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London Omnibus Traction Society

Coming soon

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 London Omnibus Traction Society

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48 CONTENTS SPRING 1984

- 2 **Around and About**
- 12 **All Change in Wandle District**
- 14 **The Story of the RP Stephen Floyd**
- 48 **Odd Men Out in the North and West**
- 50 **Letters**

Cover: The Leyland Olympians started work on 26th March on route 170, L2 being the first to appear. It was caught here in Parliament Street heading for Aldwych during the early morning. *Paul Carpenter*

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Around and About

Go-ahead for Shuttlebus

The Transport Minister, Nicholas Ridley, has over-ruled both London Transport and an independent inspector to open the door for a private bus service from Heathrow Airport. Vulcrown Ltd, trading as Shuttlebus, applied to LT to run a service from the airport to 'any point in Greater London'. LT refused and the company then appealed to the Minister. An independent inspector was appointed to hear their appeal and he reported that the complex operation should be soundly based, but the company had not established such a base. It is proposed that Vulcrown will operate a fleet of 25 vehicles, running seven journeys each day of the year.

LRT will offer free off-peak OAP travel

The Transport Secretary has answered the question of free OAP travel and has stated that the LRT bill will provide for a uniform scheme throughout London. LRT will offer free *off-peak* travel to London's elderly and disabled people, and free travel at all times for the blind. Mr David Wetzel, chairman of the GLC transport committee, has pointed out that the Government's proposal excluded free travel during the evening peak period, now enjoyed by OAPs.



"L-shaped" advertisements have been appearing recently on Routemasters. A few of those which have been seen so far are for Kenning Van Hire (on RM1170 at Hounslow), Maxell Tapes (on RML893 at the Law Courts), and Whyte & Mackay Whisky (on RM1167 in Victoria Street).
Colin Fradd



Left Prior to the conversion of the Sidcup 161s from RM to T crew operation, later this year, Plumstead have been working Ts for some time, but schedule changes on 4th February saw Titans running to Sidcup for the first time. T677 is seen here on Sidcup Hill. **Ramon Hefford** **Right** To replace the Sunday services on the 228 and 229, a new 299 was introduced between Eltham and Green Street Green, seen here worked by T618 in Bexley on the first day, 5th February. **Ramon Hefford**



An interesting feature of the changes was the projection of two early morning journeys on the 21 beyond Sidcup to Swanley, bringing RMs to Birchwood where RM501 pulls out on 22nd February. **Colin Fradd**

More passengers for LT

London Transport ran more miles than budgeted in 1983 and waiting time for passengers was down on previous years. LT ended the year in a healthy financial position, and taking into account various grant aid, with a surplus of £37 million compared with the expected £2 million.



The Green Line 795 started on 1st April bringing together for the first time three NBC subsidiaries and a municipal operator on one service. Marketed by Green Line, the service is shared with Eastern National, Southdown and Southend Transport, and provides an Essex link to Gatwick Airport. It has proved popular so far and has already seen some duplication. Here we see RS148 at Green Street Green in Sealine livery, Southdown's 1348 in National Holidays livery at Grays, Eastern National's 1116 in Swanley, and Southend's 213 at Brighton, all taken on the first day of operation. Ramon Hefford (1-3)/Mike Harris (4)





The sister to the 795 is the 765, solely operated by Green Line and running between Stevenage and Brighton via Romford. TP27 is seen here passing the 'Five Bells' at Eynsford. *Ramon Hefford*

London Country gave up their journey on the 161 to Handcross after 6th April, and here in Southgate in dismal weather AN139 heads off for its southern terminus. *Richard Godfrey*



The new 768 from Kingston to Brighton has also proved popular despite little publicity at first. LR11 carries a good many passengers through Tadworth on 27th March. *Richard Godfrey*



More information at bus stops

LT is looking at ways of introducing electronic indicators at some bus stops. The investigation is at an early stage, but the basic idea is to notify waiting passengers when the next bus will be along. Times would be updated as the bus gets nearer. It is expected that a single prototype will be installed at a bus stop in central London.



The rear of the Leyland Olympian is far neater than its Titan older brother, as shown in this shot taken at Danebury Avenue. Note the position of the side destination blind. *Paul Carpenter*

The closure of Hammersmith Bridge resulted in a shuttle on the south side, west end buses being curtailed on the north side. RM871 waits at a temporary bus stop for its return trip. *Ramon Hefford*



Seaside Specials

Selkent district introduced two services to the coast for day-trippers from Good Friday 20th April. The 604 runs from Plumstead to Brighton, and the 605 from Sidcup to Folkestone. Both run every Sunday and Bank Holiday and the return fare on either service is £3 for adults (£2 children). Tickets are only sold in advance at Plumstead or Sidcup garages.



A celebration run of the Harrow Weald showbus, LS402, took place on Sunday 4th March when it worked one of the cemetery journeys on the 140 as shown here in Sheppiston Lane. *Paul Carpenter*

The conversion of route 86 to crew T operation eventually started in March using some vehicles not fitted with 'Pay Conductor' flaps as on T94 in Romford. *Colin Fradd*





Leyland Nationals are starting to be fitted with Johnston-style number blinds. LS194, previously in 1933 livery, is seen here at Tooting on the revised 189 to Brixton. It has retained an underlined fleetname, and LEYLAND name at the front. *Malcolm Papes*

The Sunday operation of the 71 was turned over to Metrobus in January, perhaps paving the way for weekday conversion. M196 is seen at Hook with the Sunday 'via point' blind showing the diversion through Norbiton. *Colin Stannard*



More travel surveys

Following surveys in the Romford and Harrow areas to determine travel patterns and what improvements could be made, passengers in the Kingston area are now being asked to fill in questionnaires. It is planned to cover other areas in due course, changes being introduced either later in the year or in 1985.

Fraud down

Following a major publicity campaign against fraudulent travel, it is reported that the number of passengers who now admit they sometimes travel without paying the full fare has dropped by half. LT state that before the start of the campaign, which involves radio and TV commercials, estimated annual losses from fraud had been reduced from a peak of £40m to £25m.

Fifty buses undergo test overhauls

Some buses are being overhauled by outside contractors as part of a cost comparison exercise. The programme has been agreed between LT and the trade unions concerned to determine the cost effectiveness of in-house overhaul compared with external sources. The fifty vehicles are a mixture of RMs, Ms, Ts and LSs. Three Leyland Nationals have received chassis and body overhauls at the Carlyle works of Midland Red at Birmingham and Metrobuses are also going to the Midland Red workshops. Other types are being dealt with by the Leyland centre at Nottingham, with MCW carrying out the necessary work on the bodies at its Lowestoft plant.

New coach for Tilbury residents

Following the success of the 722, Green Line have started a new 721 commuter service from Tilbury running via Chadwell St. Mary, Sockets Heath and Stifford Clays, then non-stop via the A13 to the City and West End.

'All-over' advertisements in the Country area have seen a number of Leyland Nationals promoting further car manufacturers. In Hemel Hempstead SNB119 encourages you to buy Volvo, while SNB363 at Reigate prefers Nissan. Both are predominantly white. Double-deckers tend to be more colourful and National Holidays is the theme of AN160 at Leverstock Green, while another version of Imperial Life advert is carried on AN50 at Bushey Hill Drive. *Richard Godfrey/Colin Fradd*





The long-awaited night bus changes on 13th April saw off the N84 after fourteen years. Here in Bloomsbury some time ago, T477 sets off on its homeward run one morning. *Colin Fradd*



As a celebration, although there can be little for the conductor to celebrate, the last night of crew operation on the N83 saw RCL2251 in place of the usual type making this the only recorded such working. *Colin Fradd*



To mark the end of crew-operation on the 177 Saturday night duty, RM151 worked in place of the customary Titan. Caught here on Westminster Bridge, it provides the first ever Routemaster journey via Fleet Street. *Colin Taffel*



The last night of crew operation on the N87 saw the use of RML2389 from Stockwell. The N87 now no longer runs across Blackfriars Bridge where we see the driver pausing to have a word with the conductor. *Bob Turner*



The BBC have filmed a Routemaster bus plummeting over the edge of a steep Medway quarry for a six-part series of "The Young Ones" in the spring. *Chatham, Rochester & Gillingham News*

All Change in Wandle District



The withdrawal of the 234A resulted in other services being extended to cover the solo sections. At the southern end, the 12A was projected beyond Selsdon to Old Lodge Lane, shown here by LS226 in Purley, while the service to Streatham was replaced by an extension of route 200 worked here at Merton by **DMS 2371**
Colin Fradd/Colin Stannard





Above The 127 regained double-deck operation upon its reallocation to Croydon garage and Mitcham sets the scene for DMS2333 with incorrect side blind. *Malcolm Papes*.
A Sunday version of the 127 to Streatham is numbered 127A and DMS2434 queues in traffic at St. Leonard's Church. *Colin Stannard*

Left The 151 number returned to the area after an absence of many years, used for a new service between Worcester park and Wallington where we see DMS2283. *Malcolm Papes*

Below The 213 with its dual allocation has become most complex. In addition to the Belmont journeys which were unchanged, part of the Monday to Saturday service now runs to St. Helier Station as shown by M5235 at Worcester Park, *Colin Stannard* while on Sundays, the route is projected instead via Roundshaw to West Croydon where M283 is seen in the gloom. *Paul Carpenter*



The Story of the RP

by Stephen Floyd



The first route to see RP operation was the 727 running between Luton and Crawley. RP9, seen here turning at Hatton Cross, was one of the batch which was fitted with rear luggage boots making them suitable for private hire work. *Colin Stannard*

The story of the RP really started when London Country Bus Services Ltd was formed on 1st January 1970. The new company inherited a fleet of vehicles with a high average age, and a network of routes which were losing money. Charged with a duty to break even as far as possible, London Country announced large orders of new buses suitable for one-man operation in March 1970.

Amongst these orders was one for a batch of 90 AEC Reliances with 6U2R type chassis, all metal Park Royal bodies, and dual-purpose seating. They had semi-automatic five-speed gearboxes with fluid flywheels, and were fitted with AH691 11.3 litre engines, rated at 154bhp at 2,000 rpm. It was intended that these vehicles would replace all the RMC and RCL vehicles on Green Line services (except route 709), converting the routes to one-man operation. They were similar to the experimental RC coaches which were purchased in 1965, though of an updated specification. The vehicles were classified 'RP' (Reliance—Park Royal) and were planned to be delivered from late summer 1971. They were given the booked registrations JPA101-190K. The chassis and body numbers were also allocated consecutively and were 6U2R 7596-7685 and B58245-58334 respectively.



An interior shot of the RP looking towards the rear. *National Bus Company*

Initially, it was intended that they should be delivered as 49-seaters with a few vehicles, for route 727, having 45 seats and additional luggage pens. In the event, all of the RPs were delivered as 45-seaters with luggage pens. Internally, they featured parcel shelves with forced air ventilation, and individual air vents under the passengers' control. The seats had high backs, fitted with ashtrays, and were upholstered in blue and green moquette in the standard LT pattern of that time. Externally, they were similar to the RC class, although they had shorter window bays, and the lower front end panels were to the same design as the Park Royal ANs which had been ordered at the same time, to ensure spare part interchangeability. The first thirty RPs had lockable boots making them suitable for private hire work. They were all finished in the Green Line Lincoln green livery, with a pale green waistband, as carried by the 'coach' RFs.

On 1st November 1971 RP1 was delivered, followed by RPs 2-6 later in the same month. Subsequent deliveries were completed over the next five months as shown in the Appendix.

The first RPs entered service on route 727 on 18th December 1971, displacing RCs from Reigate (RG) and St. Albans (SA) pending reallocation to Grays (GY) on 1st January 1972. Also on 1st January, the 721 was converted to RP which, together with the RCs for the 723, meant that the RCLs were reallocated to Reigate and Dorking (DS) for the 414 and part of the 405, with some remaining at Grays for the 300 and 328.

The 718 was converted to RP on 5th February 1972, the Windsor (WR) allocation being transferred to Staines (ST) in exchange for the 725. The RMCs were transferred to the 370 at Grays and the 499 at Dartford (DT). The 716/A was next to receive RPs on 11th March, having been deferred from 22nd January. This was because the Metropolitan Traffic Commissioners would not approve the route for 11-metre vehicles due to a tight corner in Richmond. However, after a Traffic Court hearing, approval was given. The RMCs displaced were sent to St. Albans and Two Waters (HH) for the 330/A, to Hatfield (HF) for the 340, and more to Grays for the 370. Two weeks later, on 25th March, the 704 and 705 were converted releasing more RCLs to Reigate, Crawley (CY) and



RP6 lasted for little more than a year on the 721 giving way to Leyland Nationals, something which undoubtedly killed off much of the passenger traffic on this busy route. The 716/A received RPs on 11th March 1972. RP64 rests at Welwyn Garden City Station after its long journey from Woking. Windsor's RP62 passes the National Bank in Victoria on its way to Tunbridge Wells during the summer of 1972. The Saturday variant of the 715 via Kingston was numbered 715A and RP85 passes through Hammersmith bound for Hertford. *Colin Stannard*



The RPs spent a little of their time on bus work before and after duties on Green Line routes. Hertford's RP16 works an early morning journey to Buntingford before commencing its day's work on the 715. *Steve Fennell*

Grays to complete the conversion of the 300, 328 and 405. The last RP conversion was on 29th April when they were allocated to the 715/A. RMCs remained at Hertford (HG) for the 341, 395 and certain school journeys on other routes, while the remainder, along with those from Guildford (GF), went to Swanley (SJ) for the 477 with a few more going to Grays for the 370.

During May 1972, RPs with luggage boots were allocated to all garages with RPs (except Dunton Green) for use on private hire which London Country was beginning to develop. Romford (RE) dispersed RPs 15-25 to HA, HG, SV, WR, WY and GF, and received RPs 32, 33, 37, 47, 48, 55, 56, 74, 75, 83 and 84 in return. The RPs settled down on the Green Line routes, together with the odd journeys on bus work that they inherited from crew days. Perhaps it would now be appropriate to look at the allocations:

Route	Terminals	Garage	Allocation			Also works
			Mon-Fri	Sat	Sun	
704	Windsor – Tunbridge Wells	WR	8	8	8	
705	Windsor – Sevenoaks	DG	8	8	8	402
715/A	Guildford – Hertford	GF	7	6	4	425, 436, 463
		HG	8	9	4	
716	Chertsey – Hitchin	WY	7	7	7	420, 461
716A	Woking – Stevenage	HF	5	5	5	
		SV	5	5	4	800A, 801, 802
		ST	4	4	4	
718	Windsor – Harlow	HA	4	4	4	804, 806, 810A
721	Aldgate – Brentwood	RE	14	13	9	
727	Crawley – Luton Airport	RG	4	4	4	
		SA	4	4	4	
			78	77	65	

There was then little change until November, when RP44 was repainted into the new National Bus Company corporate image livery and allocated to Staines. The new livery comprised National (leaf) green up to the window level, including the waistband, and white above. The 'double N' National symbol appeared with the Green Line fleetname in white letters on the waistband above the front wheelarch, and again above the waistband at the back, although those fitted with luggage boots had the fleetname painted directly on the boot doors. The fleetnumbers and legal lettering were in flake grey. London Country announced that the whole fleet of RPs would be re-painted similarly by Park Royal, and in January 1973 RP1 was dispatched to the works. In the meantime, other RPs lost the London Country 'flying polo mint' symbol that appeared on the front panels.

Another RP was sent to the paint shop in January 1973, and this was RP46 which received an 'all-over' advertising livery for Wimpy Bars at the premises of Monorep at Southall. The lower panels were mainly red, with the upper panels in yellow, orange and white wavy lines. Various slogans and pictures of hamburgers appeared on the vehicle which entered service on the 715/A from Hertford garage.

A rear shot of RP72 in National livery taken on the 705. Colin Stannard





RP7 carried an all-over advertisement for Champion spark-plugs for two years. After a spell on the 727, it moved to Harlow for the 720 between Bishops Stortford and Aldgate. It is seen here in its mainly white livery at Harlow Mill. *Peter Graves*

On 17th February 1973 LNCs entered service on route 721 and replaced the RPs over the following two weeks. The RPs moved first on to route 724 (Romford to Staines), then to route 720 (Aldgate to Bishops Stortford), replacing virtually all scheduled coach RFs, introducing RP journeys to the 339 and 397.

In March, RP7 received an 'all-over' advert for Champion Spark Plugs, painted in a basically white livery with a red/pink racing car along both sides of the coach, the wheels of the coach being incorporated into the design as the wheels of the racing car. Slogans appeared above the windows. It entered service on 29th March from Reigate garage on the 727. During April, the Wimpy Bars RP46 was transferred to Dunton Green for a spell on the 704 and 705.

From June until October 1973 RP16 was allocated to Crawley garage, a garage which had not previously worked RPs, to assist SMA20 on excursion and tours duties. On 7th July, routes 441C, 452 and 457 gained RP workings, while two weeks later, on 21st, RPs at SV gained workings on the 384/B, losing them on the 800A and 801.

In July, RP87 was the third RP to receive an 'all-over' advertisement—for Airfix models. Painted at Godfrey Davis' premises at Alperton, it was again basically white with pictures of models and slogans on the roof. It entered service at Staines on 11th August on routes 718 and 724. The two other advert RPs were moved soon after; RP46 to Addlestone for the 716/A from 3rd September, and RP7 to Harlow for the 720 from 19th October.



The third all-over advert was for Airfix, carried by RP87. Note the reversed slogan on the front so that drivers could read the name in their rear-view mirror. *Steve Fennell*



The first of the RPs all-over adverts was carried by RP46 for Wimpy Bars. Lasting for nearly four years, it worked a number of Green Line routes and also many associated bus routes such as the 461, seen entering Addlestone garage. *Steve Fennell*

1974 started with power strikes, industrial disputes, and a three-day working week which, amongst other problems, affected the supply of spare parts for buses. RPs did not escape the effects, some being delicensed for long periods, and others being gradually cannibalised, one or two examples never seeing service again. Indeed, by January 1975, thirty of the 90 RPs were off the road for attention, although not all were actually delicensed. While Britain was having problems in early 1974, though, RP87, the Airfix coach, made what is believed to be the only visit abroad by an RP while in London Country service when it went to the Nuremberg Toy Fair between 30th January and 11th February 1974.

On 4th May, the 720 was extended daily from Bishops Stortford to Stansted Airport. On the same date, the 339 and 397 lost RP journeys but the 333, 337 and 810 gained some and the 384B was renumbered 381. At Addlestone, on 22nd June, the 420, 425, 461 and 463 lost RP workings. Two days later, the Wimpy Bars RP moved to Reigate for the 727 where it occasionally sneaked an appearance on the 711 (Reigate to High Wycombe).

As 1974 wore on, London Country made valiant efforts to keep services going against tremendous engineering difficulties. In November, RP63 was completely stripped at the rear to effect accident repairs, and was returned to service on 8th April 1975. RP34, damaged by fire outside Lord's Cricket Ground on 28th November 1974, was back on the road again on 1st February 1975.

Airfix RP87 was repainted into the National livery in January 1975, followed by Champion RP7 in May. This left RP46 as the sole all-over advertisement vehicle, and RPs 47, 73 and 79 still in the old Lincoln Green livery in March 1975, the remainder by now having been painted into the National leaf green and white. RP46 moved back to Dunton Green for a further stint on the 704 and 705 in June.

A portent of 'things to come' occurred on 4th October 1975 when route 701 (Ascot to Gravesend) was withdrawn completely. It had seen the occasional RP, working from Staines, and was the first of many, old established routes to disappear before the Green Line network was shaken up later in the 'seventies. The SNCs made spare from the 701 were reallocated to the 724, and two RPs were sent to Windsor to help ease the vehicle shortage there. The RP journeys on the 441C were also replaced by SNCs.



One of the rarer workings of the RP was its occasional appearance on the 701 between Ascot and Gravesend. The 701 was the first of many of the traditional routes to disappear and RP32 was caught here near Egham.
Colin Stannard



June 1974 saw off RP workings on the 463 for a while and old-liveried RP88 heads for Woking. *Steve Fennell*



The 716 was diverted to Woking upon the withdrawal of the 716A, Chertsey no longer being served by Green Line. RP51 is seen here crossing Hammersmith Bridge bound for the old terminus.
Colin Stannard



The first RPs to be allocated exclusively to bus work were at Stevenage replacing RTs. Here at Hitchin Station we see crew-operated RP26 on the peak hour 303C, while nearby RP35 works the local 383 to Oakfield Estate and Weston.
Colin Stannard



Also in October, a fire at Harlow garage, started by vandals, badly damaged RP39 and an RT. The RT was quickly returned to service, but RP39 was eventually rebuilt by Willowbrook of Loughborough, after storage at Harlow, Romford and Garston during 1976. It returned to service in November of that year having been repainted, receiving the revised style National symbol in a white box in the usual fleetname position. It also differed in some internal details when various fittings such as air vents were replaced by Willowbrook.

A minor schedule change at Stevenage on 3rd January 1976 caused the RP journey on route 802 to be transferred to the 801C. On 21st February, the remaining RPs on route 724 at Romford garage were replaced by SNCs, moving as spare vehicles to St. Albans, Hertford and Reigate, and to Dunton Green and Windsor to replace the 'late-running' RF for routes 704/5.

During 1976, an advertising campaign for Embassy Cigarettes was started, with most RPs, SNCs and LNCs on Green Line services carrying vinyl posters on the sides of the vehicles. Green Line coaches rarely carried external commercial adverts before, and indeed, do not today.

A further reduction of the Green Line network saw the withdrawal of the 716A from 15th May with the 716 being revised to run hourly from Hitchin to Woking. The 716 gained a Hatfield allocation, and some of the RPs saved at Stevenage were the first to be allocated exclusively to bus routes, namely the SV allocations on routes 303/C (Hitchin to Stevenage), 381/4 (Letchworth to Hertford) and 383 (Hitchin local service). They replaced RTs and RFs on a one-for-one basis, and were thus crew operated on the Monday to Friday 303/C journeys. This was to be shortlived, however, as these crew journeys were converted to one-man operation two months later.

In August, Wimpy Bars RP46 was repainted into National livery, but with the fleetname on the roof panels instead of on the waistband. Changes to services on 30th October saw routes 402 and 804 losing RP journeys while the 454/A gained some.

The hot summer of 1976 had seen some feverish activity on Green Line routes which manifested itself in the form of a network survey. Falling traffic and harsh economic facts had to be faced, and the unreliability of the coach routes in general meant that drastic remedial action was necessary. The network survey established the following general principles which would allow Green Line to survive:

- a) To cater for known heavy through movements by means of non-stop operation;
- b) To provide special services or journeys for commuters;
- c) To speed up existing routes into London, retaining local traffic at the outer ends;
- d) To curtail or divert routes with good inter-urban traffic, but with relatively low usage within London, to feed into Underground stations;
- e) To divert existing routes to nearby traffic objectives;
- f) To reroute services to provide faster and more direct links;
- g) To amalgamate routes running parallel for long distances;
- h) To review parallel bus services and reduce duplication;
- i) To extend services beyond present terminals to tap potential traffic;
- j) To co-ordinate with other NBC subsidiaries whose express services parallel Green Line routes;
- k) To improve seasonal services;
- l) To alter routes or frequencies and enable reductions on parallel bus routes;
- m) To split cross-London routes to aid reliability.

This 'reshaping' of the Green Line network was announced to the Press in December 1976, together with the news that the image was also to be improved with the replacement of the Green Line fleet by coaches to full luxury specification. The company announced that 150 coaches were to be obtained at the rate of thirty per year, each batch being leased for 5-6 years and then replaced on a rolling programme. Of the 30 AEC Reliances, the first of which were due early in 1977, fifteen were to be bodied by Plaxton (RS) and fifteen by Duple (RB). The announcement meant that RPs, SNCs and SMAs would be replaced on Green Line duties. As it would take five years to complete the programme, it was decided to overhaul the RPs and keep them for Green Line work in preference to other types. As we shall see, the RPs reached new destinations and had a more varied, if chequered, career in their later years.

The first coach routes to see extensive alteration were the northern ends of the 712, 713 and 714 which were replaced by new routes 707 and 717 from 29th January 1977. Running between Victoria and Luton Airport, the new services were the first to be worked by the RS class. Changes to bus operations from the same date meant that the 335, 390 and 441 gained RP journeys, while the 452 and 457 lost them, one RP being allocated to bus work on Mondays to Fridays at WR. Later on, RSs replaced RPs at Reigate and St. Albans on route 727 but this conversion was not completed until September.

The new coaches were well received by the public, and enthusiasts noting the similarity of chassis type between the RPs and the new vehicles must have wondered whether RPs would be rebodied. However, this could not be considered because of the expense and, in addition, the RPs had smaller engines and, at that time, a poor record of reliability.



A very rare working was that of RP10 on the 712 and 713 between St. Albans and Victoria before their withdrawal and replacement by the new 707/717. It is seen here in Grosvenor Place on the return trip. *Colin Stannard*



The new Green Line routes to Walthamstow and Waltham Cross were numbered 702 and 703. Here in Harlow RP47 works a short journey to Epping Station while **below**, Waltham Abbey dwarfs RP56 bound for its Hertfordshire terminus. *Colin Fradd/Guy Brigden*

On 2nd April 1977 many route alterations were made to long-standing Green Line routes, all of which were operated by RPs. The 718 (Harlow to Windsor) was curtailed to operate only between Victoria and Windsor, while the 720 (Aldgate to Stansted Airport) was withdrawn completely. At first, it was intended that the revised 718 should be a summer-only operation, but it was subsequently decided to retain it all the year round. In replacement, new routes 702 and 703 were introduced running from Bishops Stortford to Harlow and Epping, the 702 continuing via Chingford to Walthamstow Central Station, and the 703 to Waltham Cross. Both routes were operated by Harlow using a mixture of RPs and SNCs and also permitted some reduction on associated bus routes 396, 397 and 812. The Romford allocation on route 724 was transferred to Harlow and converted back to RP, while at Staines, the RPs on the 718 were switched with the SNCs on the 724. The SNCs on the 724 had caused problems, as they had smaller fuel tanks than RPs, and on a long route such as the 724 there had been several instances of buses running out of fuel.





The Commuter Express 710 was a short-lived RP operation lasting less than four months and represented here by RP6. *Colin Stannard*

Other changes on this date saw the daily rerouting of the 715 via Kingston, absorbing the Saturday-only 715A. The timetable provided for additional short journeys on Mondays to Fridays between Guildford and Kingston replacing routes 215 and 415. Another new route, numbered 710, was introduced between Guildford and Oxford Circus via Kingston-By-Pass to cater for commuters. The 710 was to be operated by RBs, but due to late deliveries, RPs started the service and ran it until the RBs arrived on 25th June. The coach alterations on 2nd April meant that the 806, 810 and 810A lost RP journeys, and the 415, 432, 460 and 463 gained them. Indeed, one RP was scheduled at Guildford on Saturdays solely for use on bus work.

The long overdue diversion of routes 704/5 via Heathrow Airport Central started on 21st May, and one journey on the 705 was diverted via Chartwell on certain days during the summer, replacing the seasonal extension of route 706 which had been withdrawn from 2nd April.

In June 1977, the first RPs were taken into Tinsley Green works for overhaul; RPs 1 and 4 were mechanically overhauled and repainted internally and externally, and the heating system was improved. Some RPs also lost their boot handles on overhaul. RP1 was outshopped in September in a new dual-purpose livery with the white extended down to include the waistband and window surrounds, the Green Line fleetname appearing on the roof panels. This revised livery was suggested by the Managing Director, Mr Fytche, to brighten up their appearance. RP4 was also completed during the same month and, surprisingly, was outshopped in National green bus livery with white waistband and London Country fleetnames. It carried this for only a day or two before being repainted into the new dual-purpose livery. The intention was to overhaul all RPs, with 1-30 being dual-purpose, the remainder in bus livery. London Country described the overhauled RPs as 'refurbished'.



The summer diversions on the 705 via Chartwell seemed popular with tourists and RP49 empties out at the grounds in August 1977. *Colin Fradd*



An early morning RP worked the 801C until October 1977. As a route which was normally fare-box operated, passengers were unaccustomed to taking a ticket from an Almex machine. RP2 carries a full load to the industrial area at Wedgwood Way. *Colin Fradd*

On 1st October 1977, Stevenage bus routes worked by RPs were altered in an exchange of services with United Counties. A new route 44, jointly operated with United Counties, ran on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays between Luton and Stevenage via Knebworth, Nup End, Codicote, Kimpton and Peters Green. Another new route, the 314, was introduced between Hitchin and Welwyn Garden City via Langley, Codicote, Welwyn and Ayot Green replacing UCOC route 82. Both services used RPs from Stevenage garage, the buses on the 314 being worked off positioning journeys on the 303. In exchange, London Country surrendered the operation of the 383 (Hitchin to Weston) to United Counties. On the same date, schedule revisions meant that the 335, 441 and 801C lost their RP journeys, while on 26th November the 431 and 483 gained some in lieu of the 454/A.



Another cross-country link started at the same time was the 314 between Welwyn Garden City and Hitchin, here worked by RP10. *Colin Fradd*



RPs at Addlestone for the 716 occasionally strayed onto the orbital 725 as shown here by RP21.
Colin Stannard

Thus the end of 1977 had seen some major changes to the routes operated by RPs, so now it is appropriate to take another look at the allocation book:

Garage		Mon-Fri	Sat	Sun	Routes	Also works
Addlestone	WY	4	4	4	716	
Dunton Green	DG	9	8	9	704/5	431, 483
Guildford	GF	7	6	4	715	432, 463
		—	1	—	415, 436, 463	
Harlow	HA	7	7	5	702/3	
		4	4	4	724	
Hatfield	HF	3	3	3	716	
Hertford	HG	8	9	4	715	331, 333, 337, 390
Staines	ST	4	4	4	724	460
Stevenage	SV	2	2	1	716	
		4	3	—	44, 303/C, 314, 381, 384	special duplicate
Windsor	WR	8	8	8	704/5	
		1	1	1	late running coach	
Totals:		61	60	47		



At Guildford, there were scheduled bus workings on the 432 and RP6 passes through Bookham on 27th August 1980. *Colin Fradd*



Left One of the new Green Line routes to replace the northern end of the 716 was the 732. Although originally intended to be worked by new coaches, due to late deliveries, RPs filled the gap. Refurbished RP1 is seen here in Oxford Street. *Colin Fradd* **Right** From 24th April 1978 scheduled RP journeys on the 431 were withdrawn and RP70 here at Orpington Works to Goddington Lane some months earlier. *Colin Fradd*

On 9th January 1978, new school contracts were gained by London Country and one RP was allocated for these at Addlestone. Five days later, on 14th, the 702/3 terminal in Bishops Stortford was changed from the Bricklayers Arms to The Causeway. On the same date, the 716 was split in central London, a change originally planned for 19th November 1977, the 716 number being retained for the section between Oxford Circus and Woking. The northern half was speeded up (by making minor reroutings in Hitchin, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City) and extended to Victoria to provide a new facility for passengers, and to provide for drivers' meal breaks. The northern service was numbered 722, with journeys operating via Brent Cross during shopping hours numbered 732. The 722 and 732 were to have been operated by new RSs, but as the next batch had been delayed, the refurbished RPs to date, 1, 3, 4 and 10 were allocated to HF and SV to launch the new routes.

On 28th January new route 459 (Feltham to Addlestone) was introduced, and a by-product of this schedule change was the withdrawal of the Saturday RP journeys on Guildford bus routes. Further revisions to RP journeys on 29th April meant that routes 431 and 483 lost RP journeys, while the 402 gained a few. 20th May 1978 saw the withdrawal of route 703 which had been very unreliable. It was replaced between Harlow and Waltham Cross by new bus route 329. New coach route 712, operated by HA RPs, was introduced between Bishops Stortford and Romford replacing the northern part of the 703, and route 724 between Harlow and Romford to improve reliability at the Romford end. On the same date, two new works contracts for ITT at Harlow commenced—Staple Tye, Passmores, Hare Street, The Stow to Templefields, and Potter Street, Bush Fair to Templefields. Both were operated by RPs.

The new 712 introduced to replace parts of the 703 and 724 was operated by RPs from Harlow. Here at Bishops Stortford RP7 shows the unusual blind treatment. *Clive Hyam*



The 704 and 705 were also revised from this date, the change having been deferred from 29th April. The 704 continued to run hourly from Windsor to Tunbridge Wells, but the 705 was withdrawn on Mondays to Saturdays, except for a late evening journey from Tunbridge Wells to Westerham. On Sundays, a joint service ran with the 704, each route operating two-hourly, with extra 705 'shorts' between Bromley and Sevenoaks. The 705 was also diverted via the 410 route instead of Hayes. The 454/A also gained an RP working at this time. A new 701 commenced between Victoria and Windsor, running via the M4 between Hammersmith and Heathrow Airport, and on to Windsor Safari Park daily during the summer season, replacing the extensions hitherto worked by the 704/5. The 701 was intended to be an RB operation displacing RPs for the overhaul programme, but in the event RSs were used instead as a temporary measure, the RPs helping out on the summer augmentation of the 727 between Heathrow and Crawley. Gradually during May and June, RSs moved into RG, while from 6th July to 12th October 1978, RBs took over on the 724 with RPs covering the 718, RBs moving onto the 718 between 12th October and 8th December. The RS conversion of the 722 and 732 started on 10th August being completed on 28th October 1978. All these conversions released more RPs for overhaul, with those already overhauled being distributed around the fleet.

RP73 and RP35 were outshopped in bus livery, which was the same style as RP4's test-livery, except that the white band extended to below the windscreen. RP73 also received the new computer style number plates, this vehicle being overhauled out of sequence after receiving accident repairs at the works. RP5 at Hertford, was also outshopped in the 1973-style livery, save the metal beading was painted over; however it regained the new DP livery by Spring 1979.

In September 1978, the company announced an additional order of 30 coaches, to provide for expansion, and also as replacements for RPs. Only 18 RPs had been overhauled between September 1977 and November 1978, and those remaining would suffer CoF expiry from November 1978 onwards. With such slow progress, it was obvious that several RPs would be "demised" as the company also had to overhaul ANs as well as the early Leyland Nationals. Indeed, from 15th December 1978 DG and WR RPs started to expire, and were generally replaced by SNCs displaced from LH, WR and GR by the new series-B SNBs. This process continued throughout January and February 1979 with SNCs being cascaded from other garages by SNBs to replace RP operations temporarily. Dunton Green's last RP moved out on 2nd February 1979. At this time, only the overhauled RPs, which included RP39, plus RP76, maintained the scheduled allocations with SNCs until the new coaches were delivered.

Once the new coaches had arrived though, the RPs were concentrated at WR for the 704, HA for the 702, 712 and contracts, at SV for bus work, and bus work at WY, GF and HG, (routes 331, 333, 337, 350, 351, 384, 390, 420, 436, 437, 461, 462 and 463), upon conversion of routes 715 and 716 which took place gradually between May and July 1979.





Upon the arrival of new coaches, RPs were concentrated at Guildford, Hertford and Addlestone for bus work. The northern area is represented by RP78 (facing page) leaving Hertford Bus Station on the 333, and RP21 passing through Little Hadham on the 350, *Colin Fradd/Richard Godfrey* while in the south we see RP11 on the 420 at St. Peter's Hospital, RP36 at Addlestone on the 461, and RP54 on the 463 at Woodham Lane. *Stephen Floyd/Colin Fradd/Guy Brigden*





A new route to Stevenage was the 803 linking Chells with the town centre. RP2 is seen here passing the garage on 24th April 1980. Colin Fradd

From 31st March 1979 the 712 was rerouted between Epping and Theydon Bois via Wake Arms and Coppice Row. New route 713 was introduced, also RP from Harlow, between Harlow and Romford partnering the 712, except that it ran via Abridge, Chigwell Station, Hainault Road, Fencepiece Road, New North Road and Hainault Forest in replacement for journeys on LT route 235. The same date also saw the introduction of morning RP journeys for schoolchildren on route 808 between Katherines and Passmores Schools. RPs were also scheduled on the afternoon working of route 339 from Chigwell *West Hatch School* as well as odd journeys on 329, 805 and 810A.

Also in March, RP29 appeared at Reigate as an RN replacement for school contract work, although it did see use on routes 422, 425, 440 and 727. In April, RP49 was given an MoT and became a training bus in the south east district and was allocated to DG, remaining in the 1973-style National livery. On 28th April the 704 and 705 were the next routes to be split in central London. The 704 was revised to run between London and Windsor only, while the southern section of the 704 became the 706 which, together with the 705 on Sundays only, were operated by DG RBs.

The first RPs were sold in July 1979, comprising six of the longest standing invalids which had been heavily cannibalised. For instance, RP69 languishing at Reigate, consisted only of the back half of a coach supported on bricks! They were sold for scrap to Wombwell Diesels along with RTs, RFs, LRs, SMs, an SMA, and three of their cousins, the RCs. The six, with their last date of service and their home garage, were: RP9 (21.5.74—SA); RP19 (12.6.74—WY); RP37 (5.1.77—HA); RP38 (8.12.78—HA); RP61 (16.7.74—WR); RP69 (14.9.75—DG).

On 1st September 1979 a new Monday to Friday off-peak route numbered 803 was introduced with RPs from SV. It ran between Chells and the Bus Station via Chells Way, Fairlands Way, Martins Wood loop, Sishes End, St. Nicholas, Canterbury Way, Martins Way, Hitchin Road, Lister Hospital, Baldock Road, Old Town and Lytton Way. On the same date a new RP allocation commenced at Dorking when two spare RPs from HG converted two runnings (DS41 and 42) on route 714, the other two remaining SNC as they worked morning peak journeys on route 412 which was not approved for RP operation. The SNCs displaced were used, with a couple of new vehicles, to replace MBs and BNs at DS.



An allocation of RPs at Dorking brought them for the first time to the 714 as shown by RP42 at Mickleham.
Richard Godfrey

Many major route changes took place on 27th October 1979 including the introduction of a new orbital Green Line route 734 between Addlestone and Hertford via Staines, Heathrow Airport, Hounslow, Brentford, Ealing, Perivale, Alperton, Wembley, Neasden, Brent Cross, Golders Green, Muswell Hill and Wood Green where it joined forces with the new 735 to Hertford following the old 715 route. The southern half of the 715 continued to operate between Oxford Circus and Guildford. The 734 was operated by RBs, although RPs at WY gained displays gradually and soon put in regular appearances. In order to equate the increase of work at WY, and the decrease at East Grinstead (EG), there was a shuffle of work affecting most south west area garages. A by-product of the changes was the official scheduling of an RP on route 422 at RG. Route 700 ceased running for the winter and the RBs were allocated to route 704 instead, although three RPs remained as engineering spares. The next Monday saw the start of a new RP service with the unusual number 999. It was a Monday to Friday works contract for Marconi and ran from St. Albans *Mile House Estate* via Drakes Drive, Ashley Road, Beechwood Avenue, Marshalswick Lane, Beech Road, Batchwood Drive, Waverley Road, St. Peter's Street, Doggets Way, Colney Street, Radlett and Theobald Street to Borehamwood *Marconi Avionics Works*. The unusual route number was requested by Marconi who wanted a distinctive number for its employees to recognise. Indeed Marconi themselves advertised the service in the local press, using an illustration of RP74 which was one of two RPs drafted into HF for the service.

During the latter part of November 1979 RBs from the next batch of thirty coaches started replacing the RPs on routes 702, 712 and 713 from HA. They were officially converted on 8th December 1979. The RPs were distributed to GF and DS for MB replacement, HF for LNB overhaul cover, and those remaining at HA were principally for routes 391, 392 and 393.



RP39 was one which was kept at Harlow primarily for the 391/392/393 as shown here near Nazeing.
Richard Godfrey



The RPs at Dorking were scheduled on the 449 and RP31 was caught here at Goodwyns Farm Estate. *Richard Godfrey*

During 1979, RP overhauls continued and by the end of the year a further 24 had been completed before overhauls were stopped. This left a service fleet of 45 RPs, including RP39 which had been recertified earlier, plus one RP trainer, RP49. These were able to work on any route at their garage approved for 11-metre vehicles. By this time, London Country ceased producing an allocation book, and produced an allocation chart instead which showed the actual vehicles at the garage, rather than what was allocated to individual routes. So let us look at the position as it was on 1st January 1980:

Addlestone	WY:	RP 14, 16, 22, 25, 30, 32, 33, 53, 54	joint allocation with SNB and SM for bus work and spare vehicle cover routes 425, 439, 449, 714
Dorking	DS:	RP 6, 31, 42, 44, 70	joint allocation with SNB, SM and MB on bus work, contract and also Green Line spare routes 391, 392, 393, plus journeys 329, 339, 397, 808, 810A and also Green Line spare route 999 and spare vehicle cover spare vehicle cover route 422, and also occasional use on 425, 440 route 44, 303, 303C, 314, 381, 384, 803 and spare vehicle cover spare vehicle cover
Guildford	GF:	RP 1, 8, 11, 18, 27, 36	
Harlow	HA:	RP 3, 39, 43, 47	
Hatfield	HF:	RP 7, 24, 28, 74, 84	
Hertford	HG:	RP 5, 13, 21	
Reigate	RG:	RP 29, 40	
Stevenage	SV:	RP 2, 10, 15, 20, 23, 73	
Windsor	WR:	RP 4, 12, 17	

Plus RP49, DGt and RP 26 GFu, 35 WYu (ex HA) for accident repair.
Plus other RPs stored in various locations.



RP7 was one of five at Hatfield for spare vehicle cover. Locally made blinds enabled them to work a number of unusual routes such as the G3 here in Bridge Road Welwyn Garden City. *Guy Brigden*



The Rail-Air link worked by Reigate garage carried magenta blinds, and RP40 is seen here in Reigate on 15th April 1982. *Colin Fradd*

During January 1980 though, two of the last RSs were allocated to DS replacing the two RPs scheduled on the 714, these moving to GF by 2nd February 1980 to replace the last MBs. In February, RP50 was restored to work as a trainer from HG, having last worked in passenger service in December 1975! Hertford Bus Station was closed for redevelopment from 27th March 1980, buses terminating in Fore Street.

Withdrawn RPs stored at Wadham-Stringers (Guildford) moved for further storage to Beddingtons Commercial Motors (Wallington) during April 1980. On 5th April a productivity deal with London Country's drivers included the increase of standing capacities of Green Line coaches (including RPs) from 3 to 8. Most RPs still in service had their licensed capacities notice inside the vehicles amended accordingly.

On 25th April route 999 ceased to run, having suffered from lack of patronage, while the next day all Stevenage Town services were numbered in the 'SB' series, designated "StevenageBus" rather than "SuperBus". As a result, route 803 and part of the 384 were replaced by new route SB6. All the SB routes were converted to AN farebox operation, and to give greater standardisation SNBs (equipped with fareboxes) were to take over the country services hitherto operated by the RPs, thus ending their long association with Stevenage Garage. They did not move out immediately though, remaining for a few weeks to help cover for a shortfall of ANs. The routes which they had been associated with also changed on the same day. The 732 was rerouted between Finchley Central and Golders Green via Hendon Central, double running to Brent Cross only during shopping hours, while route 722 was withdrawn. In the south, the 716 was withdrawn, the section from Kingston to Woking being covered by a diversion of the 725. Thus one could see the occasional RP from WY making the long journey to the Gravesend area. The 725 also took over the Staines workings via Thorpe Park on Sundays, and was also rerouted in Chertsey, along with the 734, via Heriot Road.

Two RPs were transferred to RG for a rail-air coach service between Reigate Station forecourt and Gatwick Airport starting on 12th May 1980 as from this date, British Rail introduced a new fast service from Reading to Gatwick via Dorking, Reigate and Redhill but, due to train-pathing problems, one train in the morning and evening peak had to be reversed at Reigate Station. Three journeys were provided to give a link to Gatwick, the timings being 0810 from Reigate Station forecourt, and 0810 and 1810 from Gatwick. The RPs were equipped with magenta blinds with white lettering reading "Gatwick-Reigate Rail-air link". The service, which was unnumbered, followed the same routing as the 727.

On 18th May 1980 Guildford (Commercial Road) Bus Station was closed as a result of redevelopment, all services standing in Woodbridge Road. The 425 and 439 continued to use Onslow Street Bus Station. One week later, on 25th, new routes 740 (Tuesday and Thursday) and 741 (Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays) were introduced. The 740 ran from Victoria to Guildford via Kensington High Street, Hammersmith, A3 and Wisley Gardens while the 741 ran from Victoria to Guildford via Knightsbridge, M4, Datchet, Old Windsor, Datchet and Thorpe Park. They were operated for the benefit of tourists using the positioning journeys on route 710 running in the summer only. Although scheduled for RS operation, they were liable for RP operation.



Each year, the special operation of the 406F to Epsom Downs on Derby Day results in many types of vehicle. RPs have played their part and RP2 is seen at the Downs in 1978. *Guy Brigden*



RPs returned to St. Albans in 1980 where they replaced BLs and were able to work on any route approved for 11-metre vehicles. The 355 here at Sandridge represents the many bus workings, while RP11 in Park Lane shows how coach shortages resulted in their use on Green Line. Note the incorrect 'white on black' blinds. *Richard Godfrey/ Colin Fradd*



The Thamesline network centred at WR was due to start on 31st May 1980. However, due to industrial action over the new schedules, the LCBS share in the new network did not start until 12th June, when the last RP at WR (17) was relicensed for use as a ferry bus between Windsor and Slough Bus Station for crew changes. May 1980 also saw the sale for scrap of London Country's last RC, the forerunner of the RP class.

On Derby Day, 4th June 1980, route 406 terminated at Reigate Garage all day to offset the effects of late running, and an additional RP operated as a 406 shuttle running between Reigate and Redhill. However, later in the month, three of Reigate's RPs 15, 23 and 29, were delicensed and stored at WY in spite of the vehicle shortage there. It was felt locally that the RPs were difficult to board for elderly people and therefore only appeared on certain routes, namely 422, 425, 440, 727 and as contract vehicles.

In July 1980, RPs returned to SA where they helped to replace BLs and here they were able to appear on any route approved for 11-metre vehicles. These included the 'S' routes, 304, 313, 320, 330, 340, 341, 342, 343, 355, 358, 361 and were also available for Green Line routes, although the blind sections for these were erroneously printed in white on black. These RPs mainly came from HF, whose LNBs were returning from overhaul.

There were a large number of route changes on 31st August 1980 affecting RP operations. The Weyfarer scheme at WY and GF was introduced and the following routes were withdrawn: 415, 420, 427 and 437. The changes were:

407: New route, Guildford to Merrow Park;

435: New route, Woking to St. Peter's Hospital via West Byfleet;

436: Rerouted at Burnt Common via Portsmouth Road to replace routes 415 and 420, with special journeys to Ripley;

437: Old route withdrawn, and new service under this number from Guildford to Weybridge (Hospital), via Merrow, Burnt Common, Woking, Pyrford, West Byfleet, Manor Farm Estate, BAC Works and Weybridge Station;

459: Extended from Addlestone to Knaphill via New Haw, West Byfleet, Woking and Hook Heath;

461: Extended from St. Peter's Hospital to Feltham via Chertsey, Shepperton, Halliford Road, Sunbury Village, Sunbury Cross, Vicarage Road and Lower Feltham;

462: Reduced to just a Monday-Friday facility from Addlestone to Lyne (operated by WY) and Leatherhead to Chertsey (operated by LH);

463: Reduced to just a Monday to Friday off-peak facility from Addlestone and Woking via Rowtown and Woodham Church;

854: New service, operating on the 1st Wednesday of each month replacing withdrawn Tillingbourne route 454.

Guildford to Chichester via Cranleigh, Alford, Loxwood, Ifold, Plaistow, Mackerels Common and Petworth;

859: New Sunday service from Knaphill (via 459), or Burnt Common (via 436) to St. Peter's Hospital via Woking, West Byfleet, Addlestone and Chertsey.

All the routes, except the Feltham section of routes 459 and 461 were approved for RPs which operated the services together with SNBs, SMs, and ANs from GF, although the RPs and SMs were not able to display correct blinds for the revised services for the first week or so until the new blinds were delivered. The 854 was scheduled with RNs, but after a while RPs and RSs did appear. Route 740 also gained extra commuter and shopping journeys. Unlike other MAP schemes, LCBS vehicles at GF and WY did not carry external stickers proclaiming

Changes in the south-west area on 31st August 1980 saw the use of rather ugly non-LT style blinds as shown by RP1 on the 408A. *Clive Hyam*
One of the more tidy displays was for the 459 extension to Knaphill as on RP30. *Richard Godfrey*





The 425 lost its section between Dorking and Reigate and no longer served Flanchford Road where RP31 is seen. As a result of new schedules, RPs appeared more frequently on the 440, such as RP40 here in Redhill. *Guy Brigden/Colin Fradd*





The limited-stop 841 between Hatfield Polytechnic and Hertford carried turquoise blinds and replaced a contract service. RP84 is seen at Essendon on 8th November 1980 in the all-over green livery with white waistband. *Richard Godfrey*

the local identity, although they were given "Welcome aboard Weyfarer" stickers on the cab doors. LCBS felt that the area was too large to be marketed under one name. In the same area, route 425 was withdrawn between Dorking and Reigate, the RG allocation on the 425 ceasing and causing RPs to appear more frequently on route 440. Route 714 was extended to Horsham replacing the 414 south of Dorking (or Capel in peak hours) and was also diverted via Surbiton Station. The Kingston to Victoria section was reduced and officially re-routed via Kingston Hill and Roehampton, a routeing which had been followed since the 'Petersham Hole' appeared on 30th March 1979. These changes were introduced on a Sunday to conform with Alder Valley's changeover day.

The northern area had its schedule changes on Saturday 30th August, although the new RP operations started on the first day of Monday to Friday operations. Route 841 was a limited stop service running between Hatfield Polytechnic and Hertford *Balls Park College* via the 341 route. This service replaced a previous RP-operated contract which followed the same routeing and became available for public use. The service was allocated to HF who used RPs equipped with turquoise blinds with white lettering, and it ran on Mondays to Fridays during polytechnic terms only. Over at Harlow, the 'Townbus' scheme was introduced which involved the numbering of the Town services as 'T' routes. RPs made Monday to Friday visits to the T10 (Mill Station – Old Harlow – Bus Station – Pinnacles). T16 (Mill Station – Templefields – Stow – Bus Station – Town Station – Little Parndon) and T29 (Sumners – Katherines – Southern Way – Brays Grove School). In St. Albans, the 304 was extended via Hill End to Tyttenhanger in conjunction with revisions to the 'S' services.



Another of the 'T' routes at Harlow to see RP operation was the T15 between Templefields and Potter Street where RP24 is seen. *Richard Godfrey*

On 6th October 1980, the Transport Act (1980) was to have an immediate profound effect on coach services. The Act provided for the de-regulation of coach routes where passengers were carried for more than 30 miles. This created a more competitive spirit, and Green Line routes became subject to alteration at short notice, and paved the way for the introduction of routes which took Green Line beyond its traditional boundaries in search of commercial markets.

On 11th October the 397 was withdrawn and replaced by certain journeys on route 338 diverted at Sawbridgeworth to Bishops Stortford, RPs continuing to appear. The 27th saw the extension of route 740 commuter journeys to Grange Park Estate, also being rerouted between Guildford and Burpham via York Road, Epsom Road, Merrow and Park Lane. Later the same week, on 2nd November, the Friary Bus Station opened at Guildford with the closure of the Farnham Road and Onslow Street bus stations, all LCBS routes moving to the new stands which were adjacent to Commercial Road.

During November several 'Transport Act' Green Line routes started worked by RSs and RBs. One new route, introduced on 1st November, did occasionally see RP operation—the 757 running from Luton Airport and Bus Station, then non-stop to London.

On 31st January 1981, Monday to Saturday route 760 (Broadfield – Gossops Green – Tilgate – Furnace Green – Three Bridges – M23 – Croydon) and Saturday route 761 (as 760 but via Ifield) were introduced. For these CY received RP16, which was the same vehicle allocated to Crawley for private hire duties between June and October 1973. It was officially allocated to route 750 (Crawley – Gatwick – Addington – Bromley – Dartford – Gravesend) with RB97 working on the new routes and an SMA being used as a spare coach. The 750 running included a journey on route 405 on Mondays to Fridays.

During February RP87 became a trainer at WR, and gained a yellow band which appeared on other training vehicles although this was the only RP to carry this training livery. In March HA gave a garage repaint to RP7 into all-over green bus livery, to the NBC's new image for single-deck buses, but the effect was rather drab. The rest of Harlow's bus-liveried RPs all received this treatment, except RP74, followed by the DP-liveried vehicles which had their waistbands painted green, virtually returning them to 1973 style livery, save that the white band remained below the windscreen. Several other garages painted out the Green Line fleetname on their DP liveried vehicles, leaving passengers to guess which operator ran the vehicles!

On 11th April 1981, a journey on route 714 was extended in Horsham to Worthing Road (Tanbridge House School), and new route 773 (Westcott – Dorking – Reigate – Crawley – Brighton) started. The new PL coaches moved in to DS though from 19th May to 5th June 1981, and all RPs except RP4 moved out.

On 25th April the Lee Valley area was subject to a large number of alterations. Route 324 was renumbered 334 during off-peak times, the new number indicating journeys operating via Queen Elizabeth II Hospital, and both routes were extended from Broxbourne Station to Waltham Cross. Route 331 was diverted at all times apart from a few peak and 'when working' journeys via Hare Street, with the 337 being numbered 331. The service was also converted to double-deck operation. The 350 and 351 were withdrawn between Hertford and Essendon, route 381 was withdrawn, and route 384 withdrawn between Stevenage and Letchworth and Stevenage and Weston. Route 390 was withdrawn from the Aston double run, apart from one peak hour journey each way to or from Stevenage Bus Station but was extended in off-peak times from Stevenage to Lister Hospital, and also from Hertford to Waltham Cross via Hertford Heath, Hoddesdon, Broxbourne, Wormley and Cheshunt. There were also other changes to bus routes at HG, but these were the only changes to affect the minority RP allocation there, other routes apart from 333, not being approved for RP operation. Some blind sections were locally amended. The 734 was withdrawn between Brent Cross and Addlestone and became an off-peak facility. In partial replacement in the south west area, route 436 was extended on Mondays to Saturdays, except evenings, from Staines to Heathrow Airport Bus Station via London Road, Town Lane, Stanwell High Street, Park Road, Moor Road, Perimeter Road and the Cargo Tunnel.

Two new coach services also started on this date, the 797 and 798 running from London to Cambridge. SV's allocation on the 797 was with brand new PLs but due to late deliveries, several loaned coaches arrived, including RP2 loaned from RG which also helped out on route 732. RP2 soon moved out however, and went via HF to SA where it became a regular duplicate coach on route 757 together with make-shift blind details using publicity material stuck onto the blank blind section. Crawley also ended its second flirtation with RP16 when it moved to SA, but it expired shortly after arriving.

The last day of operation of the Reigate Station to Gatwick Airport rail-air link contract service was 29th May 1981, a new rail timetable starting the next day.

Changes were made to the 725, 750 and 760 group of services on 13th June 1981. The 750 and 760 were combined as the 755 (Crawley – Croydon – Gravesend) while the 725 was dovetailed with the 755 and ran every two hours from Woking to Croydon and Gravesend, and an additional hourly service ran from Woking to Croydon. On Sundays, the 725 was revised to work between Croydon and Staines via the weekday route to Addlestone, then via St. Peter's Hospital, Chertsey and Thorpe Park. Together with Sunday timetable revisions to route 461, route 859 was withdrawn.



The 750 did not prove a great success, but during its time it did see RP operation, RP16 being allocated to Crawley garage. It is seen at Hooley on its way to Gravesend on 21st March 1981.
Colin Fradd



The 338's diversion to Bishops Stortford saw the use of RPs, and at The Causeway RP43 in all-over green picks up passengers after a storm. *Clive Hyam*

Also from 13th June route 440 lost its scheduled RP journeys, although RPs were still allocated to RG and could therefore still appear. RPs were also moved out of HF (the 841 becoming SNB) and were concentrated at HA and SA, and a new garage to RPs, Leatherhead, gained one to test the local private hire market. This vehicle, RP42, was frequently used on contract and ferry bus workings, and also subsequently became the only RP to be fitted with a tachograph. RP44 became a trainer, in the same month.

Harlow coach services were revised on 13th July 1981 with the 712 rerouted between Epping and Romford via Centre Drive, Ivychimneys, Theydon Bois, Abridge, Passingford Bridge, Stapleford Abbots, Havering-atte-Bower, Chase Cross and North Street in partial replacement of LT route 247 and the frequency was increased on Saturdays to half-hourly. Route 713 was withdrawn.

During September 1981, the increased overhaul output of SNBs meant that several RPs were delicensed as surplus to requirements on 25th September 1981. They were RPs 1, 2, 13, 21, 27, 28 and 40. They included the last RPs allocated to Reigate and Hertford. However, the company was in no hurry to dispose of them, since most were in serviceable condition and they were regarded as reserve vehicles, doubtless with an eye to the return of the first batch of RSs and RBs which had to be refurbished before return to Kirkby Central. Three more RPs, 11, 16 and 74, were stored in October 1981. This left the operational fleet of the RPs as follows:

WY:	14, 22, 25, 30, 31, 32, 33, 53, 54	(9)
GF:	6, 8, 15, 18, 23, 29, 36	(7)
HA:	3, 5, 24, 39, 43, 47, 73, 84	(8)
SA:	7, 10, 20	(3)
DS:	4	(1)
LH:	42, (for private hire)	(1)
WR:	17, (for ferry journeys)	(1)
	plus trainers, 44, 49, 50, 87	(4)

From 16th November 1981 a new garage came to operate RPs. This was Hemel Hempstead which gained three vehicles for a new contract required by the DoE, who had to transfer 140 staff from Hemel Hempstead to Stanmore at short notice when the Hemel Hempstead office needed emergency building repairs. HH gained RP7 from St. Albans and RPs 31 and 54 from Addlestone. No blinds were available at first but this did not stop them putting in guest appearances on routes 273 and 708 with chalked details. Local ingenuity triumphed though when some old MBS blinds were found and stitched together to make up three blinds. They included displays for the 301, 302, 322 and 708. In the same month RP8 was withdrawn from GF, but RP74 was reinstated at HA after RP73 suffered from serious accident damage.

December 1981 saw the sale of the last SMs and SMWs, and the last SMA and XF were taken out of service. In consequence, London Country's next task in vehicle type rationalisation was to withdraw several BNs and all the remaining RPs during 1982. As we shall see, circumstances conspired to give the RPs a years reprieve.

16th January 1982 saw more revisions to Harlow 'country' routes frequented by their RPs. Route 338 was diverted via Eastwick Village and route 391 was withdrawn. Route 392 was diverted during shopping hours via Haydens Road in Harlow and extended during Monday to Friday peaks from Hoddesdon *Clock Tower* to Pindar Road. Route 393 was reduced and diverted between Tylers Cross and Harlow via Roydon, Harlow Road and Pinnacles. Non-stop route 767 (London to Heathrow Airport) was introduced and a ferry bus from WY was provided at first and often produced an RP.

January 1982 was also memorable because of the one-day rail strikes and bad weather which put many buses off the road just when they were needed most. RPs appeared as coach duplicates making appearances on the 710 and 730 amongst others. WR's ferry bus, RP17, was withdrawn after an accident, RP3 transferring in from HA as replacement. Another Harlow RP, 24, restored an allocation to HG after only three months!

By February 1982, RPs 41, 51, 55, 70, 72 and 90 turned up with Smith's of Reading. RP70 was only used as a source of spares though, the seats being refitted into another acquired Reliance of a similar age—ex-Devon General 83 (TUO 83J). The hulk of RP70 was later used for rescue training by the Reading Fire Brigade!

Forty-two of the new Leyland Tigers with ECW bodies were due to commence delivery in about February 1982, but because of a strike the delivery dates were put back to May and June. In the meantime, a design weakness manifested itself, and modifications had to be made before final delivery. Once again, London Country's plans of expansion were thwarted and it was obliged to press every vehicle available into service on coaching work, through no fault of its own. The RPs appeared from HA, WY, GF, SA and HH on coach routes so regularly that it became less strange to see them on Green Line routes 702, 707, 708, 712, 715, 717 and 725. Three RPs were re-instated during February 1982. RP2 went to HG together with RP39 transferred from HA, while RP11 went to SA. Also during the spring of 1982, Berresfords of Cheddleton rebuilt RP45 using a Willowbrook front with a route number destination below the windscreen. Painted in their red and cream livery, it was adorned with slogans detailing the route of the Derby - Leek - Manchester service which the vehicle usually performed. Other RPs operated by Berresfords or Stoniers appeared to have been re-seated with older style PVC covered seats with rounded backs.

On 19th April 1982 construction work south of Epping for the M25 caused the 712 to divert away from the Ivychimneys area. To cover the unserved roads the M25 contractors supported an RP-operated service, worked by HA garage. It ran from Epping Town via Station Road, Bower Hill, Brook Road, Bridge Hill, Centre Drive and back via Station Road. Blind details consisted of a paper label. The service ceased at noon on 8th June 1982 when the 712 was restored to through running once more using a new bridge over the motorway.

One of the RPs which passed to Smiths of Reading was RP90. Carrying a basically white livery with dark blue relief, it is seen in their yard. *Stephen Floyd*



A route to see RPs towards the end of their life was the 708, and RP7 is seen here in Buckingham Palace Road during May 1982. *Colin Fradd*



On 24th April 1982 London Country took over operation of LT route 84 between St. Albans and New Barnet, while the 313 was taken over by London Transport in exchange. Route 355 was diverted via How Wood Estate in the evenings, and new route 827 was introduced on schooldays from Kingsbourne Green to St. Albans *Nicholas Breakspear School*. On the same date, minor reroutings were made in the Harlow area to the 339 and 702, the 339 being diverted via Staple Tye and Southern Way in Harlow, while the 702 was diverted between Woodford Green and Chingford Mount via Woodford Wells, Chingford Lane and Chingford Hatch. During the same month, RP31, was delicensed and stored at GR and RP27 was reinstated at SA.

The usual round of Green Line service changes occurred on 16th May, and once again garages with allocations of RPs were involved with some of the revised routes. In the Guildford area, route 715 received a new timetable which featured short workings between Kingston and Cobham, while the 710 was rerouted via Ripley and reduced to one return journey. WY's 730 gained extra stops between Tolworth and Hammersmith as part coverage for the 710. Route 740 was augmented and extended to form an express service between Victoria and Guildford via Kensington, Hammersmith, A3, Wisley Gardens and Merrow Park continuing to Farnham Station via Guildford University, with Grange Park journeys being timed for commuters on Mondays to Fridays. New route 741 was introduced as a variation of the 740 with just a few shopper and commuter journeys, plus a late service on Fridays and return facility on Sundays. This ran from Victoria to Guildford via the 740 then continuing via Godalming, Milford, Hindhead, Grayshott, Headley and Bordon Camp to Whitehill. The revised 740/741 were shared with Alder Valley. Route 725 was split at Croydon with the number being retained for the Croydon to Dartford/Gravesend section, while the Croydon to Woking section (Staines on Sundays) was given the revived number 716. An interesting feature of this renumbering was that the RPs, which continued to be frequent performers from WY, gained amended blind displays with the number "716" cut out from old blinds and stuck onto the newer 725 blinds. Unfortunately, not every blind section could be amended, and for at least two months afterwards RPs on the 716 running to Addlestone garage proclaimed to be on the 725 which must have confused intending passengers! The reason new blinds were not ordered was because LCBS still intended to withdraw the RPs as soon as possible. Local ingenuity, however, continued to keep the RPs in service. New blinds inserts were delivered after a while.

There was a strike of the London Underground from 21st-29th June 1982, and this was coupled with an NUR stoppage on 28th and 29th June. There then followed an ASLEF stoppage from 4th-18th July. Coming as they did in the middle of summer, Green Line, along with the rest of the NBC, pressed many unusual types into service as scheduled or duplicate vehicles. Some of the more interesting workings on Green Line can be found in LBM 42. The RPs had a field day and appeared regularly on the 707, 708, 710, 715, 717, 730, 740, 741 and 758, often in the company of double-deckers. In fact, LCBS made a quick application for a new route 731 which ran from Chertsey to Oxford Circus via Ottershaw, Addlestone, West Byfleet and Byfleet, where it joined forces with the 730 along the same route to London. One return journey ran on Mondays to Fridays, the first day of operation also being the first day of the NUR strike.

During June 1982, RP54 was given a garage repaint into all-over green and by August 1982, SA's RPs appeared to be out of use, but accidents to RSs and RBs meant that they were restored to use and were joined in September by HG's last RP, 39, still sporting its earlier, 1973-style DP livery.

Bus routes in Addlestone were altered from 21st August 1982, when 459 peak hour journeys and route 461 were rerouted at Sunbury Cross to run to Ashford Station via LT route 216. Two new schoolday routes were also introduced for a new school opening in Sheerwater at the start of the Autumn Term. The 837 from Maybury Hill, and the 838 from East Hill ran via Pyrford to the new school, which was named "Bishop David Brown" a few weeks after the school had been opened.

854 was withdrawn after 1st September 1982, and on 18th September 1982, journeys on the 758 were extended back to start at Redbourn. In October 1982, one of the HH's RPs moved out however, when RP54 went to another garage new to the type, Northfleet. This was to release a vehicle for the ever-increasing 720 service. It carried only paper labels at first, and soon settled down on the 725 and 726. The vehicle did receive a Green Line blind however, when an old NF SMA blind was found.

On 4th December 1982, changes in the Harlow and Epping areas were made as a result of an Essex County Council co-ordination scheme. The alterations involved an exchange of routes between LT and LCBS with LT taking over the Epping - Ongar bus link in partial replacement of the Epping - Ongar branch of the Central Line, which was withdrawn outside the peak hours from 6th December. Routes 329 and 339 had Monday to Friday peak hour journeys extended to start at Harlow Town Station. Route 339 was revised to limited stop throughout, and diverted away from Epping town centre, originally via Woodside but residents objections meant that the service had to operate via St. Margarets. The service was extended from Ongar to Romford Station via Stanford Rivers, Passingford Bridge, Stapleford Abbots, Havering-atte-Bower, and Chase Cross, replacing LT 247B. The schoolday journeys to Chigwell were transferred to new route 839, while another schoolday route, 840, also ran from Epping to Chigwell (*West Hatch School*) running via Wake Arms, Loughton and Buckhurst Hill, replacing schoolday journeys on LT 20A. The 702 was withdrawn between Harlow Bus Station and Bishops Stortford, and



Changes on 4th December 1982 resulted in some new services in the Epping area which saw the use of RPs. To replace the off-peak service on the Epping-Ongar line, new LT route 201 was introduced on which one evening peak journey was worked by London Country as shown by RP7. The 339 was revised to become an express operation between Harlow and Romford and RP27 passes through Ongar carrying its blue blind. Lastly, a school service to West Hatch School numbered 839 was introduced, represented here by RP7 at Epping. (1/2) Clive Hyam (3) Richard Godfrey



the SDO journeys to Woodford County High School were also withdrawn. The 702 was also rerouted via The Stow. The 712 was diverted to double run via Epping Station and increased to operate every half hour between Bishops Stortford and Romford Market (Romford Station in Monday to Friday peak hours), during the day and hourly on Sundays. Also, LCBS operated an evening peak hour journey on LT route 201 between Epping and Tylers Green. The HA RPs were usually scheduled to operate on routes 702 and 339 Express which interworked with each other, and also journeys on the 201, 839 and 840. The RPs received new blinds for these routes, gaining blue panels for the 339 Express. During November HH's last RP, 7, was withdrawn. But it was later given a new engine and reinstated to HA for the new services outlined above.

From the 1st January 1983, the EEC regulations regarding the yearly inspection of PSV vehicles, and the issuing of Freedom from Defect certificate came fully into effect. Therefore, any vehicle which had not been presented for examination during 1982 had to be taken out of service. Four RPs at HA had to be withdrawn, including 2, 5, 27 and 39, after a month where the allocation of RPs at HA had peaked at 11 vehicles.

The 1983 coach order consisted of 45 Leyland Tigers with Duple Dominant IV bodywork. Of the 30 coaches from the 1978 batch (RS31-45, RB46-60), only 9 were due to be returned, the leases of those remaining extended. This meant that the company would be getting 36 extra coaches for 1983, indicating the amount of service expansion in the coaching market which is still taking place. Nevertheless, the writing was on the wall for the RPs. Sales of RPs in January 1983 depleted the type still in stock by a quarter, to just 33 vehicles, but they included the first RPs to be sold for preservation.

Also during January, RP22 at WY as adapted as a trainer, but it was needed for service later in the month on 29th when another exchange of services between LT and LCBS involved routes in the Addlestone, Sunbury and Weybridge areas.

Route 437 was withdrawn between Woking and West Byfleet via Pyrford, and diverted instead via Sheerwater Estate. It was diverted at Weybridge Station to replace LT219 via Heath Road, Weybridge town centre, Queen's Road, Hersham, Esher, Portsmouth Road and Kingston. The frequency was increased to half-hourly on Mondays to Saturdays between Kingston and Weybridge with alternate buses going to Addlestone Garage and Guildford. Hanger Lane in Weybridge was served by occasional buses, and on Sundays, most buses ran between Kingston and West Byfleet. Route 461 was withdrawn between St. Peter's Hospital and Ashford and became an hourly service (two-hourly on Sundays) between St. Peter's Hospital and Kingston via Addlestone, Walton-on-Thames, Field Common Estate, West Molesey, New Road, Hurst Road and Hampton Court replacing LT route 211. Route 459 was withdrawn between Chertsey Station and Ashford/Feltham and was diverted via Pyrford, only special journeys running via Woking Road. Buses ran alternatively via Maybury Inn or East Hill between Pyrford and Woking. To cover the withdrawn sections of routes 459 and 461 and to create new links, two new routes were introduced, the 455 and 456, the latter making a comeback to the area after nearly 10 years, although not in quite the same form! The 456 was an hourly Monday to Saturday service (half that frequency on Sundays) running from St. Peter's Hospital to Heathrow Airport via Ottershaw, Addlestone, Weybridge, Walton, Walton Bridge, Upper Halliford, Nursery Road, Sunbury Cross, Feltham Hill Road, Ashford, Ashford Hospital, Clare Road, Stanwell Village and the Cargo Tunnel. Route 455, covering the restricted Shepperton section, was not approved for RP operation. Other services were also revised—route 435 was withdrawn, the Scotland Bridge Road and West Byfleet section being covered by a diversion of route 716 on Mondays to Saturdays which was also diverted via New Road and Hurst Road in the West Molesey area to provide a common route with the 461. Route 436 was diverted in Stanwell via Clare Road and was extended on evenings and Sundays from Staines to Heathrow Airport. The Lyne journeys on route 462 were reduced to run on Tuesdays and Thursdays only, while the 463 was altered to a loop working at Woodham and reduced to run on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Route 838 was withdrawn and combined into an altered 837 which was revised to run schooldays only between Maybury Hill *College Road* and Sheerwater *Bishop David Brown School* via Maybury Inn and Pyrford Village.

On 25th February, RP11 made a rare appearance on the 727 substituting for a defective Reigate coach at St. Albans and, running as RG74, made one round trip to Crawley. Such substitutions have always been a feature of Green Line operations, hence the strange appearances of WY RPs on NF workings on the 725 (amongst others) and it is possible that there have been other strange, if unreported, workings.

During March 1983, Northfleet's only RP, 54, suffered an engine failure and was withdrawn, but RP49, the training bus at DG, gained a local repaint in all-over green. On 2nd April RP43 performed a strange working when it ran as HA66 on route 799, but with no blind details, while on 16th April, HF had a final fling with the RP when RP11 was loaned to operate as HF24 on route 341. The TDs entered service between mid-April and June, and many RPs came off the road. The last examples operated at St. Albans on 18th May, while the last RPs at Harlow and Dorking last operated on 9th June. By the end of July, just 10 RPs were left as PSVs at Addlestone (14, 22, 24, 25, 32, 53), Guildford (4, 29, 36) and Leatherhead (42).

An exercise to reduce the percentage of engineering spares was implemented during August, which, coupled with the entry into service of 15 LRs at Hatfield, displaced several single-deckers rendering all the RPs surplus. Many suffered FFD expiries including RP42 which was withdrawn after 17th August. Plans to convert this vehicle to a trainer did not materialise, though RP87 moved from the north west Training School to the south west. More RPs expired but although they were now surplus, RP4 at GF and RPs 22 and 25 at WY still put in odd appearances, especially on routes 436, 437, 456, 461 and 715 with a few 'wild' workings on the 425 and 740.

RP22 at WY expired during November 1983, and RP4 last worked on 22nd December 1983 at GF, and was stored at CM. This left RP25 at WY which was kept on as a spare coach. As these were the first Green Line coaches actually ordered by London Country, it was suggested that a special operation should be run to enable enthusiasts to mourn the passing of the class.



The last RP in London Country service ran on 18th February 1984 when RP25 worked a duplicate to scheduled journeys on the 715, 740 and 741. Seen here passing through Merrow on its way to Witley, for which no blind was available, RP25 carries a full complement of enthusiasts and displays Godalming instead. *Ramon Hefford*

It was planned to transfer the vehicle to GF so it could run to and from London via a 'traditional' route such as the 715, and also on a new commercial route to provide variety. Incidentally, a private tour could not be arranged, as this would involve using tachographs, so a duplicate operation was arranged. The date chosen, Saturday, 18th February 1984, was highly significant, as this was the same date as RP25's FFD expiry! This meant that it definitely would be the last ever RP passenger working with LCBS.

Staff at Reigate head office suggested re-applying Green Line fleetnames, producing a headboard, and reinstating the rear blind for the special day, and even assisted in supplying GF blinds (which did not include "741 Witley" as no panel for RP blinds was ever produced).

RP25 duly operated as a duplicate, with its special running number for that day only, GF81, to the following journeys:

740	0729	Guildford Cathedral – Victoria
741	0900	Victoria – Witley Star, (then empty to GF for drivers mealbreak)
715	1200	Guildford – Oxford Circus
715	1415	Oxford Circus – Guildford

Apart from the fact the RP had ineffective heaters and left late because it had to be jump started the journeys operated without incident, and included spirited runs down the A3 on the 740/1 at 70 mph. Many photographic stops were made in perfect sunny weather, and at the end of the run, the driver was presented with £13 after a whip-round amongst the enthusiast passengers.

So, the last RP ran into Guildford, and by the following week, it was on its way to join its sisters in Scotland, having already been sold to Rennie's two weeks before. At the time of writing (21st February 1984), the only RPs remaining in LCBS ownership were the three trainers (49, 50 and 87), and there are currently proposals to replace them with surplus LNBs.

Thus, the story of the RP is brought up to date. Before acknowledging all those people who have assisted me with this article, I should like to touch upon three features of RPs, which by their nature, would be inappropriate to include in the main text: blinds, seats and ticket machines.

Taking the last item first, all RPs from new were equipped with brackets for Setright machines and Cambist change dispensers. These were gradually phased out from the middle of the 1970s being replaced by Almex ticket machines and coin trays.

Blinds were carried front and rear in all RPs, and were of the standard Green Line display similar to that carried by the RFs, namely a large number and destination details in black on a yellow background with the heading "Green Line" in yellow on black on each panel. Some express routes (722, 724, 727, 732) had a different style, with a yellow number on a black background separated from the destination which was black on yellow. Short workings on express routes displayed yellow on black destination details. An experiment at WR was carried out during 1977 whereby blinds had normal Green Line panels for routes 704 and 705, and black on yellow "overlapping" bus style blinds for 725 and 726 displays. The SMA blinds were the reverse, i.e. they had

overlapping displays for 704 and 705. However WR did install some blinds in the wrong type of bus! Other garages received overlapping blinds gradually from this date for their RPs. The back blinds generally fell out of use during 1978/9. In 1980, London Country's blind manufacturer, King & Flack, closed down and so a variety of alternative manufacturers were tried. This resulted in more provincial-style blinds appearing in RPs, especially in the WY/GF areas. Since making appearances on various special services, RP blinds have been host to some interesting colour schemes. The rail-air link at RG had white letters on magenta, the 841 at HF had white on turquoise, the 339 Express had white on blue, while the "Not in Service" blind appeared on all new blinds made after July 1978 in black on white. Conversely, blinds made for SA during 1981 erroneously had the Green Line displays in white on black.

London Country now has its blinds made by MacKenna Brothers, and new RP blinds made for HA and WY for December 1982 and January 1983 are fairly close to the old LT style using Johnston lettering. Indeed the HA blind is quite colourful containing white on blue panels for 339 Express, black on yellow panels for 702, 712 and 724, black on white for a "Not in Service" panel and white on black displays for bus routes 201, 329, 338, 392, 393, 839, 840, a selection of 'T' routes, plus "Works Contract", "Private" and "Special Railway Service" panels.

The RP seats are also believed to have been adjusted in order to give a marginally better rake and leg room, although it has been difficult to find official records. Certain RPs were noted with adjusted seats during 1974 and 1975, but most were noted during 1976/7. They included the following vehicles: 3, 4, 5, 7, 12, 16, 23, 24, 26, 31, 32, 38, 39, 40, 41, 45, 46, 54, 55, 56, 57, 70, 71, 76, 78, 79, 88 and 90. If anyone has any further information about other modifications to RPs, I would be grateful to hear from readers.

The RPs were a common sight on Green Line routes crossing London and the Home Counties for the first few years of their lives, but when they appeared on bus routes, their scope of operation increased and RPs could be seen on almost any route operated by their parent garage. For the record, these were, at one time or another, CY, DG, DS, GF, HA, HF, HG, HH, LH, NF, RE, RG, SA, ST, SV, WR and WY.

In conclusion, I would like to thank colleagues at London Country for their help with this article, especially Nigel Gray, Guy Brigden, Kevin Hawkins, Neil Sadler of the Traffic Planning Office, Gerry Evans and Alan Younge of the Schedules Office, Paul Evans of the Publicity Office, the girls of Engineering Records, and Shena Lumsden, for patiently typing the original manuscript.



Rennies of Dunfermline have purchased fourteen RPs from London Country. Most are in their white livery and RPs 74, 5 and 41 are seen at their yard, RP5 still carrying LCBS livery when this shot was taken. *Ramon Hefford*



RP76 subsequently passed from Ensigns to Stoniers of Goldenhill. It now carries a red and white livery and is seen here in Dawlish Drive, Bentilee on 11th September 1982. *Peter Murray*

Appendix to The Story of the RP

RP	Delivery Date	Entered Service At	Disposal Date	Subsequent Owner	Notes
1	11/71	SA	1/83	Wombwell Diesels	
2	11/71	SA	6/83	N.W. Cowland, Rochester	
3	11/71	RG	1/83	Wombwell Diesels	
4	11/71	RG	2/84	Rennie's of Dunfermline	
5	11/71	RG	7/83	Rennie's of Dunfermline	k
6	11/71	RG	6/83	Rennie's of Dunfermline	a
7	12/71	RG	7/83	Rennie's of Dunfermline	
8	12/71	SA	7/83	Wombwell Diesels	
9	12/71	SA	7/79	Wombwell Diesels	
10	12/71	SA	1/83	Wombwell Diesels	
11	12/71	RE	5/83	Rennie's of Dunfermline	
12	12/71	RE	12/81	C.F. Booths	
13	12/71	RE	1/83	Wombwell Diesels	
14	12/71	RE	9/83	Stuart Johnson, Harthill, Sheffield	
15	12/71	RE	7/83	Rennie's of Dunfermline	
16	12/71	RE	7/83	Wombwell Diesels	
17	12/71	RE	1/83	Wombwell Diesels	
18	12/71	RE	6/83	P. Slaughter, Morden	
19	12/71	RE	7/79	Wombwell Diesels	
20	12/71	RE	5/83	Rennie's of Dunfermline	a
21	12/71	RE	1/83	Garbutt, Horley	
22	12/71	RE	2/84	Wombwell Diesels	
23	12/71	RE	6/83	Rennie's of Dunfermline	j l
24	12/71	RE	2/84	Wombwell Diesels	
25	12/71	RE	2/84	Rennie's of Dunfermline	
26	12/71	HF	12/81	C.F. Booths	
27	12/71	HF	7/83	Rennie's of Dunfermline	l
28	12/71	HF	7/83	Wombwell Diesels	
29	12/71	HF	2/84	Wombwell Diesels	
30	12/71	HF	9/83	Stuart Johnson, Harthill, Sheffield	
31	1/72	HF	1/83	Wombwell Diesels	
32	1/72	SV	9/83	Stuart Johnson, Harthill, Sheffield	
33	1/72	SV	6/83	Chapman & Wentworth-Bowyers, Croydon	
34	1/72	SV	2/81	C.F. Booths	
35	1/72	SV	12/81	C.F. Booths	
36	1/72	SV	2/84	Wombwell Diesels	
37	1/72	HA	7/79	Wombwell Diesels	
38	1/72	HA	7/79	Wombwell Diesels	
39	1/72	HA	6/83	Rennie's of Dunfermline	
40	1/72	HA	1/83	Chapman & Wentworth-Bowyers, Croydon	
41	1/72	HA	12/79	Cranes & Commercials, Southampton	b
42	1/72	ST	2/84	Wombwell Diesels	
43	1/72	ST	5/83	Rennie's of Dunfermline	
44	1/72	ST	9/83	Stuart Johnson, Harthill, Sheffield	
45	1/72	ST	4/80	Ensigns	c
46	1/72	ST	4/80	Ensigns	
47	1/72	WY	9/83	Stuart Johnson, Harthill, Sheffield	
48	1/72	WY	1/80	C.F. Booths	
49	2/72	WY			DGt
50	2/72	WY			HGt
51	2/72	WY	5/80	Cranes & Commercial, Southampton	b
52	2/72	WY	4/80	6th Newtonwards Sea Scouts, N.I.	d
53	2/72	WY	9/83	Stuart Johnson, Harthill, Sheffield	l
54	2/72	WY	6/83	Chapman & Wentworth-Bowyers, Croydon	
55	2/72	WR	5/80	Cranes & Commercials, Southampton	b

RP	Delivery Date	Entered Service At	Disposal Date	Subsequent Owner	Notes
56	2/72	WR	2/81	C.F. Booths	
57	2/72	WR	8/81	C.F. Booths	
58	2/72	WR	8/81	C.F. Booths	
59	2/72	WR	3/80	Ensigns	c
60	2/72	WR	8/81	C.F. Booths	
61	2/72	WR	7/79	Wombwell Diesels	
62	2/72	WR	8/81	C.F. Booths	
63	3/72	WR	1/80	C.F. Booths	
64	3/72	DG	2/81	C.F. Booths	
65	3/72	DG	4/80	Ensigns	e
66	3/72	DG	4/80	Ensigns	
67	3/72	DG	8/81	C.F. Booths	
68	3/72	DG	2/81	C.F. Booths	
69	3/72	DG	7/79	Wombwell Diesels	
70	3/72	DG	8/81	C.F. Booths	b
71	3/72	DG	1/80	Allmey of Eastcote	
72	3/72	DG	9/80	C.F. Booths	b
73	3/72	SV	1/83	Wombwell Diesels	
74	3/72	HG	5/83	Rennie's of Dunfermline	
75	3/72	HG	2/81	C.F. Booths	
76	3/72	HG	3/80	Ensigns	f
77	3/72	HG	2/81	C.F. Booths	
78	3/72	HG	2/81	C.F. Booths	
79	3/72	HG	3/80	Kirkby Kingsforth	c
80	4/72	HG	8/81	C.F. Booths	
81	4/72	HG	4/80	Ensigns	
82	4/72	HG	2/81	C.F. Booths	
83	4/72	GF	3/80	Ensigns	g
84	4/72	GF	5/83	Rennie's of Dunfermline	h
85	4/72	GF	4/80	Ensigns	g
86	4/72	GF	2/81	C.F. Booths	
87	4/72	GF			WYt
88	4/72	GF	8/81	C.F. Booths	
89	4/72	GF	12/81	C.F. Booths	
90	4/72	GF	8/81	C.F. Booths	b

Notes:

- a - then to Orr, Glasgow on loan from Blythswood (Dealer).
b - then to Smiths of Reading (RP70 for spares only).
c - then to Berresfords of Cheddleton.
d - then to Bourke of Toomyvarra, Co. Tipperary.
e - then to Wards of Epping, but scrapped by 6/82 by Eyres, Brentwood.
f - then to Stoniers of Goldenhill.
g - then to Rosemary Coaches (Dack), Terrington St. Clement
h - then to Farrell, Glasgow.
j - then to Sturrock, Methil.
k - then to Blythswood, Glasgow.
l - then to Heart of England Services, Water Orton.

Odd Men Out in North and West

Right The 45 has again become a regular haunt for RMLs from Holloway such as RML2629 in last summer's sunshine at Battersea. However, the 4 has always been one of the rarer users of RMLs but this chance shot of RML2413 in Holloway shows that they do occasionally happen.
Colin Stannard



Below At Uxbridge, Metrobuses are now scheduled to work certain duties on the 98 and 204 where LSs are inadequate. Until this time, they did put in odd appearances and M976 is seen in Uxbridge on the 98 while during last autumn M384 was captured in Hayes. It is rather surprising that these routes have not been fully converted to M operation by now. *Colin Fradd/Colin Stannard*





Even now, Metrobuses appear on the 117, and on 3rd April M264 with wrongly fitted side blind heads for '117 Brentford' in Hounslow. *Colin Fradd*. Other Leyland National routes in the Hounslow area have seen the use of Ms from time to time. The 81 was one of the rarer workings and leafy Colnbrook is the setting for M380 last summer. *Colin Stannard*. The use of Ms on the 203 ceased after revised schedules were introduced and buses were jointly worked with the 116. An earlier shot taken in January 1983 at Brentford shows the 203 arriving from Staines. *Paul Dabrowski*. Not so unusual was the local 257, M167 showing how both the via and destination blinds can be used to advantage. *Colin Stannard*



Letters to the Editor

Photograph appeal

Sir,

Let me say how much I enjoyed 'The Story of 1958' in LBM 46.

I understand that the Autumn issue was delayed because of the search for suitable photographs and obviously in one or two cases it has been necessary to use views of much later or earlier date than 1958, or to use shots the blind details of which are not clear as on page 29.

This would seem to be a good occasion to make an appeal for help with the project upon which we are engaged to catalogue all the photographs taken of London buses in service. The work is well under way, although probably it will never be 100% complete. Most of the well-known photographers have already provided a great deal of help or indeed are continuing to do so. However, more help is needed in several ways.

A lot of enthusiasts have taken photographs over the years who do not wish to get involved in the commercial sale and production of photographs. Nonetheless everyone who takes photographs has recorded a small portion of London's history, and often these include rare workings and unusual shots. Some of the more common workings of the past have seemed to have escaped the camera too. If you have taken some reasonable quality photographs which you think could add to our catalogue for the archives then please write to me stating the details. Generally the latest period in which we are interested is up to about ten years ago.

The further back we go the more sparse become the records, and even one or two war-time or pre-war shots may be of enormous value. It is especially important that we do not delay with these earlier times before valuable negatives and prints are lost. It may be that an elderly relative has a few worthwhile pictures; old postcards, books and newspapers can often be of use so a wet day spent in the library can uncover fascinating results. Some areas have local history societies which include records of early transport. I have been very pleased with my researches in the Ilford area, but hard work needs to be done Borough by Borough.

I would like to make it clear that by inclusion in the catalogue no rights are taken. Copyright remains with the photographer, and the payment of any fees should the photograph be published; and this only with the copyright holder's permission. Names and addresses will not be divulged to casual enquirers nor will enthusiasts be supplied with prints. However, for research or the illustration of an article the search for suitable material should be made that bit more easy.

All letters will be answered (eventually.)

Yours faithfully,
Malcolm E. Papes

(Photographic Registrar Omnibus Society)
30 Merlin Grove,
Tomswood Hill,
Hainault,
Ilford, Essex IG6 2QX

The Doctor's Little Blue Bus

Sir,

Congratulations to Chris Johnson for his potted history of Thames Weald. There is, however, one error of date and I hope he will permit me to correct it through your letters column.

At the foot of page 32 he states that the Saturday West Kingsdown-Sevenoaks service, plus the diversions via Romney Street and Hever Road, were all introduced from 4th January 1964. This is not so—only the Hever Road diversion was effective from that date. The Romney Street diversion was added from Thursday 25th May 1963, and the Saturday service commenced on 25th May 1963, as set out in "Thames Weald Traveller" No. 8.

Yours faithfully,

Derek Persson

Enfield, Middlesex.

The Chiswick Gala

Sir,

Since the Chiswick Gala in July there have been several references in the enthusiasts' press regarding the appearance of RM5 at this event. As these have tended to be rather un-informed perhaps I could set the record straight.

The decision to display RMs 1 to 8 at the Gala was taken some weeks in advance of the event. However, two days before the event we were informed that RM5 would be unable to attend. We now had a problem, because it was fairly well-known that the display had been planned, and RMs 6, 7 and 8 were still coming. We had two options, and only a few hours to make a decision. It was thought that an incomplete display was unacceptable for a Golden Jubilee event, so a substitute had to be found. RM555 was therefore chosen and renumbered RM5. It looked authentic, and for the majority of visitors to Chiswick the display was complete.

The Chiswick Gala was a success due to the hard work and enthusiasm of the organisers and a small band of helpers. If any bus enthusiast feels cheated, deceived, or otherwise hard done by, this is unfortunate but it really is too bad. I believe that the right decision was made at the time, and I make no apologies. I hope that as the facts are now known correspondence on this matter will cease.

Yours faithfully,

S.M. Kaye

London Buses

Abbey District

Editor's note: Presumably the work was carried out at Chiswick to avoid running a vehicle with false registration plates on the road.

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TELEPHONE: NEWICK 2370

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VICTORIA—Buckingham Palace Road	09.35	MERSTHAM—Feathers	10.41
CLAPHAM COMMON—Station	09.48	REDHILL—High Street	10.47
STREATHAM COMMON—opp. Bus Garage	10.00	EARLSWOOD—Nags Head	10.53
THORNTON HEATH—opp. Granada	10.07	HORLEY—Post Office	11.00
WEST CROYDON—Bus Station	10.15	GATWICK AIRPORT	11.09
CROYDON—Fairfield Halls	10.18	THREE BRIDGES STATION—Hazelwick Avenue	11.16
PURLEY—Cross Roads	10.28	CRAWLEY—Bus Station	11.20
ARRIVE SHEFFIELD PARK STATION—Bluebell Railway			12.00

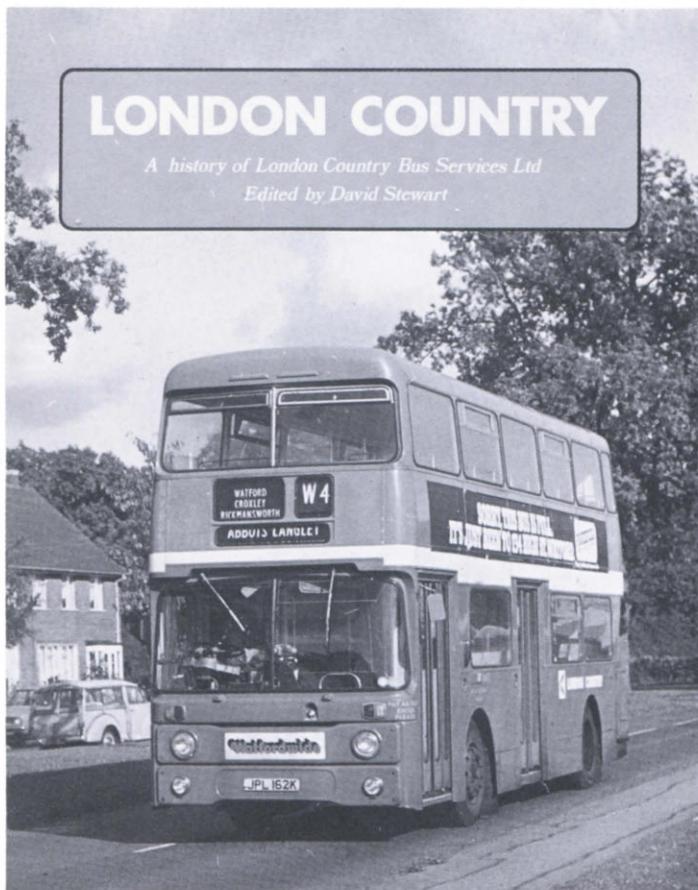
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