



AEC Renown LT1429c (EV 7340) was a unique vehicle in the London Transport fleet, the highest numbered of the six-wheel single- and double-deckers built between 1929 and 1932 and the only one not supplied new to the London General Omnibus Company. It had a 32-seat Harrington coach body and was new in September 1932 to Edward Hillman Saloon Coaches of Romford where it was numbered 119. It also was unique there, as all of Hillman's other coaches were Giflords. Read more on page 2.
(Photographer JF Higham, copyright The Bus Archive, ref. JH08/0661)

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AEC Renown LTI 429c (EV 7340)

Hillman was a classic transport entrepreneur of the age. He established his coach business in December 1928 and within three years had 107 vehicles on routes connecting London with its eastern suburbs and the Essex and East Anglia coast. London Transport acquired the operations within its area in April 1934, around the same time as Eastern National bought almost everything else.

Hillman retained two 14-seat Giflors for a service between London and Essex Airport at Stapleford Abbots, 6 miles north of Romford. That was the base of Hillman Airways, a venture he started in December 1931 and which flew to destinations within Britain and the near continent. Such was his showmanship that he piloted one of his De Havillands to the AEC works at Southall to order the Renown. He died, aged 45, on New Year's Eve 1934. The airline survived and in September 1935 was merged with Spartan Air Lines, United Airways and British Continental Airways to create the first carrier to be called British Airways.

In this photograph, the disc attached to the nearside headlamp on the Renown indicates that it was attending an FA Cup Final at Wembley, probably in April 1934. Although London Transport painted it in Green Line livery of green and black with a silver roof (and replaced the AEC badge on the radiator with one of its own logo and name), it was not considered suitable for Green Line or other stage carriage services and was used for private hires, identified as such by a small letter C after the fleet number and operated successively from south London garages in Brixton and Old Kent Road.

It was taken out of service in May 1939 and placed in store at Chiswick tram depot. Together with many other stored vehicles, it was moved in March 1940 to the Bull Yard garage in Peckham where space had become available following wartime service cuts. It was one of 48 vehicles destroyed seven months later when Luftwaffe incendiary bombs wrecked the garage. It was ironic that what its first owner claimed was the first bus ever to be ordered via the use of an aeroplane should have met its end in an air raid.

Mutual aid from Tilling and BET

Essential information for BET and Tilling operators was a directory detailing the addresses and phone numbers of their offices and service depots across England, Wales and into south-west Scotland.

The 1938 edition from the British Electrical Federation and Tilling Association lists them alphabetically by town and city, with an indication of the services they could provide (day or night garaging and/or repairs, fuelling (petrol and diesel), lubricating oil and washing) and the main makes of vehicles operated from each site.

50			EVE - FAR		
TOWN	COMPANY	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NO.	TYPE OF SERVICE AVAILABLE	GENERAL MAKE OF VEHICLE OPERATED
EVESHAM	MIDLAND RED	ABBEY ROAD	EVESHAM 515	T.P.F.O.G.D.	S.O.S.
"	MIDLAND RED	18, HIGH STREET	EVESHAM 515	T.	S.O.S.
EXETER	DEVON GENERAL	BLACKBOY ROAD	EXETER 3034	T.P.F.O.W.G.D.	A.E.C., LEYLAND
"	DEVON GENERAL	PAUL STREET	EXETER 3698 & 4123	T.P.F.O.	A.E.C., LEYLAND
"	SOUTHERN & WESTERN NATIONAL	48, QUEEN STREET	EXETER 4191	T.	A.E.C., BEDFORD, BRISTOL, DENNIS, LEYLAND, T.S. MOTORS
"	WESTERN NATIONAL	23, QUEEN STREET	EXETER 4644	T.	BEDFORD, BRISTOL, DENNIS, LEYLAND, T.S. MOTORS
EXMOUTH	DEVON GENERAL	IMPERIAL ROAD	EXMOUTH 361	T.P.F.O.G.D.	A.E.C., LEYLAND
FALMOUTH	WESTERN NATIONAL	DRACAENA AVENUE	FALMOUTH 501	T.O.W.G.	BRISTOL, DENNIS, LEYLAND
"	WESTERN NATIONAL	19, KILLIGREW STREET	FALMOUTH 501	T.	BEDFORD, BRISTOL, DENNIS, LEYLAND, T.S. MOTORS
FAREHAM	HANTS & DORSET	12, WEST STREET	FAREHAM 2259	T.P.F.O.G.D.	LEYLAND
ADDENDA			T. TELEPHONE. P. PETROL. F. FUEL OIL. O. LUBRICATING OIL. W. CAR WASHING.		
			G. DAY GARAGING. H. NIGHT GARAGING. D. DAY REPAIRS. N. NIGHT REPAIRS.		

Facebook highlights

Over the last quarter, we have again been looking through the Roy Marshall photo collection, this time focusing on traditional independent operators.

Here are the most popular half dozen. The captions are highly abridged from the original posts; for full stories behind the operators and the vehicles go to <https://www.facebook.com/thebusarchive/>.



Waiting for passengers in Church Street, Llangefni is LRU 538F, a coach that could genuinely claim to be unique and a pioneer as it was the first Jonckheere bodied coach registered in the UK and the only Ford R226 with this style of body. It was new in 1966 for Munda Tourisme, Ostend a subsidiary of Excelsior European Motorways of Bournemouth. It worked for Excelsior for a further four summers, sometimes from Bournemouth on its UK plates or in Belgium as 5774 P. It is seen here when with Burrows of LLangedwen. (ref. RM02/NSE23).

Huntingdon Street Bus Station, Nottingham in October 1972 is the setting for two of Barton's creations. 901 (901 LRR) was originally a Duple low-bridge bodied Leyland Titan PD1A new to Barton in 1948 as 577 (KAL 374). In 1961 the chassis was rebodied by Northern Counties with a new 70 seat body. Alongside is 1130 (YRR 508H), a 1955 AEC Reliance chassis with 1969 Plaxton Panorama Elite body. (ref. RM02/MAA128).



Blue Bus (Tailby & George), Willington, trading as Blue Bus Services. TNU 687F was a Daimler Roadliner with Plaxton Panorama body, new in 1967. The Roadliner was fitted with the powerful Cummins V6 engine, but was far from reliable, even when given the close attention a small independent could afford. On 1st December 1973 TNU and the rest of the business was sold to Derby Corporation, and on 5th January 1976 it was destroyed along with 18 other vehicles in a depot fire at Willington. (ref. RM02/NCA15).

Fishwick of Leyland. The Atlantean chassis under MTE 186K was purchased in 1969 and Fishwick's sister company Fowler built the individualistic body quite slowly over the next three years! Fishwick's lasted until 24th October 2015 when the company entered administration. (ref. RM02/NED73).



Facebook highlights

For many years Yeates of Loughborough was the favoured body builder of Bourne independent The Delaine, including both of the double deck bodies that Yeates produced. Here, No. 55 (TTL 517), a 1961 Bedford SBI, displays the typical flamboyance of trim used by Yeates to make what is essentially a bus look very smart. (ref. RM02/NFE20).



And our most popular post is....



Wallace Arnold. In the early 1960s, they took delivery of around 45 new coaches each year, including this 1964 specimen, 236 HUM a Plaxton bodied Bedford VAL. Each year, Wallace Arnold would have several coaches on hire from Stanley Hughes, the Gomersal based dealer and this vehicle was one of nine VALs on loan in 1964. However, it came back in 1965, and again in 1966! In July 1967 it was found a more stable home when acquired by Bingley of Kinsley, staying with them until May 1976. (ref. RM02/NMF7).

Continental coach travel and commercial TV

There was more to the British Electric Traction (BET) group than the big territorial bus companies like Ribble, Southdown and Midland Red that were household names in the English counties that they served. It also owned small coach businesses and diversified into television when ITV was established to offer a second channel as an alternative to the output of the BBC.

BET treated its small coach and bus subsidiaries as places for promising young managers to develop their skills before advancing to more challenging roles in the bigger companies. Some of them admitted later that they were attracted by the possibility of a career move into the glittering world of television.

The late Frank Woodworth cut his teeth as manager of two London-based subsidiaries that specialised in tours into mainland Europe, Red Line Continental Motorways with a garage in Basing Street, Notting Hill and Blue Cars Continental Coaches with a prominent shop front in the heart of West End theatreland in Shaftesbury Avenue. His collection in the Archive includes documents offering an insight into some of their activities.

We don't know if he ever aspired to become a broadcasting mogul, but he played a part in promoting those coach companies through BET's pioneering commercial television station, Associated Rediffusion, which held the ITV franchise for London and surrounding counties from 1955 to 1968 and was the first of the franchises to go on air.

It was succeeded by Thames Television in which BET was co-owner.

For the first eight years, the commercial channels were permitted to include programmes known as admags in their schedules, feel good short features of 15 to 20 minute duration in which products and services were promoted within the framework of an entertaining story. Among them was a series called *Girl on a Date* starring Muriel Young, a film actress in her 30s who was one of Associated Rediffusion's continuity announcers and was in the cast of Peter Sellers's 1959 film *I'm All Right Jack*. The script writer for at least some of them was Diana Noel, who also wrote television plays.

