

The London General Omnibus Company - 1856 - 1956

A CENTENNARY PARADE

In Regent's Park

- 16th July, 1956

On Monday, 7th January, 1856, the first London General Omnibus Company buses appeared on the streets. For more than 75 years the L.G.O.C. expanded by absorbing the fleets of other operators and co-ordinating their efforts, and by extending its own routes and services. And from its earliest days it set out not only to justify itself in terms of profit, but to provide a service in the public interest. The story of the L.G.O.C. is one of progress in the face of problems now familiar. It is also the story of a constant search for a better vehicle punctuated by the arrival on the scene of the successive types that are taking part in the parade today. In 1933

the London Passenger Transport Board took over the L.G.O.C., its assets, its experience, its tradition of service to the Londoner, and its search for an improved bus to match the problems of the day. In 1948 the London Transport Executive succeeded to the traditions and to the responsibilities. The parade ends with the first prototype of the Routemaster, London's bus of the future. The Routemaster is a logical and lineal descendant of the Knifeboard of 1856. *Mr George Savidge, who joined the L.G.O.C. in 1892, will be with Sir John Elliot, the Chairman of London Transport, at the saluting base and will take the salute.*

ORDER OF MARCH

HORSE BUSES

❧ 1 ❧

The Favorite 1856

This early type of bus represents, in the Parade, the miscellany of competing vehicles which had developed in the years since George Shillibeer, in 1829 ran his first 'omnibus' on the streets of London.

❧ 2 ❧


The Knifeboard 1856-1900

A typical bus of the type taken over and operated by the L.G.O.C. It was called the Knifeboard from the shape of the seat on the roof. The L.G.O.C. set about changing the 'bus nuisance', as it had been called, into a public amenity, continually building new, and modifying existing, vehicles, adding a staircase and changing the seats. For nearly half a century the Knifeboard in one form or another was a normal component of the London scene.

❧ 3 ❧

The Garden Seat 1881-1914

The name came from the seats set across the roof instead of along it. It carried 26 passengers and was introduced by the London Road Car Company but was quickly adopted by the L.G.O.C. In 1911 the L.G.O.C. handed over its remaining horse buses to another company, later to be absorbed. Thomas Tilling Ltd operated Garden Seat buses until 1914.

 A Hansom cab and a Grouper of the 1890's, followed by veteran cars, bridge the gap between the horse bus and the motor bus. Many different types of motor bus were built and tested until the next bus in the Parade came on the scene to bring reliability and efficiency to motorized public transport.

MOTOR BUSES

❧ 4 ❧

The 'B' Type 1910-1927

London's first standardized motor bus. It was, in comparison with its motorized predecessors, extremely reliable. Designed by the L.G.O.C., it had a 28-h.p. engine and seated 34 passengers. Altogether more than 5,000 'B' type buses were built: more than 1,000 saw service in France during the First World War. The bus in the Parade is known as 'Ole Bill', and is one of these. It is lent by the Auxiliary Omnibus Companies Association.

❧ 5 ❧

The 'K' Type 1919-1932

Until the introduction of this bus no designer had really done more than adapt a horse bus to a petrol engine. Now the bus and its engine is designed as a single unit. The driver's seat is beside his engine instead of behind it. The sides are straight instead of curved over the wheels. Now, 46 seats can be provided for the passengers.

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The 'NS' Type 1923-1937

The first 'NS' appeared as an open-top vehicle with solid tyres. It had a 35-h.p. petrol engine, seats for 52 passengers and was designed with a low centre of gravity to permit a roof to be added to the upper deck. In 1925 permission was given for the roof to be added, and later came pneumatic tyres and an enclosed driving cab.

❧ 7 ❧

The 'STL' Type 1932-1954

The first 'STL' was petrol-engined and was adopted by London Transport. More than 2,600 were built. Before the last of this type ran, it had been given an oil engine, fluid transmission, a pre-selective gear box, servo-assisted brakes and a fully-floating rear axle.

❧ 8 ❧

The 'RLH' Type

This has a low roof and has been designed for use where low bridges prevent the standard 'RT' bus from running.

❧ 9 ❧

The 'GS' Type

A light bus operated by one man who is both driver and conductor. A change-giving machine is provided and the doors can be opened and shut from the driving seat. This type is used in country districts where passengers are comparatively few.

