in three bus companies in which there was no railway shareholding — Brighton Hove & District, United Counties and Westcliff-on-Sea — along with other businesses that included Ford Ltd, a long established freight carrier in

London, and the car dealer Stratstone. Its Tilling Motor Services subsidiary managed its interest in the 11 companies transferred from T&BAT. The railways had a shareholding in all of these except the Dumfries-based Caledonian Omnibus Company. The dotted lines in the diagram reveal other curious detail, not least that United Automobile Services owned nearly half the capital in Eastern Counties Omnibus Company, which had been created in 1931 out of four separate companies, one of them United Auto's East Anglia area. Eastern Counties, rather than the parent company, wholly owned Eastern Coach Works Ltd, the principal bodybuilder for Tilling companies.

Tilling's third arm was the National Omnibus & Transport Company, which had been part of the group since 1931 and owned Eastern National, Southern National and Western National jointly with the railway companies that served their respective areas. In turn, Western National owned the Bristol Tramways & Carriage Company, its subsidiaries in Bath and its Bristol Joint Services agreement with Bristol Corporation to provide the city's bus services.

The BET structure was every bit as confusing. British Electric Traction Company directly owned five companies, Hebble Motor Services, Northern General Transport (and five of its subsidiary companies), Potteries Motor Traction, South Wales Transport and Yorkshire Woollen District.

A subsidiary, the BET Omnibus Services Company, owned BET's share in the ten companies taken

over from Tilling & BAT, all of which also were part-owned by railways, while its National Electric Construction Company held its interest in Devon General, Oxford Transport Trust (parent of City of Oxford Motor Services), Rhondda Transport, Western Welsh and Mexborough & Swinton Traction. The railways had a shareholding in all except the small Mexborough & Swinton business.

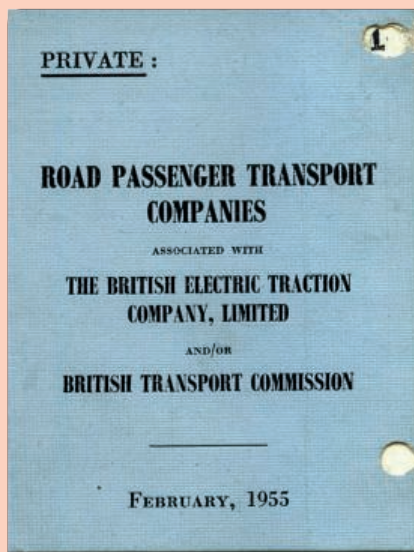
There was one more variation of all this, as British Electric Traction Company and BET Omnibus Services both had stakes in the Birmingham & District Investment Trust, which in turn held BET's shareholding in the Birmingham & Midland Motor Omnibus Company better known as Midland Red, and just to make it even more intriguing, the B&D trust and BET Omnibus Services had separate shareholdings in Midland Red, along with those of the GWR and LMS railways.

Other dotted lines reveal more. Sheffield United Tours was owned by three of the BET Omnibus Services companies — East Midland, North Western and Yorkshire Traction — and several other joint ventures bound Tilling and BET closer together than the 1942 split implied. Bristol Tramways, Midland Red and City of Oxford jointly owned the Black & White Motorways coach business and companies either side of the Pennines had a shared interest in various bus and coach stations, most notably in Blackpool where Ribble, East Yorkshire, North Western, Yorkshire Woollen and Tilling's West Yorkshire Road Car were co-owners.

Who owned whom?

Nationalisation of the railways in 1948 transferred their shareholdings to the British Transport Commission (BTC) which acquired Tilling's bus businesses in September 1948, SMT's buses in January 1949 and the Red & White group in February 1950.

In Scotland BTC acquired the Sutherland's business in Peterhead in north-east Aberdeenshire in 1950 and bought Highland Transport in 1951 to extend its presence right up the North Sea coast to John O'Groats and Thurso. Other tidying up transferred Caledonian Omnibus Company from Tilling to the BTC-owned Western SMT in 1950.



The extracts from a private document in February 1955 spell out the percentage shareholdings in 47 Tilling, BET and what by then were BTC's Scottish Omnibuses Group companies. The 100% BTC ownership of the Tilling and Scottish companies is to be expected, though the acquisition of the Meageen family's one third stake in Cumberland Motor Services had taken place some time after BTC acquired Tilling's bus companies.

OPERATING COMPANY	OWNERSHIP OF ORD. SHARES		
	B.E.T.	B.T.C.	Public
	%	%	%
Aldershot & District Traction Co. Ltd.	33.06	33.06	33.88
Alexander (W.) & Sons Ltd.	—	100	—
Bath Electric Tramways Ltd.	—	100	—
Bath Tramways Motor Co. Ltd.	—	100	—
*Bee-Line Continental Tours Ltd.	44	44	12
Birmingham & Midland Motor Omnibus Co. Ltd.	50	50	—
*Black & White Motorways Ltd.	30	70	—
Blue Cars Continental Coach Cruises Ltd.	100	—	—
*Bourne & Balmer (Croydon) Ltd.	21	61	18
Brighton, Hove & District Omnibus Co. Ltd.	—	100	—
Bristol Tramways & Carriage Co. Ltd.	—	100	—
Central S.M.T. Ltd.	—	100	—
*Chatham & District Traction Co.	36.37	36.37	27.26
Cheltenham & District Transport Co.	—	100	—
City Coach Co. Ltd.	—	100	—
City of Oxford Motor Services Ltd.	50	50	—
*County Motors (Lepton) Ltd.	33.33	66.66	—
Crosville Motor Services Ltd.	—	100	—

Cumberland Motor Services Ltd.	—	100	—
Devon General Omnibus & Touring Co. Ltd.	35.03	35.03	29.94
Durham & District Services Ltd.	—	100	—
East Kent Road Car Co. Ltd.	35.51	35.51	28.98
East Midland Motor Services Ltd.	50	50	—
East Yorkshire Motor Services Ltd.	49.79	49.79	.42
Eastern Counties Omnibus Co. Ltd.	—	100	—
Eastern National Omnibus Co. Ltd.	—	100	—
*Gateshead & District Omnibus Co.	43	43	14
Greenslades Tours Ltd.	100	—	—
Griffin Motor Co. Ltd.	—	100	—
Hants & Dorset Motor Services Ltd.	—	100	—
*Hastings Tramways Co.	36.7	36.7	26.6
Hebble Motor Services Ltd.	50	50	—
Hicks Bros. Ltd.	—	100	—
Highland Omnibuses Ltd.	—	100	—
Liberty Motors Ltd.	—	100	—
James (J.) & Sons Ltd.	100	—	—
Lawson (David) Ltd.	—	100	—
Lincolnshire Road Car Co. Ltd.	—	100	—
Maidstone & District Motor Services Ltd.	36.7	36.7	26.6
Mansfield District Traction Co.	—	100	—

OPERATING COMPANY	OWNERSHIP OF ORDINARY SHARES		
	B.E.T.	B.T.C.	Public
	%	%	%
Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services Ltd.	—	100	—
Western National Omnibus Co. Ltd.	—	100	—
Western S.M.T. Co. Ltd.	—	100	—
Western Welsh Omnibus Co. Ltd.	50	50	—
Wilts & Dorset Motor Services Ltd.	—	100	—
Yorkshire Traction Co. Ltd.	49.04	49.04	1.92
Yorkshire Woollen District Transport Co. Ltd.	50	50	—

The following companies are not included, since they do not operate public service vehicles :—

Blackpool Omnibus Stations Ltd.
 Fawdon Bus Co. Ltd.
 Leamington & Warwick Transport Co. Ltd.
 London Coastal Coaches Ltd.
 Omnibus Stations Ltd.
 Otley Omnibus Stations Ltd.

Who owned whom?

Perhaps more surprising is to see that big companies managed by BET — Midland Red, City of Oxford, East Midland and Western Welsh — were owned 50% by the BTC, essentially as a sleeping partner, and that besides BET and BTC, there were significant private shareholdings in Aldershot & District, Devon General, East Kent and Maidstone & District.

The structure of Black & White Motorways is notable. Outwardly, this had all the hallmarks of a BET company, with a corporate identity all of its own and with the apparent freedom to purchase coaches built to its own specification. Yet BTC owned 70% of the shares to BET's 30%, thanks to the Bristol Tramways shareholding and the BTC's 50% stakes in Midland Red and City of Oxford.

A parallel from more recent times is the joint venture that Stagecoach and ComfortDelGro established in 2005 to run Scottish Citylink and Megabus coach services. Stagecoach owned 35% to ComfortDelGro's 65%, but Stagecoach provided the day-to-day management. History has a habit of repeating itself.

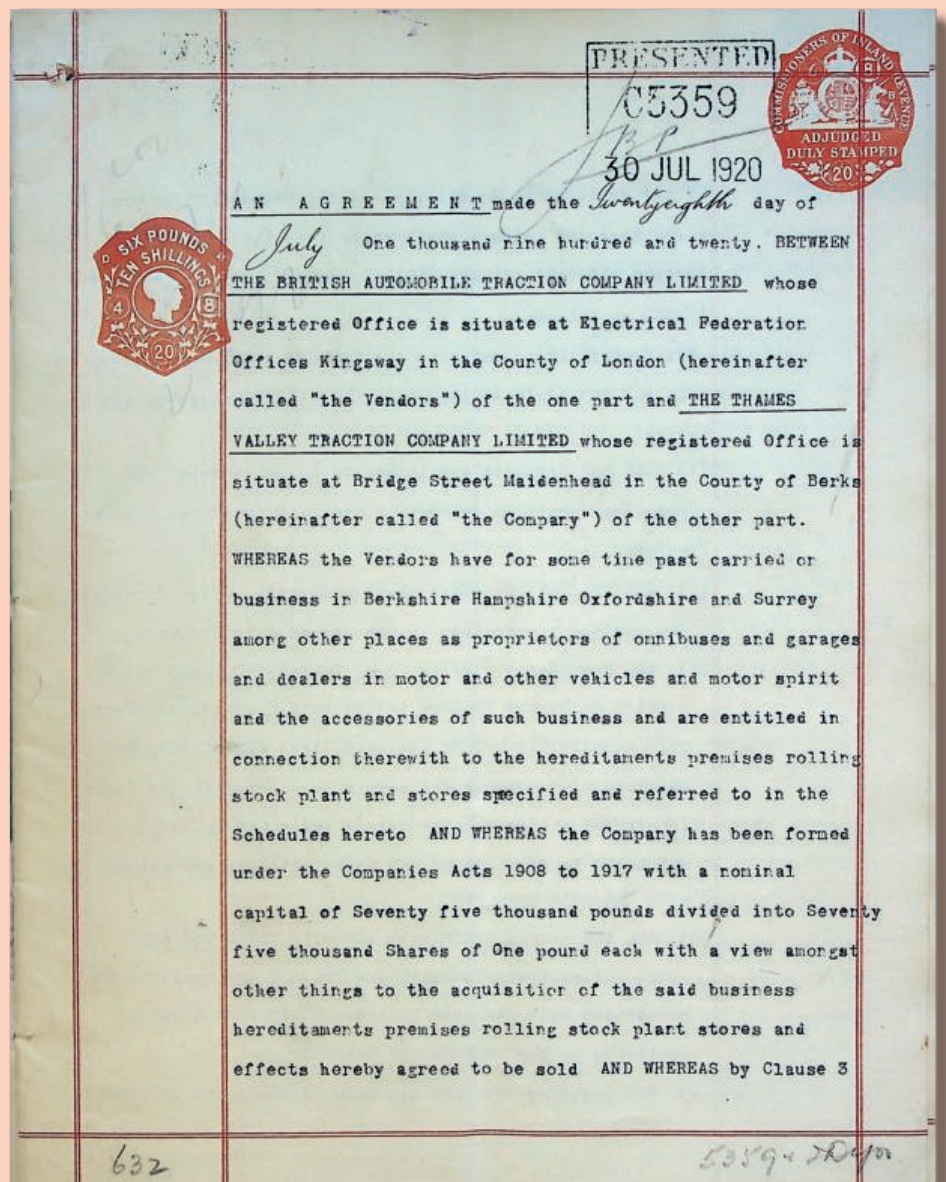
Thames Valley - one that changed sides

Five of the 21 companies that entered the Tilling & BAT partnership owned by one of the groups emerged from the 1942 break-up as subsidiaries of the other.

One of them was Thames Valley Traction, with registered office at Bridge Street in Maidenhead, which was formed in 1920 to consolidate British Automobile Traction's business in the area. BAT owned 86% of the equity while Thomas Tilling held a 14% minority interest.

It became a Tilling company in 1942, with 97.4% of the equity divided equally between Tilling Motor Services and two of the Big Four railways — GWR holding 34% and Southern Railway 14.6%.

This document from the late Peter Jaques's collection, dated 28 July 1920, formalises the sale of BAT's omnibus operations in Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire and Surrey — and its business as proprietors of 'garages and dealers in motor and other vehicles and motor spirit and the accessories of such business' — to the Thames



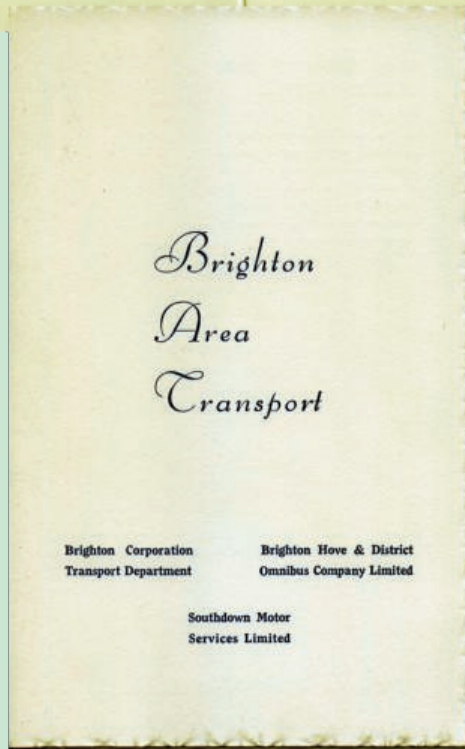
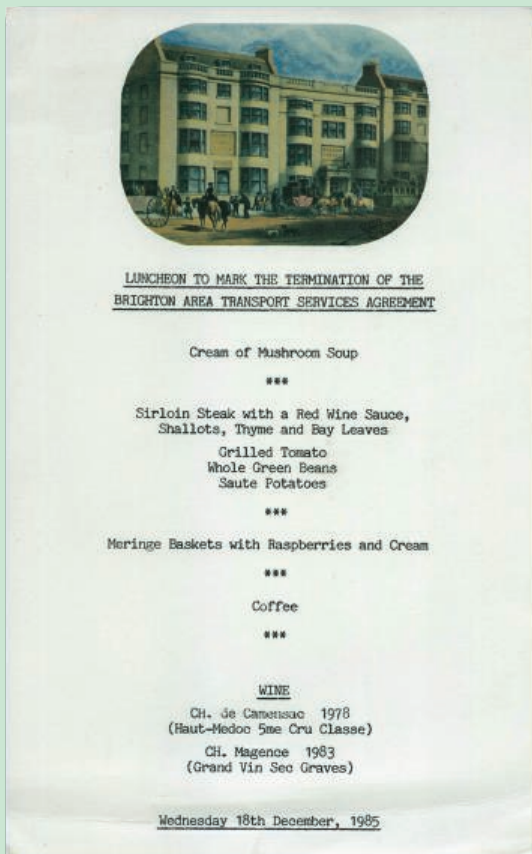
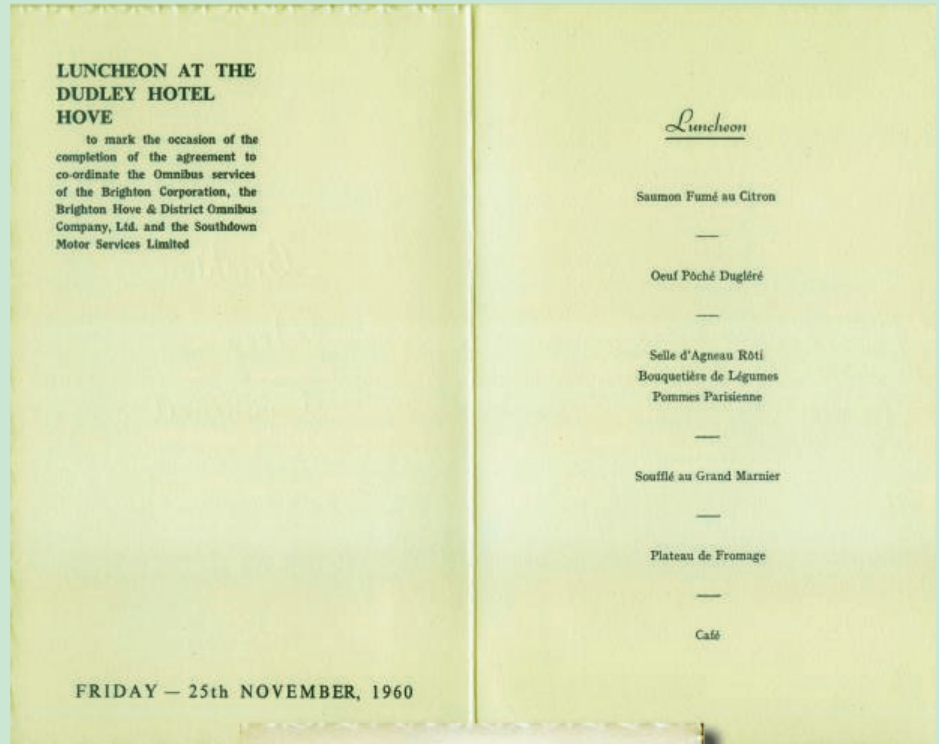
Valley Traction Company with a nominal share capital of £75,000.