Red Line was one of seven advertising participators, as they were termed, in an episode transmitted from Associated Rediffusion's studio in Wembley between 22:00 and 22:15 on Thursday 4 April 1957, promoting coach travel along with Bramington rings, NMC cigarette lighters, Gloria shampoo, Addis combs, Lipcote lipstick sealer and Janet Dickinson swimwear.

We might guess that a hint of glamour, sophistication, a sunshine holiday and possible engagement ran through the storyline. The script is preserved in the Archive.

While advertising agencies represented other participants — J Walter Thompson no less on behalf of Addis — the contact at Red Line was Mr Woodworth himself whose phone number was

COV (for Covent Garden) 0902. Supporting actors were Hugh David and Joan Winter.

Associated Rediffusion also aired advertisements and exclusive admags for Blue Cars, several of which featured Nicholas Parsons and his then wife, the actress Denise Bryer.

Frank Woodworth's collection also includes an article in the January 1947 edition of *The Leyland Journal*, the manufacturer's customer and colleague magazine. It explains that Red Line then was still owned independently by Mr JF Brennan who commented, 'I dare say we're the least likely firm in the country to be nationalised, though anything can happen these days.'

The subsequent sale to BET ensured that it remained out of state ownership.

The first page of this article appears on the next page.

Mrs Brennan had kept the company afloat during the war while her husband served in the Royal Navy, returning to civilian life in time to accompany manager Mr HJ Henesy in re-establishing a continental tours programme in 1946.

The first of six tours to Switzerland and the south of France left Victoria Coach Station on 15 September that year. That was no mean feat of organisation when it is considered that the war had only been over for little more than a year, and half of Europe was in ruins and short of food.



Two Red Line vehicles enable British lovers of the Continent to renew their acquaintance with favourite places and scenes.

CONTINENTAL TOURING CONCERN'S 1947 PLANS

A Story of Constant Triumph Over Difficulties

I DARE say we're the least likely firm in the country to be nationalised, though anything can happen these days." The speaker was Mr. J. F. Brennan, proprietor of Red Line Continental Motorways Ltd., telling *The Leyland Journal* of his plans for the 1947 coaching season.

Before the war his company operated luxurious Leyland Tiger machines on all-in holiday tours all over Europe, under the management of Mr. H. J. Hensy, who "graduated" in the foreign tours business with the original European Motorways concern and has now had twenty-five years experience in this field. Mrs. Brennan fought to keep the Red Line firm alive during the difficult war years, and as soon as Mr. Brennan was demobilised from the Navy, he and Mr. Hensy laboured together to get the tours going again in the 1946 season.

Quick Off the Mark

As a result of their toil, the first tour left the Victoria Coach Station on Sept. 15, 1946. Six tours were sent to Switzerland and the South of France before the season closed, no mean feat of organisation when it is considered

that the war had only been over for a little more than a year, and half Europe was in ruins and short of food.

Mr. Hensy travelled round the continent for thousands of uncomfortable miles on train and service bus, renewing pre-war contacts with hotels and others. Hotels where coach parties could be fed were few and far between, he found; roads, too, were in bad condition due to neglect. The hotels proved to be the controlling factor; pre-war routes and timings had to be re-arranged according to the location of hotels capable of offering the first-class facilities that Red Line insist upon.

Extra Fuel Carried

Shortage of fuel was not a real problem; tanks on both sides of the vehicles used contain enough fuel oil for 1000 miles without re-fuelling. For use in case of emergency or difficulty a letter of authority was obtained from the French Government.

In general, France showed herself willing and anxious to accommodate visitors. One deterrent is the comprehensive coupon system, without which no food can be obtained; Red Line passengers hear nothing of these troubles,

Continental coach travel and commercial TV



Holidays without equal !

*Carefree....excitingly different....
operated by the Biggest and Best
in the Business.....*

ONCE AGAIN, "Blue Cars", the No. 1 Continental Coach Touring Organisation, offer a Holiday Programme unequalled for sheer enjoyment, travel interest and **OUTSTANDING VALUE FOR MONEY!**

Old favourites are still here—proved in popularity over the years. In addition, new itineraries have been carefully devised for those wanting something different. Here are tours to suit **EVERYONE!**

And **ALL** set a new standard in holiday value! As the organisation grows, spreading into every Country of Western Europe, "Blue Cars" are enabled to provide **EVEN BETTER SERVICE** than ever before...**MORE** comfort, **MORE** fun, **MORE** good living, **MORE** varied and interesting itineraries.....

Decide **NOW**—a "Blue Cars" Continental Coach Cruise for **YOU** this time! Enjoy the most excitingly **DIFFERENT** holiday of your life—in armchair comfort and at an "all-in" cost well within your means.....

"Blue Cars" **CONTINENTAL COACH CRUISES**

Blue Cars had traded by that name since 1936 and BET bought the business in April 1953 for £125,000 which is around £2.9 million at 2024 values. Its founder, Ted Langton, went on to establish a package holiday business with air travel, Universal Sky Tours, in 1954 and his own airline, Euravia, which began operating in 1962 and was renamed Britannia Airways two years later. The Thomson International organisation bought the tour company and airline in 1965.

The sale agreement with BET stipulated that Mr Langton would not re-enter the coach tour business for seven years. Although Universal Sky Tours used aeroplanes, BET regarded its establishment as a breach of the terms of the sale of Blue Cars and won its argument in court in 1960 when it was awarded £45,000 damages, the equivalent of around £875,000 today.

A magazine cutting dated May 1953 described the first of eight luxuriously appointed 32-seat coaches delivered to Blue Cars just after BET had bought the business and which had been ordered by its former owner. These were Daimler Freelines with the horizontal version of Daimler's own 10.6 litre CD650 engine, a Wilson five-speed preselector gearbox and Landmaster body by Bellhouse Hartwell, based in Westhoughton near Bolton.



NEW CONTINENTAL TOURING COACHES

3/1453 Daimler Fleet for Blue Cars May 1953 Continental

At the take-over ceremony at Victoria Coach Station. Left to right : Messrs. R. W. Couch (Daimler), K. Fox (Manager, Blue Cars), W. P. Bradbury (Director, Blue Cars), B. Smith (Chairman, London Coastal Coaches), E. L. Taylor (Chairman, Blue Cars), Raymond W. Birch (Director, Blue Cars), R. J. Nauen (Daimler), Sir Alexander Maxwell (Chairman, British Travel and Holidays Association).

TO supplement its fleet of luxury coaches for Continental touring Blue Cars Continental Coaches, Ltd., of 224, Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C.2, is taking delivery of eight Daimler Freeline underfloor-engine coaches within the next few weeks. The first of these was delivered this month and was exhibited at the Victoria Coach Station in London, where it was inspected by Sir Alexander Maxwell, Chairman of the British Travel and Holidays Association, and representatives of the leading travel agencies. Blue Cars were recently acquired by the B.E.T. group and have been engaged exclusively for many years in coach tours of the Continent.

The Daimler Freeline chassis employed in these new coaches is powered by a 10.6 litre horizontal engine, developing 137 b.h.p. at 1,800 r.p.m., of Daimler manufacture, and has a Daimler fluid fly-wheel and a Wilson five-speed preselective epicyclic gearbox. This transmission was chosen for its very smooth operating characteristics and the gear ratios are such that it will be possible to climb the most severe gradients with plenty of power in hand and at the same time have a high cruising speed. A 40-gallon fuel tank will allow it to cover long journeys of 400-500 miles without refuelling.

The overall dimensions of the coach are 30ft. long

by 8ft. wide, and this has permitted a most comfortable seating arrangement for 32 passengers with a single seat for the courier at the front alongside that of the driver. The bodywork was built by Bellhouse, Hartwell and Company, Ltd., of West-houghton, Lancs., and has an outward appearance made striking by the general lines of the body and the bold wingline, which runs the length of the coach; this terminates at the front in a bold streamlined torpedo shape which incorporates the head-lamps. The rear lights are in the back form of the wing. This panel is made even more attractive by polished metal mouldings with coloured inserts to tone with the general colour scheme.

Excellent Visibility Provided

Large curved toughened glass windscreens and front quarter windows are fitted, and these, together with the low waistline and narrow metal pillars, ensure excellent visibility all round the coach. The view is greatly increased by windows along each side of the roof. These are made from the new Sundym quality glass, which excludes approximately 80 per cent. of the sun's heat while passing almost all its light. Bold chromium-plated front grills and bumpers are fitted.

The generously spaced seats for 32 instead of the

The Daimler Freeline with Bellhouse Hartwell bodywork being inspected at the Victoria Coach Station. One of the uniformed hostesses employed by Blue Cars on its tours can be seen standing at the front of the coach.



normal 41 are in pairs at each side of the gangway, each pair having two fixed outer arms and a folding central arm rest. Adjustable linen headrest covers are provided, and the deep, soft, Dunlopillo cushions, squabs and headrests are covered with blue velvet. On the seat backs there is a parcel bag, ash tray, mirror and silk rope handle; footrests are also provided. The driver's seat is fully adjustable and on his left there is a swivelling seat and a folding table for the courier. Microphone and loudspeakers are also installed.