❧ 10 ❧

The 'RF' Type Coach

Green Line coaches provide an express service. Most of the 29 routes start in the country on one side of London and end in the country on the other. The passenger spending an hour or more on his journey, needs a different standard of seating and comfort than the passenger on a short trip in a bus, and the 'RF' coach has been designed with this in mind.

❧ 11 ❧

The 'RFW' Coach

The sightseer wants to see the tops of buildings and to have the best possible view wherever he sits. This coach has curved glass roof panels and a sliding roof. It is used on London Transport conducted coach tours, on special trips round London and out to Windsor and to some of the famous country houses near London.

❧ 12 ❧

Motor Cycle

Country Bus Inspectors have many miles to travel each day controlling and regulating the normal services. On special occasions, such as Ascot or a County show, they ensure that the extra buses give the best and most efficient service. Motor cycles are an essential part of their equipment.

❧ 13 ❧

Mobile Canteen

On many occasions, particularly at events like the ones just mentioned, bus crews must stand-by with their vehicles at places where it is difficult to get a meal or even a cup of tea. It is here you will see the mobile canteens.

❧ 14 ❧

Route Survey Van

Before a new route or a diversion is authorized it must be carefully surveyed to ensure that it is practicable and safe for the buses that will use it. It must also be measured. This van enables both jobs to be done at once for it contains a wheel that accurately records the distance travelled.

❧ 15 ❧

The Tree-Lopping Van

Branches of trees overhanging the road not only disturb the passenger by the sudden rattle they cause, but often scratch and damage the roof. This vehicle is an obvious adaptation for the job it has to do.

❧ 16 ❧

Master Breakdown Bus

Accidents happen even on the best-regulated services and these buses equipped for any emergency stand-by night and day at strategic points. The rare sight of a disabled bus is a witness not only to the reliability of the buses themselves but to the efficiency of the breakdown service.

❧ 17 ❧


Auxiliary Breakdown Tender

The tools, cables and other equipment needed by the breakdown bus are carried in this vehicle. It also carries the crew needed to deal with the emergency.

❧ 18 ❧

The 'RT' Type 1939

Finally we see the well-known bus that runs today on the streets of London. The 'RT' appeared in time to demonstrate its reliability during the difficult days of the war. It had a 9.6-litre oil engine. In 1947 the first post-war 'RT' buses went into service. Today, as passengers, it carries the London Transport bus drivers who have the longest records of accident-free driving. They will each be presented with a copy of the book *London General* to mark the occasion.

 The Parade re-forms and comes past the saluting base again but this time without the auxiliary vehicles. Last of all comes the first prototype of the London bus of the future - the Routemaster.

❧ 19 ❧

The 'RM' Type

The Routemaster was produced in 1954 and spent a year undergoing trial and modifications. It finally went into public service on the 2 Route this year to have its final testing under service conditions. Many new features designed to improve both the comfort of the passenger and economy in operation have been introduced. It has no chassis, is much lighter for its size than any previous bus and has seats for 64 passengers. It will, of course, be some time before the Routemaster's design is finally decided and it takes its place as the successor to the 'RT' bus.

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ORDER OF MARCH

HORSE BUSES

The Favorite 1856


This early type of bus represents, in the Parade, the miscellany of competing vehicles which had developed in the years since George Shillibeer, in 1829 ran his first 'omnibus' on the streets of London.

The Knifeboard 1856-1900

A typical bus of the type taken over and operated by the L.G.O.C. It was called the Knifeboard from the shape of the seat on the roof. The L.G.O.C. was quick to change the 'bus nuisance', as it had been called, into a public utility, continually building new, and modifying existing, the Knifeboard in one form or another was a normal component of the London scene.

The Garden Seat 1881-1914

The name came from the seats set across the roof instead of along it. It carried 26 passengers and was introduced by the London Road Car Company bus was quickly adopted by the L.G.O.C. In 1911 the L.G.O.C. limited overtook the horse buses to another company, later to be absorbed. Thomas Tilling Ltd operated Garden Seat buses until 1914.

 A Hansom cab and a Crouler of the 1890's, followed by veteran cars, bridge the gap between the horse bus and the motor bus. Many different types of motor bus were built and tested until the next bus in the Parade came on the scene to bring reliability and efficiency to motorized public transport.

MOTOR BUSES

The 'B' Type 1910-1927

London's first standardized motor bus. It was, in comparison with its motorized predecessors, extremely reliable. Designed by the L.G.O.C., it had a 28-h.p. engine and seated 34 passengers. Altogether more than 5,000 'B' type buses were built: more than 1,000 saw service in France during the First World War. The bus in the Parade is known as 'Ole Bill', and is one of these. It is lent by the Auxiliary Omnibus Companies Association.

The 'K' Type 1919-1932

Until the introduction of this bus no designer had really done more than adapt a horse bus to a petrol engine. Now the bus and its engine is designed as a single unit. The driver's seat is beside his engine instead of behind it. The sides are straight instead of curved over the wheels. Now, 40 seats can be provided for the

The 'NS' Type 1929-1937

The first 'NS' appeared as an open-top vehicle with solid tyres. It had a 35-h.p. petrol engine, seats for 52 passengers and was designed with a low chassis and gravity to permit a roof to be added to the upper deck. In 1929 Provision was given for the roof to be added, and later came pneumatic tyres and an enclosed driving cab.

The 'STL' Type 1932-1934

This first 'STL' was petrol-engined and was adopted by London Transport. More than 2,600 were built. Before the end of this type ran, it had been given an oil engine, fluid transmission, a pre-selective gear box, servo-assisted brakes and a fully-floating rear axle.

The 'RLH' Type

This has a low roof and has been designed for use where low bridges prevent the standard 'RT' bus from running.

The 'GS' Type

A light bus operated by one man who is both driver and conductor. A change-gearing machine is provided and the doors can be opened and shut from the front of the vehicle. This type is used in country districts where passengers are comparatively few.

The 'RT' Type Coach

Green Line coaches provide an express service. Most of the 29 routes start in the country on one side of London and end in the country on the other. The passenger spending an hour or more on his journey, needs a different standard of seating and comfort than the passenger on a short trip in a bus, and the 'RT' coach has been designed with this in mind.

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Motor Cycle

Country Bus Inspectors have many miles to travel each day controlling and regulating the normal services. On special occasions, such as Ascot or a County show, they ensure that the extra buses give the best and most efficient service. Motor cycles are an essential part of their equipment.

Mobile Canteen

On many occasions, particularly at events like the ones just mentioned, bus crews must stand-by with their vehicles at places where it is difficult to get a meal or even a cup of tea. It is here you will see the mobile canteens.

Route Survey Van

Before a new route or a diversion is authorized it must be carefully surveyed to ensure that it is practicable and safe for the buses that will use it. It must also be measured. This van enables both jobs to be done at once for it contains a wheel that accurately records the distance travelled.

The Tree-Lopping Van

Branches of trees overhanging the road not only disturb the passenger by the sudden rattle they cause, but often scratch and damage the roof. This vehicle is an obvious adaptation for the job it has to do.

Master Breakdown Bus


Accidents happen even on the best-regulated services and these buses equipped for emergency stand-by night and day at strategic points. The rare sight of a disabled bus is a witness not only to the reliability of the buses themselves but to the efficiency of the breakdown service.

Auxiliary Breakdown Tender

The tools, cables and other equipment needed by the breakdown bus are carried in this vehicle. It also carries the crew needed to deal with the emergency.

The 'RT' Type 1939

Finally we see the well known bus that runs today on the streets of London. The 'RT' appeared in 1939 to displace the 'NS' which had been the mainstay of the war. It had a 90-h.p. engine. In 1947 the first post-war 'RT' buses went into service. On passengers, it carries the London Transport bus drivers and the longest records of accident-free driving. They will each be presented with a copy of the book *London General* to mark the occasion.

 The Parade reforms and comes past the saluting base again but this time without the ancient vehicles. Last of all comes the first prototype of the London bus of the future - the Routemaster.

The 'RM' Type

The Routemaster was produced in 1954 and spent a year undergoing trial and modifications. It finally went into public service on the 2nd Route this year to have its final testing under actual conditions. Many new features designed to improve both the comfort of the passenger and economy in operation have been introduced. The chassis is much lighter for its size than any previous bus and accommodates for 64 passengers. It will, of course, be some time before the Routemaster's design is finally decided and it takes its place as the successor to the 'RT' bus.

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