By 1942, the share capital stood at £250,000.

When they toasted bonjour and bye-bye to BATS

Twenty-five years apart, contrasting styles of luncheons for the principal actors marked the inauguration and termination of the Brighton Area Transport Services (BATS) agreement, which co-ordinated the omnibus services (as they were termed) of Brighton Corporation Transport, Brighton Hove & District (BH&D) and Southdown Motor Services.

The corporation and BH&D had coordinated their services since 1939, but enlarging the agreement to include Southdown was a perfect reason for the gathering at the Dudley Hotel in Hove on 25 November 1960, at which five courses were served, comprising smoked salmon, poached egg in Dugléré sauce, roast lamb, soufflé and cheese — all of which were described solely in French.



There was no such language barrier on 18 December 1985 when, with deregulation fast approaching, BATS was seen off to its terminus with three courses (and wine) at the Old Ship Hotel in Brighton — mushroom soup, sirloin steak and meringue with raspberries and cream. All rounded off with coffee, just as a quarter century earlier café had been poured.

The birth of London Transport

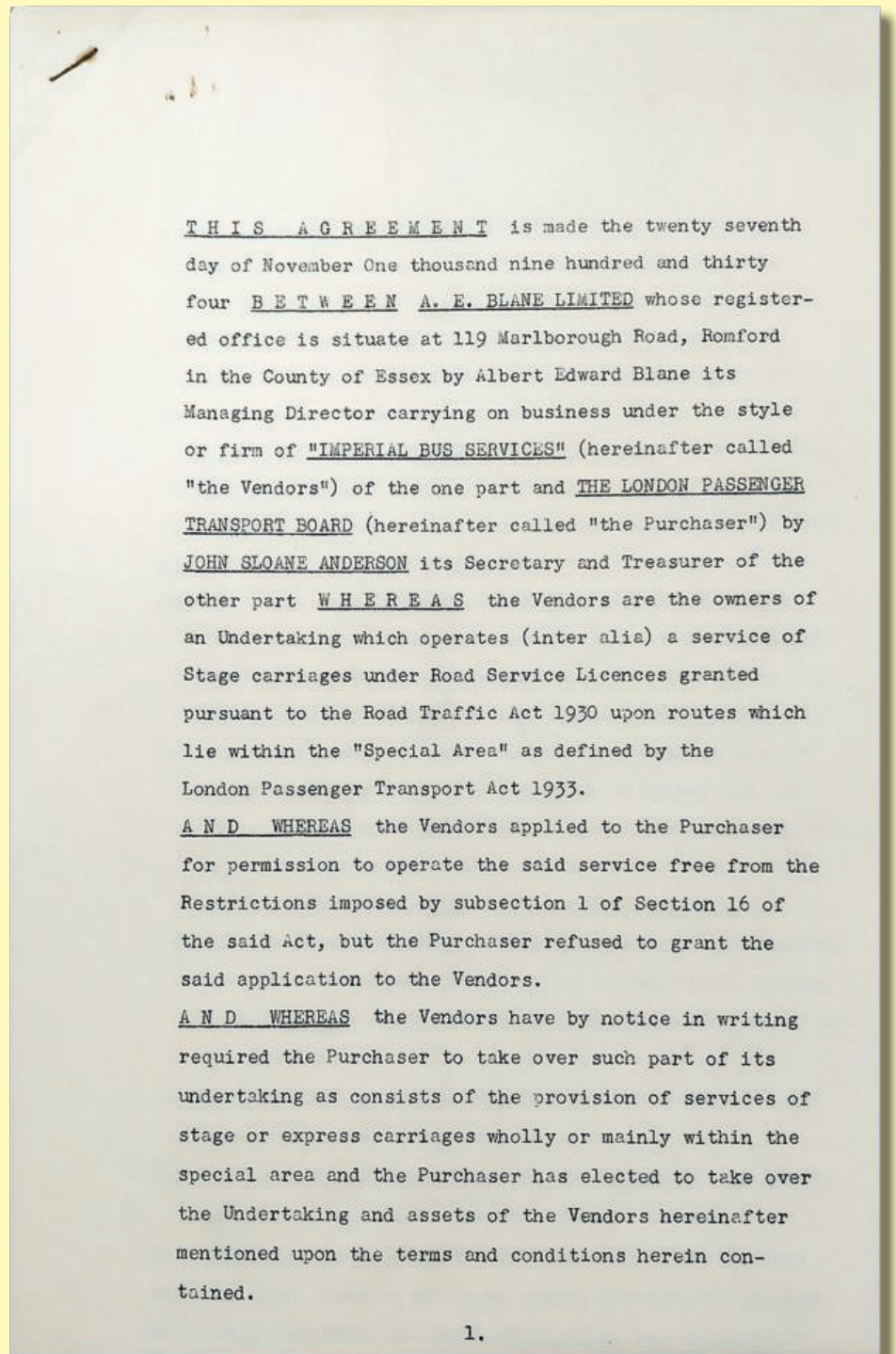
The London Passenger Transport Board came into existence 90 years ago on 1 July 1933, with a remit to provide all bus, tram and underground railway services within a 1,846 sq mile area in a 25 mile radius of Charing Cross. It adopted London Transport as its trading name from May 1934.

The new public board continued the bus, tram, trolleybus and railway services of the Underground combine, with its Lord Ashfield and Frank Pick as chairman and managing director respectively, along with the Metropolitan Railway and the trams of the London County Council and eight county boroughs and urban districts. It went on to exercise powers under Section 5 of The London Passenger Transport Act 1933 for the compulsory purchase of other operators in its area. Thomas Tilling's three south London garages, 369 buses and 2,352 employees were transferred to the board on 1 October 1933, and by 4 December 1934 it had taken over the 56 independent operators in its central area and 277 of their vehicles. Within five years it had absorbed the operations of 72 businesses in its country area.

The agreements to acquire these businesses spelt out precisely what was changing hands, with details of each vehicle, its make, model, seating capacity, registration and Metropolitan Police plate number, whether it was scheduled for regular service or was a spare, and the routes on which they ran.

The agreement of 27 November 1934 to acquire the Imperial Bus Services of 119 Marlborough Road, Romford from Albert Edward Blane of A E Blane Ltd was typical. The first schedule of the contract

covered the takeover of its stage carriage services between Romford and Rainham and between Collier Row and Upminster.



The birth of London Transport

The second schedule, *on the right*, listed 11 single-deck buses with between 14 and 26 seats plus a Morris Oxford car and a Chevrolet lorry. Two of the 26-seaters are listed as 'Guildford' though that may be a mis-spelling of Gilford, a popular English make with smaller operators of the day.

The third schedule, *below*, covered the land and buildings at 115-117 Marlborough Road that Blane used as its garage, together with 'the motor garage, offices, store rooms and dwelling house erected thereon or on some part thereof, a site identified as measuring 48 ft 'or thereabouts' at its frontage, 60 ft at the rear and to be 290 ft — again 'or thereabouts' — in depth.

claim for damages to which the Vendors may be entitled by reason of the said restrictions.

10. THE costs of and incidental to this Agreement the transfer effected hereby and the assessment payable hereunder shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of Section 12 sub-section 12 of the said Act.

A S W I T N E S S the hands of the said ALBERT EDWARD BLANE on behalf of the Vendors and JOHN SLOANE ANDERSON on behalf of the purchaser the day and year first above written.

THE FIRST SCHEDULE above referred to Stage carriage service between Romford (Marlborough Road) and Rainham. Stage carriage service between Collier Row and Upminster.

THE SECOND SCHEDULE above referred to

<u>Make</u>	<u>Seating Capacity</u>	<u>Registration No.</u>
Dennis "G"	18	V.W. 3180
A. J. Stephens	26	V.X. 4253
Dennis 30 cwt.	14	V.X. 6739
"	14	V.X. 7354
"	14	V.X. 7401
Morris Dictator	26	V.X. 9932
Dennis Lancet	32	E.V. 4760
"	32	E.V. 6168
Guildford	26	T.R. 8754
"	26	T.R. 8755
Chevrolet "L.M." with "L.P." Engine.	14	Y.U. 9022
Morris Oxford Private Car		E.V. 6814
Chevrolet Lorry		T.W. 9013
	6.	

THE THIRD SCHEDULE above referred to

PARTICULARS OF LEASEHOLD PROPERTY

ALL THAT piece or parcel of land situate at Marlborough Road Romford in the County of Essex and having a frontage to Marlborough Road aforesaid of forty eight feet or thereabouts and a depth therefrom of two hundred and ninety feet or thereabouts and a width at the rear thereof of sixty four feet or thereabouts TOGETHER WITH the motor garage offices store rooms and dwellinghouse erected thereon or on some part thereof and known as Numbers 115, 117 and 119 Marlborough Road aforesaid.

OMNIBUS SOCIETY PRESENTATION

Please note that the Omnibus Society's John Taylor Memorial Address, on Saturday 8th July 2023, is a presentation by Dr. James Fowler, on "How and why did London's Transport become London Transport". For more details, please click [here](#).

The birth of London Transport

The fourth and final schedule covered contracts and agreements, which in this case ran to three items. One was an agreement with Redline-Glico Ltd to supply 50,000 gallons of motor spirit and/or standard benzole mixture (petrol, in other words) every month from August 1 1934 to 31 July 1935. Another agreement was with the Bell Punch & Printing Company for the hire of 11 punches for five years from 1 September 1932. The third was for a verbal contract dating from 1928 with Gidea Park College for the conveyance of an unspecified number of schoolchildren at £3 a week, payable four weeks in advance. That last one equates to £173 at 2023 prices.

THE FOURTH SCHEDULE above referred to
PARTICULARS OF CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS.

1st August 1934. AGREEMENT with Redline-Glico Limited for supplying 50,000 gallons of Motor Spirit and/or Standard Benzole Mixture by equal monthly quantities from 1st August 1934 to 31st July 1935.

20th September 1932. AGREEMENT with Bell Punch & Printing Co., Ltd. for a period of five years from 1st September 1932 for hire of eleven punches.

1928 Contract Carriage (verbal) with Gidea Park College of Balgores Lane, Gidea Park, Essex for conveyance of school children at £3.0.0. per week payable four weeks in advance.

SIGNED by the said ALBERT EDWARD }
BLANE in the presence of:- } A. E. BLANE

27/11/34

E. E. Taylor,
27 Chancery Lane,
W. C. 2.
Clerk.

A memorandum dated 1 September 1933 from one Mr C E Ayres reviewed the progress, or lack of it, being made in obtaining information on some of the businesses scheduled for acquisition in the country area, noting that 'some action, more or less definite, must be taken immediately in view of the limited time now available for dealing with such matters under the Act'.

MR. C. E. AYRES.

xxx
MR. JONES.

K.1/5438 1st September, 1933.

Reports on the following businesses are outstanding.

Mr. Page was drawn attention to the fact that some action, more or less definite, must be taken immediately in view of the limited time now available for dealing with such matters under the Act.

Penfold & Brodie - information asked for on 15th August. Still outstanding division of rolling stock.

Beaumont & Priest- asked for on 25th August.

Tillingbourne Valley - " " " 24th "

Tilbury Coaching Services - " " " 29th "

Amalgamated Supplies now requested.

The following are also outstanding -

Proposed increase and extension of Sunbury service. Report upon Grays area.

So far as the Hitchin group is concerned, Mr. Pick has decided that Birch Bros.' service will not be taken over for some time, and therefore we shall have to operate according to the timetables submitted to the Metropolitan Traffic Commissioner and the present AR service. Application should be made for short journeys between Hatfield & Victoria in order that Cream Line can be withdrawn on October 4th.

It also reveals the extent of the managing director's control over the handling of events, noting in relation to the acquisition of services between Hitchin and London that 'Mr Pick has decided that Birch Bros.' services will not be taken over for some time, and therefore we will have to operate according to the timetables submitted to the Metropolitan traffic commissioner and the present AR service', adding that 'application should be made for short journeys between Hatfield and Victoria in order that Cream Line can be withdrawn on 4 October'.

Ahead of its time, Foden's revolutionary rear-engined coach

When Britain's main manufacturers of heavy-duty chassis met the demand for higher capacity coaches and single-deck buses by switching in 1950 from vertical front engines to horizontal underfloor ones within the wheelbase, Fodens took a bolder line and offered its PVR chassis with a vertical engine mounted transversely at the rear.

The Sandbach, Cheshire company was best known for its Foden lorries, but added front-engined buses and coaches — double-deck buses as well as single-deckers — to its offerings from 1947 and introduced the PVR three years later. There was a choice of engines. Operators could specify either Fodens' own 4.1litre FD6 supercharged two-stroke diesel developing 126hp at 2,000rpm or, if they preferred something they already knew, the slower revving (1,700rpm) Gardner 6LW developing 112hp. There also was a choice of a four- or five-speed constant mesh gearbox.

Besides the 16ft 6in wheelbase 30ft chassis for the home market, there was a 19ft 6in wheelbase 33ft export model available in right- or left-hand drive.

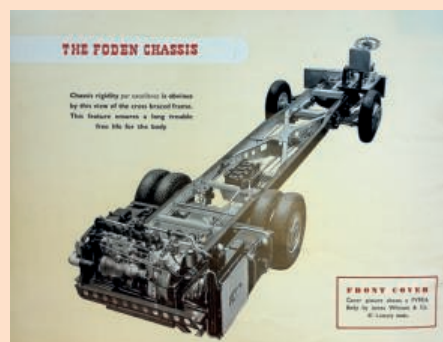
This brochure promoting its virtues spoke of Fodens' confidence in the layout being 'justified fully' by 'the independent tests made by the technical press and our many pleased customers'. Engine noise was greatly reduced owing to the sound being carried away from the rear rather than through the body. Smooth, vibrationless running was helped by its short propeller shaft, the engine could be accessed and removed easily, better weight distribution (including locating the spare wheel in the front overhang) improved ride quality and cornering, and road holding on wet and dry roads 'is quite outstanding'.

All this was accompanied by technical details and illustrations of the chassis and coach body designs available from leading manufacturers Harrington (complete with its trademark dorsal fin) and Plaxton, as well as smaller players like Whitson, Gurney Nutting, Bellhouse Hartwell, Metalcraft and Lawton.

The brochure also listed eight service depots across Britain (five of them Fodens' own), 22 sales agents in Britain and Northern Ireland, and overseas agents in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, South America, India and the Middle East.

However, it ceased building passenger chassis after 1955, having sold around 570 vehicles, of which the PVR accounted for just 70 (40 with the Foden two-stroke engine and 30 the Gardner 6LW). Approximately one third of them were exported. Although it counted smaller municipal operators among its customers for front-engined chassis, it was unable to break into the big fleet market and consequently its home market sales of rear-engined coaches were confined to orders from independent operators buying ones and twos.

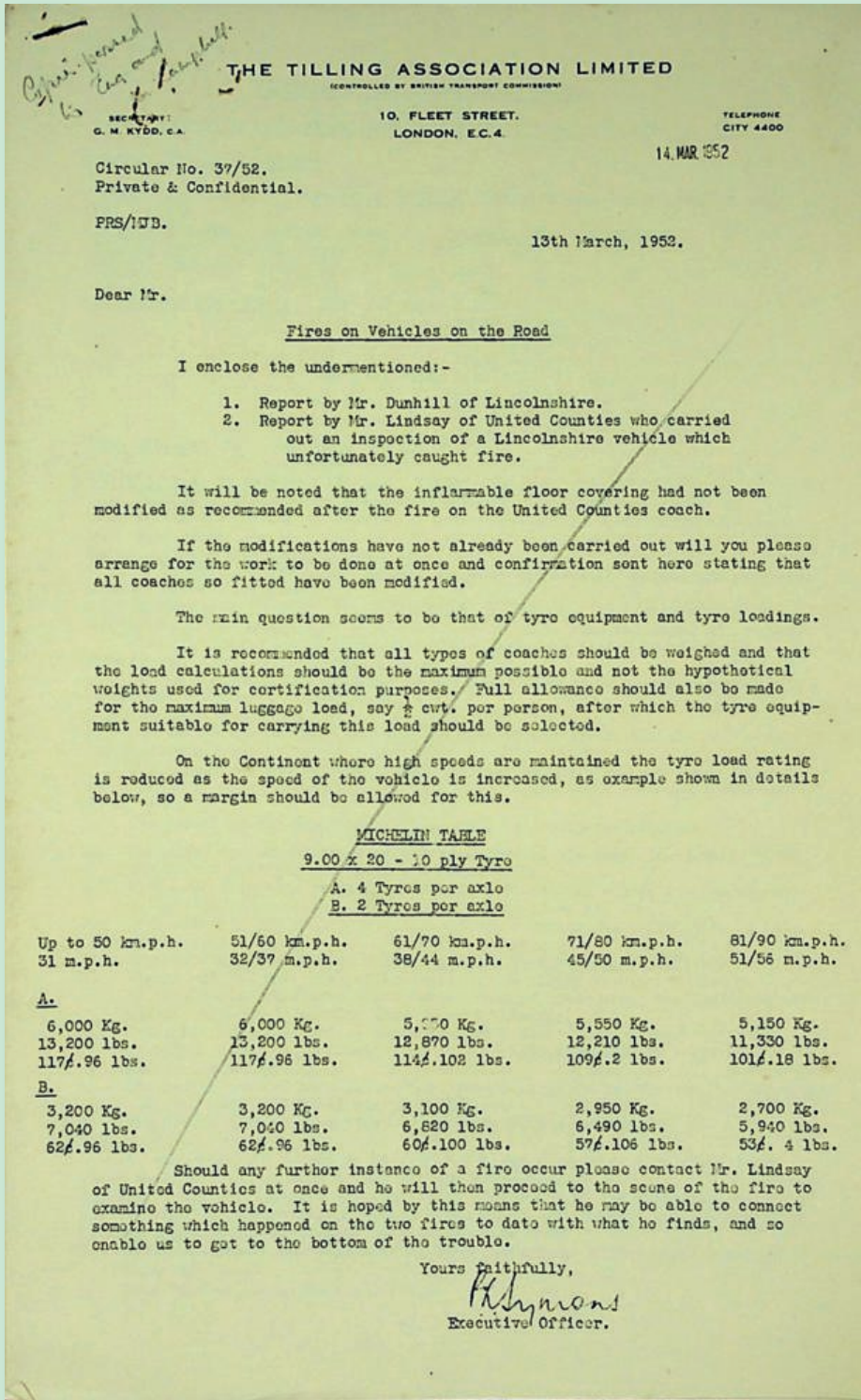
It would be another ten years before rear-engined coaches became established in the UK with the Bristol RE, and 15 years beyond that before mainland European manufacturers like DAF, Scania and Neoplan made them an everyday product for family-owned fleets. To view the complete brochure, click [here](#).



Hot tyres put Tilling in the firing line

A March 1952 memorandum from The Tilling Association Ltd, the arm of the British Transport Commission responsible for its companies in England and Wales beyond London, is a reminder that accidental vehicle fires were as much of a risk 70 years ago as they are today, and reveals one of the ways that the group tried to pool its knowledge and expertise for the benefit of the whole.

P R Symons, the association's executive officer, had received reports on the causes of a recent fire on a Lincolnshire Road Car coach and was urging action by all of its companies to minimise the risk of a repetition, as this incident had followed another involving a United Counties coach.



A Mr Lindsay at United Counties appeared to have become Tilling's 'go to' man in the event of such a mishap, as both he and a Mr Dunhill at Lincolnshire had reported back on this latest incident and the other companies were being urged to contact him 'at once' if any of their coaches caught fire, with the promise that he 'will then proceed to the scene of the fire to examine the vehicle'.

The United Counties fire had led to a decision to remove inflammable floor covering, something that Lincolnshire had omitted to do on its unfortunate coach and which Mr Symons was instructing all the fleets do 'at once' and confirm to him in writing that this instruction had been followed.

However, although the floor covering aggravated the problem, it was not the root cause. 'The main question seems to be that of tyre equipment and tyre loadings,' he explained. Rather than rely on hypothetical weights used for certification purposes, they were urged to weigh all types of coach in their fleet and make an allowance of around half a hundredweight (25.4kg) per passenger and to follow Continental practice for higher speed running by reducing the tyre load rating as the vehicle's speed was increased.

‘Much to emulate, some things to avoid’

Glasgow Corporation Transport (GCT) produced a 50-page illustrated and tabulated report in April 1930 on a clearly enlightening visit by a deputation from the Scottish city to investigate the transport system in Berlin.

British interest in the organisation of public transport in the German capital was heightened by the merger two years earlier of the city’s bus, tram and underground railway companies into a single entity known then as Berliner Verkehrsbe-triebe AtkienGesellschaft or BVG for short, an organisation owned by the city. It is still called BVG today, though the G is no longer an abbreviation of anything. Glasgow, with one of Britain’s most extensive tram systems, a steadily expanding bus service and a small, yet-to-be-electrified underground line, was open to finding out what lessons it might learn from this restructured organisation, which in October 1929 operated 3,898 trams and trailers, 671 mainly double-deck buses and 1,040 underground carriages.

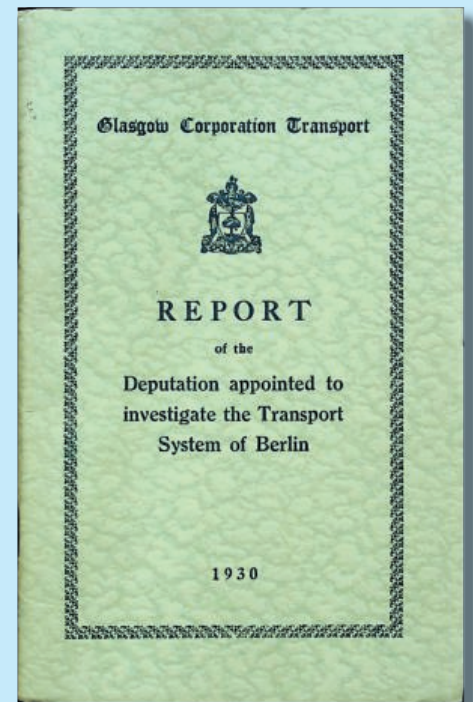
‘There was much to emulate and some things to avoid,’ the delegation concluded, ‘but the members will always carry with them happy memories of the cordial welcome extended to them, and the willingness, amounting to anxiety, on the part of all with whom they came in contact to make the visit comfortable, interesting and profitable.’

The report was produced in the names of Patrick J Dollan, the convenor of Glasgow’s transport committee, general manager

Lachlan Mackinnon and traffic superintendent Robert F Smith. Dollan, then a member of the Independent Labour Party, was one of the most prominent Scottish politicians of the time and served as Lord Provost (equivalent of lord mayor) from 1938 to 1941 for which he was knighted, as was customary. Mackinnon was GCT’s general manager from 1926 to 1936 and Smith held the post from 1937 to 1943; both retired after spending their entire working lives with the department.

A diagram helps explain how BVG was organised, with the president of the traffic company, Herr Reuter, also chairing the traffic board which dealt with all matters relating to traffic in Greater Berlin. What the delegation clearly found rather odd was that the BVG’s board of management — the box at the bottom of the diagram — had no general manager. There were heads of commercial, traffic, technical, personnel and civil engineering.

‘Herr Reuter admitted that this is a weakness in the organisation which will ultimately require to be considered,’ they reported, going on to explain how the issue had been fudged. ‘The various companies that had been amalgamated had each a general manager and it was difficult to appoint one and reject another. Some of these managers had identified themselves with one or other of the political parties, and as a consequence if the party to which they had shown allegiance was not in power, their services were not retained. One of the company managers was a Magistrate of the city. Twelve of



these ex-company managers were discharged.’ These were times of political instability in Germany.

The delegation was less than impressed. ‘When either of the sectional managers has a change of policy to propose, it is submitted to the five gentlemen comprising the board of management and is settled by a majority vote. The deputation is of the opinion, however — an opinion shared, as already stated, by the president, Herr Reuter — that in time someone will have to be appointed to act as general manager of the combined undertakings.’

BVG, they found, paid a traffic tax of 6% of the value of ticket sales as well as general industrial taxation, and a 10% tax on its gross revenue to the city, but as a municipal organisation was exempt from paying income tax.

It had hit a financial problem that will have concerned the deputation from Glasgow, which prided itself on charging low fares and generating many short-distance riders. BVG had issued bonds in

'Much to emulate, some things to avoid'

payment for the shares taken from the companies it had absorbed, but was making insufficient revenue to pay the interest guaranteed to the bond holders. It had tried raising fares, but that had been self-defeating in the short-term, as there was a sharp fall in passenger numbers — 15% on the trams, 12% on the buses — and a drop in revenue.

'There is no doubt that money is scarce in Berlin. Many extensions are being made to the underground and it is difficult to see where the money for continuing this work is to come from.

'On the journey to Treptow, when passing through one of the districts, the deputation was informed that it was "the Whitechapel of Berlin". Poor it certainly was, and the paving on the streets was shocking, but there was an entire absence of the sordidness and sliminess usually associated with the poorer areas in Britain.'

Something that left a positive impression was BVG's Müllerstrasse depot in the north of the city's Wedding district, probably the largest tramway depot in the world at the time and ultimately the second largest in Berlin, which was reached to the amusement of the party along Glasgowstrasse, one of a series of streets named after the principal towns of Europe. It was said at the time that the design of GCT's second purpose-built bus garage at Knightswood on Glasgow's then western edge, which Dollan officially opened in October 1932, was influenced by what the deputation had seen in Berlin.

Knightswood garage, with space for over 200 buses, remained operational until 2004, latterly in First Bus ownership, and the site has since been redeveloped as housing. Müllerstrasse depot was largely unscathed in World War Two and remained a tram depot until 1958, with room for 320 vehicles. It reopened as a bus depot in 1960 and can accommodate around 240 vehicles. Glasgowstrasse is still nearby, along with Dublinerstrasse, Belfaststrasse, Londonerstrasse and Edinburgerstrasse.



SUMMARY OF INFORMATION re B.V.G.

The following summary of information regarding the B.V.G. was prepared in October, 1929, and is of interest :—

Tramways.	Driving Cars.	Trailers.	Total.	<i>Rolling Stock.</i>
2 axle -	1,346	1,748	3,094	
4 " -	758	46	804	
	<u>2,104</u>	<u>1,794</u>	<u>3,898</u>	

Buses.	Two-Axle.	Three-Axle.	Total.
S.D. -	26	30	56
D.D. -	474	127	601
Excursion -	7	7	14
	<u>507</u>	<u>164</u>	<u>671</u>

Tubes.	Driving Carriages.	Trailers.	Total.
Small size -	414	367	781
Large " (13m long)	94	141	235
" " (18m ")	12	12	24
	<u>520</u>	<u>520</u>	<u>1,040</u>

Total Stock, 5,609 carriages.

Tramways (Single track)	-	73	kilometres	<i>Length of Track.</i>
" (Double ")	-	562	"	
Omnibus	-	307	"	
Tubes or Railways	-	55	"	
Tramway	-	-	-	93 <i>Number of Routes.</i>
Omnibus - City & Suburban	-	43	-	
Excursion	-	10	-	
	-	-	-	53
Tubes -	-	-	-	4
Total number of routes	-	-	-	<u>150</u>

Mrs Jean Taplin

We have lost another friend, with the passing of Mrs Jean Taplin on 26th February. Jean was the wife of the late Mike Taplin, a bus enthusiast and prolific bus photographer who predeceased her by ten years.

Jean had always supported Mike's hobby and travelled the country with him; after his death she continued to support many organisations and societies including The Bus Archive and The Omnibus Society. Indeed, she sponsored the creation of a dedicated room at our Walsall centre where volunteers and researchers can take refreshments. This was dedicated in 2018 as The Taplin Room and will now be maintained in honour of both Mike and Jean.



How to Access our Collection

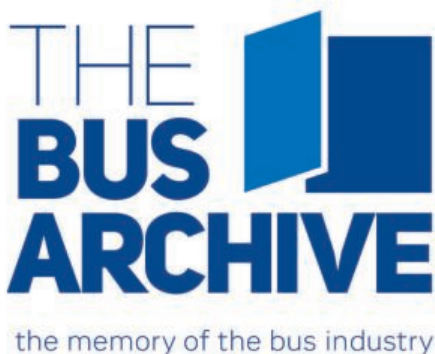
We have three Research Centres, each holding unique material:

- Droitwich, for original records
- Walsall, for publicity items and publications
- Acton, for London Transport records and timetables

Search our online catalogue at www.busarchive.org.uk.

Saturday opening

We are pleased to announce that, in collaboration with our colleagues at the London Transport Museum, we are now opening our **Acton** centre on certain Saturdays. For more details, please enquire at hello@busarchive.org.uk.



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