Trimming is luxuriously styled in shades of blue. Hand-polished wood mouldings are used extensively for the interior and the coach sides below the waist-rail are padded in fluted padded washable

material. Parcel racks are in the roof, away from the curved roof side windows, thus providing unobstructed view, particularly suitable for the mountain scenery. The racks are padded and covered with Coronation Vynide and are edged with polished metal mouldings. They incorporate lights for night driving. Two large sliding sunshine roofs are fitted; sliding side windows secure adequate ventilation. The side windows have blue poplin sun curtains and spring roller blinds.

These new coaches will be an addition to the present Blue Cars fleet of nine Leyland Royal Tigers and two Sentinels with bodywork by the Bellhouse, Hartwell and Beccols companies. The unladen weight of the coach is 8 tons 13 cwt. 3 qr.

Continental coach travel and commercial TV

Features included a swivelling seat and folding table for a courier, passenger seats with 'deep, soft' Dunlopillo cushions, blue velvet squabs and headrests, each with a parcel bag, ashtray, mirror and silk rope handle on the back and footrests below. Overhead parcel racks were padded and covered with a topically named material called Coronation Vynide. 'Two large sliding sunshine roofs are fitted; sliding side windows secure adequate ventilation. The side windows have blue poplin sun curtains and spring roller blinds.'

The article explained that they joined 11 similar coaches — nine Leyland Royal Tigers and two Sentinel SLC6s — with bodies built by Bellhouse Hartwell and near neighbour Beccols. A colour brochure from the period, rubber stamped by the Premier Travel shop in Cambridge city centre, appears to include an artist's impression of one of these coaches, though it also has the look of a Duple Britannia. The typically lengthy blurb makes much of the company's offer of value for money and inclusive pricing.

The market was changing by the 1960s, when Blue Cars began using cinema or television features to sell its own air-coach holidays, eliminating what it described as 'dreary Channel crossings' by flying its clients close to the continental base (and coaches) aboard the Bristol Britannia aircraft of none other than Britannia Airways. It appears that BET bore no lasting grudges against Mr Langton.



"Blue Cars"
CONTINENTAL COACH CRUISES

For the IDEAL Holiday!
See EUROPE in Comfort and
Luxury by booking NOW
on a "Blue Cars" Continental
Coach Cruise—the BEST
Holiday Value of ALL!

Send today for fully illustrated Colour Brochure

Reminders of how to uphold high standards

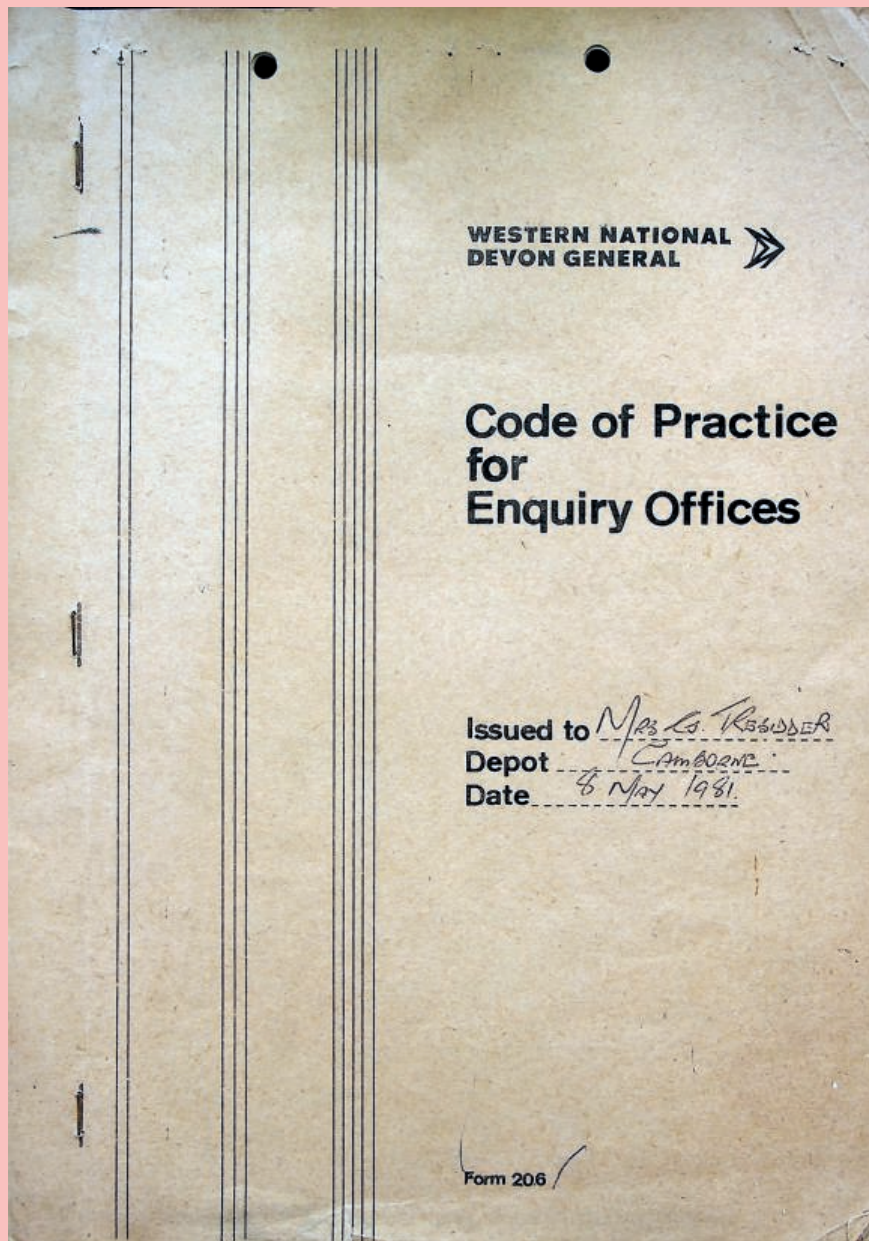
Over the years, operators have often felt moved to impress upon their staff that there are standards to be upheld, particularly when dealing with the travelling public.

The April 1963 edition of the functionally titled *Staff Magazine* of United Automobile Services and Durham District Services is a case in point. Congratulating colleagues for maintaining services during the harsh winter of January and February that year, it also encouraged them to do all they could to counter 'the insidious competition from the private car'.

'We have a first class fleet, our properties are second to none and we have tried to make the parts that the public see – the enquiry offices – particularly attractive and inviting.

'There is one other thing that we can all do and that is to go out of our way to make the passengers – our bread and butter – realise that they are really welcome at all times. On occasion this may be very difficult; there is always the odd customer who exasperates beyond measure, but there is a proverb which says that 'a soft answer turneth away wrath' and that sentiment is well worth remembering.





Nearly 20 years later, in May 1981, Western National issued its enquiry offices with a code of practice detailing how those facilities should be presented. 'In the field of public relations,' it states, 'first impressions are all important. The appearance of an enquiry office – and its staff – must surely be a guide to the general standards of efficiency of the organisation as a whole. It is the shop window of our industry and the front line in the vital battle to win – and retain – passengers.'

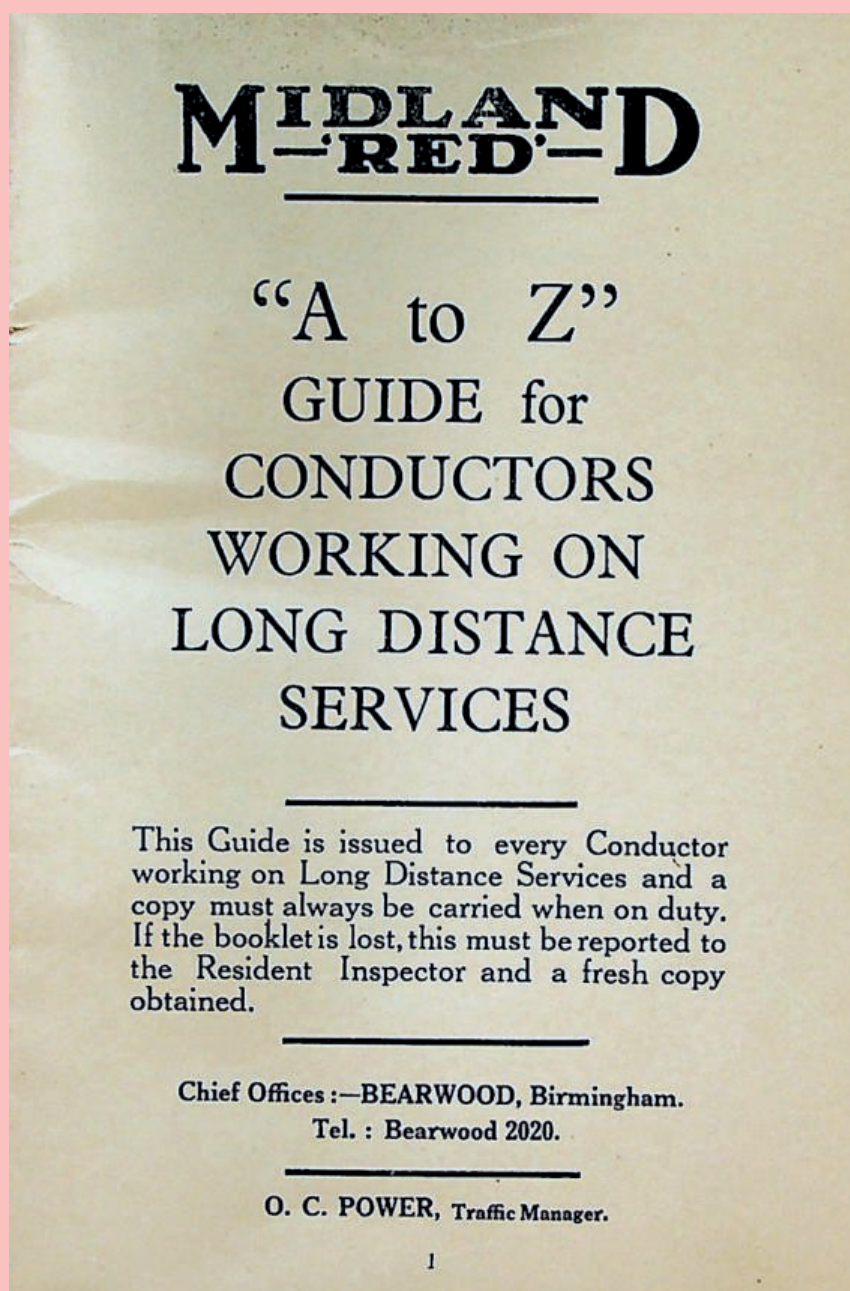
There are reminders to clean glazed areas, floors, walls and lights every week, to unlock both halves of double doors, keep counter screens and shutters open during hours of business and avoid cluttering the premises with unused paperwork or uncollected lost property. Above all to look at the office from the customers' point of view. 'It may look all right from your position behind the counter but what does it look like from the opposite direction?'

The writer of the code had a particular dislike of badly placed posters and public notices. 'One of the worst aspects of current practice is the increasing tendency to Sellotape or pin handwritten notices of all shapes and sizes to doors, windows, walls, shutters, screens and even counters. **THIS MUST NOT BE DONE.** If the message is that important it should either be carried on a free-standing blackboard of the new corporate style, or head office should be asked to supply an appropriate notice lettered to approved standards.'

Prewar, Midland Red was managed jointly by traffic manager OC Power and chief engineer LG Wyndham Shire, with conductors reporting to the traffic manager and drivers to the engineer. Conductors on long-distance services were issued with and expected always to carry with them on duty an A to Z guide in OC Power's name, setting out the company's procedures for everything ranging from coach stations, duplicate and service vehicles, tickets, luggage, overloaded vehicles to how to react when passengers were left behind.

Each area of responsibility was assigned a letter of the alphabet, so general instructions were A and the café at Digbeth coach station in Birmingham was Z.

The general instructions urged conductors to strike a balance when interacting with passengers. 'Give every necessary piece of information but do not overburden passengers with things they need not know.' 'Try to make the journey interesting by pointing out objects of note along the road but avoid making yourself a nuisance to the passengers. A touch of humour is often helpful but must not be overdone.' 'In these instructions an endeavour has been made to deal with all problems which may be expected to arise, but you must expect to come across unusual difficulties on occasion and must then use your own discretion.'



When Strachan & Brown put itself on the map

Customers of the coachbuilder Strachan & Brown were presented during the 1920s with this impressive fold-out Philips map of the County of London, showing the locations of the company's main works just outside the county boundary in North Acton and of the timber yard and sawmills in Kensington from where bodybuilding had been relocated in 1923.

Directions to the factory recommend travelling to North Acton station on the Central London Railway, which had yet to be renamed the Central line.

Follow the course of the River Thames eastwards and see that what today is called Docklands really was home to a succession of working docks from the Isle of Dogs to Canning Town and North Woolwich.

The Strachan & Brown company had traded under different names from 1894 to 1915. More name changes followed the death of James Marshall Strachan in 1929, first to Strachans (Acton) Ltd then five years later to Strachans (Successors) Ltd. Renamed Strachans (Coachbuilders) Ltd, it relocated to Hamble in Hampshire in October 1963 and closed 11 years later.

The company's telegraphic address, Straubron 'Phone London, is a clue of how the enduring family name was pronounced, anglicised from the Scottish original to 'Strawn'.

STRACHAN & BROWN

WITH COMPLIMENTS

PHILIPS' NEW LARGE PRINT MAP OF THE COUNTY OF LONDON

BRITAIN'S BEST BUSES

OUR WORKS ARE AT NORTH ACTON
*You can find your way by referring to
map inside - We invite your inspection*



30-SEATER, SINGLE-DECK BUS, WITH
REAR ENTRANCE, DROP WINDOWS, etc.
Full Particulars on Application

:: WALES FARM ROAD ::
NORTH ACTON, LONDON, W.3
(NORTH ACTON STATION, C.L. RLY.)
*PHONES: CHISWICK 2300, 2301, 1553



Southdown considered one-man PD3s

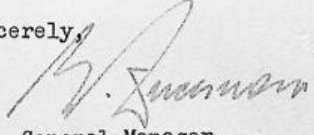
Correspondence between the general managers of two National Bus Company (NBC) subsidiaries in January 1971 reveals that there were moves afoot to at least consider the conversion of front-engined double-deckers for one-person operation.

Acknowledging an earlier letter regarding the hire of one of his vehicles, Gerald Duckworth at Southdown wrote to Tony Beetham at City of Oxford saying he was most interested in the penultimate paragraph of that earlier letter which appeared to refer to the modification of an AEC Renown for driver-only operation.

'Some two or three years ago, we did a mock-up conversion of one of our PD3s for use as a one-man-operated double-deck, the intention at the time being to use buses so converted on our seasonal holiday services – Beachy Head, Devil's Dyke and Hayling. We interested the Eastbourne union branch at the time, but unfortunately the idea was turned down at fleet level. This, you will appreciate, was before one-man operation of double-decks had really taken on.'

The idea appeared to have been revived. 'At the Brighton, Hove & District Company we have made good progress in converting routes to one-man double-deck operation, and with the present enthusiasm on the part of the unions we are toying with the idea of converting some of our conventional front-entrance double-deckers. I will let you know if we proceed along these lines.'

Suffice to say that it did not. Southdown's thoughts of doing so may have been encouraged by Brighton Corporation operating PD2s and PD3s converted for one-man operation.

SOUTHDOWN MOTOR SERVICES LIMITED		
TELEPHONE BRIGHTON 66711	HEAD OFFICE SOUTHDOWN HOUSE FRESHFIELD ROAD · BRIGHTON BN2 2BW	TELEX 87450 TELEGRAMS MOBIS BRIGHTON
OUR REF GD/SM		YOUR REF AB/LC
5th January, 1971		
A. Beetham Esq., Manager, The City of Oxford Motor Services Ltd., 395, Cowley Road, OXFORD, OX4 2DJ.		
Dear Mr. Beetham,		
<u>Hire of Vehicle</u>		
Thank you for your letter of the 30th December, 1970, which confirms the arrangements in regard to the hire of our vehicle as set out in my letter to you of the 23rd December, 1970.		
I was most interested in your penultimate paragraph. Some two or three years ago we did a mock-up conversion of one of our PD3's for use as a one-man-operated double-deck, the intention at that time being to use buses so converted on our seasonal holiday services – Beachy Head, Devil's Dyke and Hayling. We interested the Eastbourne Union Branch at the time, but unfortunately the idea was turned down at fleet level. This, you will appreciate, was before one-man operation of double-decks had really taken on.		
At the Brighton, Hove & District Company we have made good progress in converting routes to one-man double-deck operation, and with the present enthusiasm on the part of the Unions we are toying with the idea of converting some of our conventional front-entrance double-deckers. I will let you know if we proceed along these lines.		
Yours sincerely,  General Manager		



The trustees, staff and volunteers of The Bus Archive wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Bob Gray: a correction

Alan Lambert has pointed out an error in our biography of the late Bob Gray in the last issue. His career started at Southdown, Hilsea Garage as an apprentice bodybuilder in 1954, but when he qualified Southdown had no vacancies so he moved to Hants & Dorset at Fareham. When H&D merged with Provincial, he transferred to Hoeford garage where he remained until retirement.



The caption competition from the last edition was won by Richard Rollings, with "I don't suppose it's worth getting a return ticket now".

We will lock-up the depots after service on 19th December but will be back on the road on 7th January.



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