

Bob Mockford

Hold Tight!

The story of a sixteen year
journey



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A bus conductor's memories

In September 1967, at the age of 18, I found myself desperately looking for work for the second time that year and for the fourth time since leaving school in 1965.

With no qualifications and no career path, with parents who would not support me, I decided that I would try to get a job as a postman, at least temporarily.

In the event, I ended up in the bus station and without thinking I asked if they had any vacancies. This random act would change my life completely.

This is the story of my journey, a journey which took me to new places and introduced me to new experiences. A journey which made me a very different person.

Like a lot of people, I went 'on the buses' while I sorted out a proper job. Like a lot of people, I stayed much longer than intended.

A busman's life wasn't all fun but there was something about the job which was different, something which made it almost addictive.

Above all, it allowed me to break free and grow. For this it became one of the most important periods of my life.

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What's this all about?

I worked as a bus conductor from October 1967 until June 1983. Like many people at the time, I had come to the job looking for something temporary and got hooked. It was a job that is now hard to describe. In part this is because, except in London, conductors have become extinct but it is also because the times have changed so much.

Being a bus conductor, or a driver for that matter, was unlike most other occupations. Although there were rules and regulations to observe, with an army of inspectors ready to catch you if you did not, you spent most of your time working unsupervised. There was always the prospect of something out of the ordinary happening and if today it failed to do so there were plenty of passengers to liven up the journey.

Most of the companies and corporations which used to operate our buses have now vanished or been absorbed into a few nationwide groups. The variety of once familiar liveries and vehicle designs is now the domain of enthusiasts who preserve and display this part of our heritage. Maybe at some point in the future today's buses will be remembered with the same kind of nostalgia but, like vintage cars or steam engines, there is something distinctive about the kind of bus that needed two people to run it.

This is the story of my small and, for most of the time at least, enjoyable part in this history. Starting with the Hants and Dorset company in Winchester and ending with the City Transport Department in Southampton, I travelled all over southern Hampshire in my work and made trips around Europe during my time off. The journey from teenager to mature (?) thirty-something begins and ends with a crisis. But what to make of the bit in between?

I do not pretend that these pages contain a definitive history but rather give a flavour of the job and the times. Some of the information about operators, routes and locations is from (a possibly defective) memory and is hard to verify after all these years. Where possible, links have been supplied to other sites which may prove helpful.

It has not been possible to include everything that happened over the sixteen years in this short history. All the stories are true but, to respect people's privacy, some of the details have been left out.

I had a great time working on the buses, a job I could happily still be doing today if that had been possible. Writing this account of my adventures and misadventures has given me the chance to relive some of the best bits. I hope you too will find the journey interesting.

The first chapter describes how I came to apply for the job, one that I had never considered before. After that, the journey begins as I learn the ropes and use the job to move away and to travel more widely.

This is not just about me.

This story spans sixteen years of my life, during this time of course I met many people. Most were nice to me, a few for whatever reason felt they could not be and to this latter minority I can at last say what I was not allowed to back then: Who gives a xxxx? In any event they were all interesting in one way or another but some I remember more fondly than others.

There was of course Jack 'Bunny' Austin at Winchester, one of the first conductors to take this eighteen-year-old trainee under his wing. At almost seventy years of age he still had a smile and a cheery word for everyone.

At the other end of my career, although not quite the last driver I worked with but certainly one of the easiest, Dave Logan on Southampton City Transport.

But if I had to choose one person who summed up the experience of working 'on the buses' in the 60s and 70s it would have to be Freddie Wheeler.

A long serving driver on Hants & Dorset Woolston depot he came over to Southampton when Woolston was closed. He showed me that work should be fun and you don't have to be young to be a rebel. And his wife too who, finding a double decker bus parked outside her house in the middle of the afternoon and Freddie and me taking an unauthorised break, made us a cup of tea as if it was the most natural thing in the world.

Freddie, wherever you are now, remember this: I know you read the notice telling everyone to avoid Titchfield. But of course you wanted to see the carnival

Of course there were drivers who threw the conductor around the bus, taking corners too fast or braking sharply. There were those who couldn't pull up properly at a bus stop, leaving the conductor to take the abuse from the passengers. I spent a long period with one driver who never left the cab and so didn't care if I missed my breaks. But most of the time drivers and conductors worked well together.

When I passed the eleven-plus exam I did not expect a new bike like other kids. Indeed I never did get a bike and was not taught to ride one. What I got was a roasting, I was going to cost my parents money and this would never do. Doing well was something I was supposed to avoid. Like the contest we had in the family to guess the licence number of our new car. I won but that could not be allowed so I was disqualified on the grounds that I had looked at other cars and had therefore cheated. My parents tried to get me out of school at fifteen years old so I could earn money for them and not gain any qualifications. I think this was what my mother feared most, the idea that I might do well. In the event I stayed at school until I was sixteen, passing six O'Levels which was more than enough to take A'Levels and possibly continue to university. This was never going to be an option, I would have to leave school and find work. I finished school on a Friday and started work on the following Monday.

My home life and the lack of support from my parents made keeping a job difficult and I lost three in the first two years. I was in danger of achieving exactly what they had wanted for me, failure. No money, no home. My parents had to have their money, I had to find a job. I decided on a radical change of direction, I would be a postman.

Fate takes a hand.

I was used to walking. While I was at school I seldom had much money and when I did I tried not to waste it on bus fares. So the idea of becoming a postman was not all that strange. Of course I had not considered the weight of the mailbag or the cold, wet winter mornings. I had no idea if I would even be given the job but I set off for the city centre ready to give it a go.

At that time I lived in Winchester near the prison. Our neighbours included police officers and prison warders. If I had not considered either of these professions it was probably because I had not been encouraged at any point to think about my future or to plan a career. Until I was seven years old we had lived in Eastleigh which was a railway town. If we had stayed there I would quite possibly have looked to the railways for work. I did not have any wish to be a train driver but did at one time like the idea of being a guard.

My mother's father spent a lifetime in the railway works, first in Ashford and then from the 1930s in Eastleigh. My great, great grandfather, John Ware, had been a driver for the London Chatham and Dover Railway (LCDR). In June 1884 he and his fireman were killed when they ran into the rear of a stationary train at Deal in Kent. The company was criticised for having outdated signals showing a white light for clear instead of green but a signalman was held to blame for the accident.

Anyway, I headed for the bus stop. Why was I going to catch the bus and not walk? I have absolutely no idea. The fact that I did was to change my life for ever. The main road near my home was served by the local King Alfred bus company. This was the country's only privately owned city bus service.

Longer distance buses were run by Hants and Dorset, Wilts and Dorset and Aldershot and District. These three companies used the bus station while King Alfred buses stopped outside in the Broadway.

King Alfred routes 4, 4a, 6 and 16 operated along Romsey Road with just one bus each hour on the joint Hants and Dorset, Wilts and Dorset 66 service. If I had caught any of the King Alfred buses I would have got off in the Broadway and walked round the corner to the post office.

The first bus to arrive was a 66.

If you don't ask, you don't get.

My grandparents on my father's side of the family lived in the country. Their home was in the village of Shedfield, near Southampton. Until we had our first car, the only way to visit was by bus. Among my earliest memories are some of the journeys, including changing buses at Bishop's Waltham in the days when we still lived in Eastleigh. I also remember that the buses on local services in Eastleigh were of an old style with the upstairs gangway on one side and long seats right across the rest of the upper deck. The buses we caught to visit Shedfield were usually of a newer design and seemed much smoother and faster. The favourite place to sit was of course the front seat upstairs where you could pretend to be driving.

After our move to Winchester the buses I caught most often were the local King Alfred services. Their buses were very different, not least because they often had hardboard in the windows instead of glass. There never seemed to be enough buses either, squeezing three people to a seat or standing squashed together were quite normal. Some of the routes were operated with single deck vehicles but they all had conductors. However, with the traffic in the city centre often at a stand-still, it was sometimes just as easy to walk home as take the bus.

As a child, bus conductors, like all grown-ups, had always appeared to be quite old. In some cases they probably were but by the time I was eighteen I had noticed that some of them seemed to be about my age. When I decided to apply to the Post Office I had thought that working on the buses might be an alternative if I was turned down. Like being a postman, I had no real idea of what the job involved or whether I was likely to be taken on.

The journey from Romsey Road to the bus station only took about fifteen minutes. The bus swung round to pull up at its stand ready to load up for the next departure. As I got off I was facing the inspectors' office and without thinking any more about it, I walked in and asked if they had any vacancies.

The answer was 'yes'.

The conductor's job was to ensure that the passengers got on and off safely at each stop, to tell the driver when it was safe to start (after checking that it was time to leave), to walk around the bus collecting fares and issuing tickets, and to signal the driver when someone wanted to get off.

Bus work involved working shifts, sometimes starting early in the morning, sometimes finishing late at night. When I started, we still worked six days each week with Saturday afternoon, Sunday and Bank Holidays paying extra.

In the next few weeks I would find out more about all of this but for now all that mattered was that I had a new job.

Two arms, two legs - you'll do!

Along with the employment application form was another form to apply for a conductor's licence. This required two referees, fifteen shillings for the licence and two shillings and sixpence deposit for the numbered badge which I would have to wear while on duty. There was also a medical to take but this was paid for by the company.

I think getting to the medical was a test to see if I scared easily. The depot superintendent drove me to the doctor's in his company car and tried his best to frighten me. It worked. As we pulled out at Bitterne Park Triangle, I opened my eyes to find we were still in one piece but my future boss looked as though his eyes were still shut.

The medical itself was straightforward enough with the usual checks for arms, legs and blood pressure and of course the mandatory sample. But the doctor also suggested I have my toes broken and reset to straighten them, the damage having been caused by not getting new shoes often enough while I was growing. I felt I had suffered enough for one day and decided to leave them as they were.

The next step was to collect my first uniform. This consisted of heavy black serge jacket with white cuffs and gold piping, trousers of the same material, a long equally heavy raincoat, a hat with conductor's badge and two lapel badges. The whole uniform was one size too big and very uncomfortable to work in, particularly in warm weather.

In the summer we were issued with light jackets but the trousers would turn your legs black as you sweated. The hat was to be worn at all times except when collecting fares. I have never liked wearing anything on my head and this hat, padded with newspaper to make it fit, would be donated to Guy Fawkes as soon as the rule was abolished.

With all the formalities completed that Friday, I was told to report at nine o'clock the following Monday morning. What I had let myself in for I had no idea and I would have to wait through the weekend to find out. In fact it would take sixteen years!



Where am I? What's happening?

Monday the second of October 1967, a date inscribed forever in the elaborate hand of the depot superintendent on the inside of the front cover of my Hants and Dorset rule book along with the number 743 which was also on my clock card. The rule book, now battered from spending years at the bottom of my ticket box, covers every aspect of a driver or conductor's working day. I was also given a timetable and a set of fare charts plus five shillings float (so that I could give change to the first passengers before I had collected enough fares), to be paid back when I left.

A brief tour of the depot and offices was followed by a long wait in the canteen while it was decided what should be done with me. The canteen was run by the staff social club and had a snooker table. There was a small group in one corner playing cards, several people eating, drinking tea or smoking. The ones in a hurry did all of these at the same time.

It seemed a completely alien world, the more so because I had no idea what any of them were talking about. Eventually, an inspector showed me how to use a ticket machine and how to complete the conductor's official document, the waybill. On this I had to record the start and finish numbers on the ticket machine for each journey and calculate the money taken.

The ticket machine was the Setright. This was loaded with a blank ticket roll and had dials on the top for the date, the fare stage and one each for shillings and pence (later ten pences and pence). There was a lever to select single, return and other ticket types.



There were counters to record the value of tickets issued (one in halfpennies the other in shillings), one for the total tickets issued, others for child and return tickets, and one which could be set by the office to any value or ticket type for analysis.

A slot in the front was used to overprint returns and took individual tickets such as weeklies and transfers as well as 'day out' tickets which gave unlimited travel. There was a hole punch on the top of the machine to cancel these on each journey.

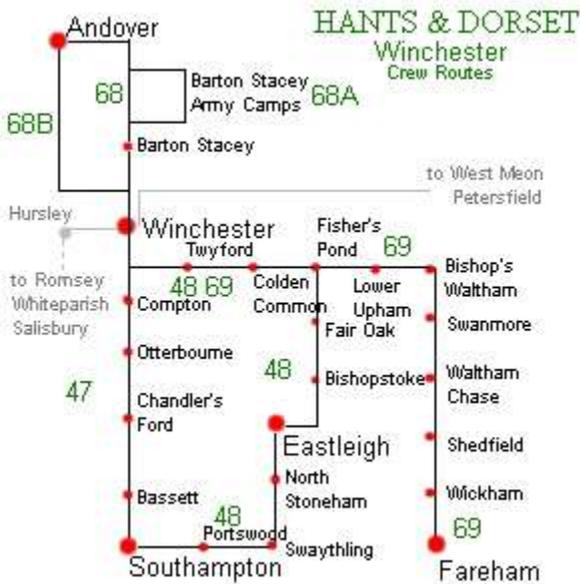
The loose tickets were carried on a wooden rack. These were five-day weeklies, six-day weeklies, day-out tickets, transfers to Aldershot & District service 14 and transfers to Southdown services to Portsmouth. These loose tickets had to be issued in numerical order and were difficult to handle when your hands were very cold.

I would not have my own ticket machine until I had completed my two weeks training but I was issued with the sling on which it was to be worn and a cash bag. An old, worn cash bag was best. The stiff leather of a brand new one would leave your fingers sore and a new strap for the machine would cut into your shoulder.

How to make a bus conductor.

My second day started in the afternoon. I met the conductor who was going to take me out on my first shift. We started with the 14:40 number 69 to Fareham and back, had a 56 minute meal break, then did the 18:30 number 47 to Southampton and finished with the 21:40 to Fareham getting back to the depot at 23:34. I then had to count the money and pay it in.

Matching the fare stages on the fare chart with the stops on the road was difficult enough in daylight but soon it was dark. Harder still was working out where the passengers wanted when they asked for places in between. Fortunately for them I was not yet expected to ring the bell to stop the bus where they wanted to get off. For the next week and a half I would have an experienced conductor with me to help out if I got into difficulties. After that, I would be on my own.



From Winchester we ran to Southampton via Chandlers Ford (47) (known as the "Main Road"), Southampton via Eastleigh (48) and Fareham (69). