

Kithead News

Newsletter of The Kithead Trust



Victoria Coach Station in all its glory, with a Standerwick Burlingham bodied Leyland PS1 just departing for Blackpool.

In this issue:

- A major update for our online search engine
- Victoria Coach Station 85th Anniversary celebrations
- The Directors come knocking at COMS
- That 1 in 4 climb up Shap....

The Directors' Visit

We are cataloguing one of our largest collections – City of Oxford Motor Services or COMS as it is commonly known. Within this collection, there are programmes for several Directors' Visits to the company up to the 1960s. In those times, the directors were rather distant characters, and none would be based at the company itself but at regional or national headquarters.

The visit of 15th and 16th April 1969 is particularly interesting because it falls in the period immediately following the creation of the National Bus Company in 1969, but before things got rather corporate.

THE
CITY OF OXFORD
MOTOR SERVICES, LIMITED

DIRECTORS'
TOUR

15th & 16th April
1969

THE CITY OF OXFORD MOTOR SERVICES LIMITED

DIRECTORS' TOUR 1969

List of duties for Mr. Watts with Manager's car DFL 648D

Monday, 14th April, 1969

1400 onwards To be available at 395 Cowley Road as required.
1815 Meet three Directors (Mr. Deacon, Mr. Skyrme, Mr. Yorke) at Oxford Station and convey them to Randolph Hotel.
To be available if required during Monday evening at the Randolph Hotel.

Tuesday, 15th April, 1969

0845 To be at Melville Hotel to take Manager to Cowley Road Offices.
0900 - 0945 To be available at 395 Cowley Road as required.
1020 Meet two Directors (Mr. Bowles, Mr. Glassborow) at Oxford Station and convey them direct to Cowley Road Offices (Board Meeting in Conference Room). Then take Mr. Bowles' and Mr. Glassborow's luggage to Randolph Hotel.
1400 - 1830 To follow Directors' Tour coach route to Randolph Hotel.
1858 Meet one Director (Mr. Pattison) at Oxford Station and convey him to Randolph Hotel for Dinner.
2130 To be available at Randolph Hotel to convey senior officials home after Dinner.

Wednesday, 16th April, 1969

0830 To be at Melville Hotel to take Manager to Cowley Road Offices.
0900 - 1730 To follow Directors' Tour coach route (please ensure that luggage of Mr. Glassborow, Mr. Bowles, Mr. Yorke, Mr. Pattison is collected from Randolph Hotel at 0920 as they will be leaving from Didcot Station).

Thursday, 17th April, 1969

0825 Pick up Manager at the Melville Hotel.
0835 To be at Randolph Hotel to take Mr. Deacon to Oxford Station for the 0855 train.
0900 - 1240 To be available if required for Mr. Skyrme, who will be travelling on 1240 train from Oxford Station.

The company's chief officer, the Manager, typically would not be a director but would attend board meetings where his (and they were all men) reports would be discussed.

The Directors' Visit was a very special event, and the programmes were worked out in very great detail in advance – the exact timings of visits, the menus and the wines which were offered at each meal.

There is a great deal of social and statistical history here: for example, the mileage operated by each depot or "dormy shed", who was in charge, how many vehicles etc.

Directors' Visit 2

THE CITY OF OXFORD MOTOR SERVICES LIMITED

TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT - COWLEY ROAD

Traffic Manager	- Mr. A. J. Price
Assistant Traffic Manager	- Mr. W. Price
Traffic Superintendent	- Mr. G. Dunlop
Assistant Traffic Superintendent	- Mr. E. J. Walters
Chief Inspector	- Mr. R. Wakefield
Traffic Trainees	- Mr. N. J. R. Taylor - Mr. D. Humphrey
Rota Clerks	- Mr. G. Pritchard - Mr. A. Louch - Mr. G. T. Buller - Mr. G. E. Pinner
Ticket Office Clerks	- Mr. A. Morris - Mr. F. Hulbert - Mrs. B. Hillard - Mr. F. Treadwell
Schedules Officer	- Mr. A. Taylor
Assistants	- Mr. D. Cooper - Mr. R. Quinlan - Mr. R. Fancutt
Traffic Clerk (Licensing)	- Mr. J. Atkinson
Staff Supervisor	- Mr. R. Sherred
Welfare Officer	- Mrs. W. R. Hiles, M.B.E.
Canteen Manager	- Mr. E. Booth
(7 staff at Cowley Road, 3 staff at Gloucester Green)	
Typists:-	
Secretary to Traffic Manager	- Miss V. Stewart
Traffic Department Typist	- Mrs. P. A. McGlynn
Staff Supervisor's Typist (part time)	- Mrs. S. A. Griffin
Traffic Superintendent's Typist	- Mrs. L. A. G. Gibbons

The programme for the visit shows the staff list for all office staff in Cowley Road, and one of the named is Traffic Trainee David Humphrey, who to forge a highly successful career in the industry and who became Managing Director of London United when it was privatised out of London Buses. David takes up the story:

I do remember clearly that Directors' visit. We were instructed to have just one piece of work on our desks, and to be ready to be seen to be working on that piece of work when the Directors breezed in.

I had a Country running board half written out sitting in front of me for about half an hour!

And my desk was the one right in front of the door, but facing away from the door. Every time the door opened behind me I started to "work", then stopped when I realised that it was someone else who had entered. In they eventually came, each of us stood up and was introduced in turn, they muttered amongst themselves, asked Alan Price a few questions, then proceeded to the next destination. Big fuss about nothing of use.

Their visits to the Dormy Sheds at Wallingford, Watlington, and Great Milton must have been fascinating: at the times of their visits all the buses would be out on service. But they would be more interested in the properties anyway. 10 minutes to "inspect" the big depots at Bicester, Witney, etc, they must have really drilled down into the detail! No doubt the Inspectors in charge (I can call them all to mind, along with most of the Leading Drivers, since they called in to the Traffic Office on a more or less weekly basis) had to have their desks clear and to remain standing to attention. The menus are nicely dated - and they didn't exactly starve!

The images reproduced here simply don't do justice to the document. We are experimenting with giving access to more material so you can see the whole thing at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/131388252@N05/albums/72157680029711451>

As you can see by searching our online catalogue at www.kitheadtrustdatabase.org.uk we have this type of document for Hants & Dorset, Midland Red, Northern General, Thames Valley and Trent.

The production values of the 1969 COMS volume are very modest – some of the others are leather bound!

Alan Mills 1931-2017



Very sadly, one of our longest-serving trustees, Alan Mills, passed away last month after a short illness, a few days after his 86th birthday.

Alan was probably best known for his long-serving stewardship of the Omnibus Society Library and Archive. It was his vision and leadership which established the Library on a firm footing first at Coalbrookdale and then at Walsall. Discussions were underway about working closer with the Kithead Trust when his final illness sadly overtook him.

His work with the OS and also with the PSV Circle was instrumental in the publication of many of the now-familiar Fleet History series, and Alan's knowledge of bus and coach operations was legendary.

A school teacher by profession, Alan served as Headteacher of Shire Oak School in Walsall from 1973 until his retirement in 1990.

Our thoughts go to his widow Avril, and children Mark and Heather.

Comments and Corrections

How high?

The delightful photograph, or rather the caption, on the front of the December issue caused a bit of a stir.



We boldly repeated the message typed on a label on the rear of the original - that the vehicle travelled 16 miles of a 1 in 4 gradient. Both Philip Battersby and Sholto Thomas pointed out that a simple calculation reveals that this would make it the first ADC at the height of Mount Everest! Red faces all round – and perhaps fake news isn't so new after all....

And that shopping message



Bob Kell points out that, although the East Yorkshire MS appeal to "ladies of leisure" is hardly PC, it conveys a serious message: "During WW2 when buses, staff and fuel were in short supply, there was a lot of publicity for "non-essential" travel to be carried out before "workers' travel. People could get pretty resentful". Good point.

Major update to our online database



UK Bus Archive

Welcome to the search facility for our UK Bus Archive. This is the initial phase, which lists records which originated with bus operating companies.

The listing will be updated monthly, and will eventually incorporate records from manufacturers and local authorities.

15 February 2017: A significant update with an additional 5,400 listings. The database now includes detailed listings for Potteries and Midland Red.

Some of the listings are very detailed – these are at 'item' level – where we have listed out every file for that entity. Other listings are more general – at 'series' level – where the list is of a series of files. Our aim is to have all the listings completed to item level as soon as practicable.

How to use the search engine

Simply type in keywords and a listing will be returned showing what material we have on a particular subject. The more words you use, the narrower the search will be.

Show 10 entries

ACC NO	TITLE	CREATOR	DATE A	DATE B	EXTENT	LEVEL
22431	Licence application TNR12/69 Transcription of public hearing, file 1.	Traffic Commissioner for the Metropolitan Traffic Commissioners.	1967	1967	1 folder	Item
22432	Licence application TNR12/69 Transcription of public hearing, file 2.	Traffic Commissioner for the Metropolitan Traffic Commissioners.	1967	1967	1 folder	Item
22433	Licence application TNR12/69 Transcription of public hearing, file 3.	Traffic Commissioner for the Metropolitan Traffic Commissioners.	1967	1967	1 folder	Item

It's taken a little while to get this right but we can now announce a major update to our online searchable database at www.kitheadtrustdatabase.org.uk.

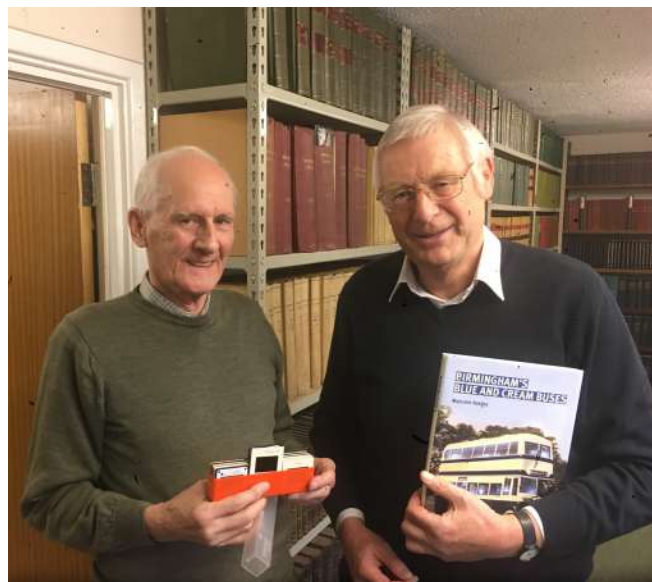
The number of entries has grown from 8,400 to 13,800 in a year. This is partly as a result of two of our larger collections, Potteries and Midland Red now being included. The search engine will be integrated into our main website at a later date; at the moment it requires a little time to download before use so please be patient.

There will be a further update in early May, when operators for which we have a small amount of information will be uploaded, and also municipal operators.

Archivist Philip Kirk said: "the hard work put into this project by our volunteers is a marvel. We are seeing more than 100 additional lines of cataloguing appear every month. I would like to thank personally everyone involved in this great team effort."

Malcolm's Blue and Cream and read allover

Well-known author Malcolm Keeley (below, right) called in to thank Kithead for supplying a number of images for his excellent book *Birmingham's Blue and Cream Buses*.



He particularly thanked long-serving volunteer and trustee Derek Potter (left) who had supplied images from his personal collection.

Malcolm's book is highly recommended, and is available from major booksellers.



Victoria Coach Station

85th Anniversary

We were delighted to work with Colin Billington and Peter Delaney of the Thames Valley and Great Western Omnibus Trust (TV&GWOT) in supporting Transport for London's celebration of 85 years since the opening of Victoria Coach Station. The Kithead Trust holds the archive of London Coastal Coaches and Victoria Coach Station up to NBC days, and so we were able to provide the majority of images for a splendid TV&GWOT publication which can be obtained from: www.tvagwot.org.uk/event-victoria2017.htm Here, we show just a few of the images used.



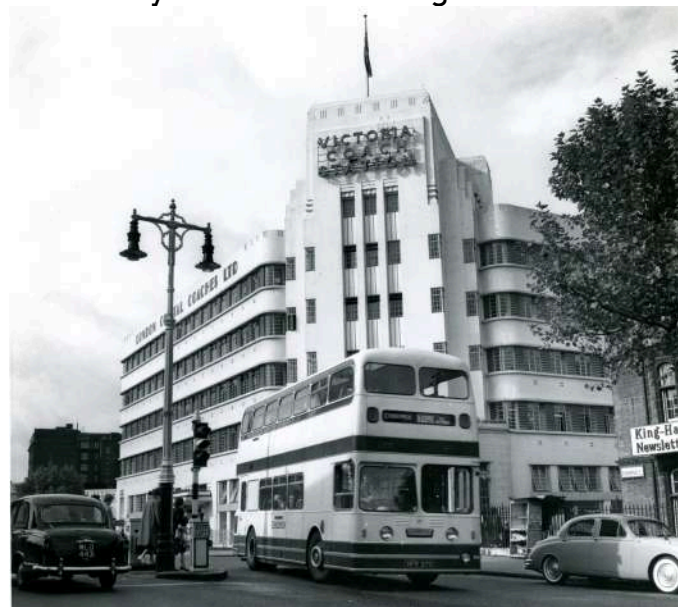
The days before VCS – a Royal Blue ADC leads the line out of Lupus Street coach station.



The chart room, where, in pre-computer days, every single booking for every journey was entered by hand on a bookings chart.



A splendid night shot with Royal Blue and Maidstone & District coaches.



A Ribble 'Gay Hostess' Leyland Atlantean leaves for the north-west.

More from the Hodgetts Collection



Here we have LNER 6843, a Z4 class 0-4-2T at Kittybrewster Shed in 1937. It was one of two similar machines built in 1915 for the Great North of Scotland Railway by Manning, Wardle & Co of Leeds. It was used in the docks of Aberdeen until withdrawn in the 1950s and finally scrapped in 1960. Another fine example of the photography of Hodgetts in our collection.



Following our publication of the photo (left) of the Caledonian Railway engine in our last edition, Tony Walmsley writes to point out a slight error and give some useful information:

“The number is actually 123 (the numeral ‘1’ is hidden by the pipe on the buffer beam). The loco was the only one of its type built and is now preserved in the Glasgow Riverside Museum.”

Thanks, Tony.

...and finally...

Kithead Trustee and former Midland Red stalwart Paul Addenbrooke writes to give a little more information on the Santa Claus photo in our December edition (right). "The man on the left is Eric Tuff, one time Chief Engineer at BMMO. The young chap in the middle looks a bit like me but it isn't!"



John Howie is seeking source information to further his research into "The Role of the Bus Dealer". In particular, he would like to make contact with anyone who was employed in the activity plus the location of any original records of dealers or bus company records related to vehicle disposals. If you can help, please contact John direct at 37, Balcombe Gardens, Horley, RH6 9BY or email mygg37@tiscali.co.uk.

Are You Signed Up?

If you didn't receive this direct from us and you would like to receive the newsletter on a regular basis, simply email us at hello@kitheadtrust.org.uk with "Newsletter Subscribe" in the subject line. We guarantee that we will only use your email address to promote the Trust and we won't disclose it to anyone else.

Why not pay us a visit?

We are open Wednesdays and Thursdays each week from 10am to 4pm (and some other days and times by arrangement). Please book your place in the Search Room by emailing hello@kitheadtrust.org.uk

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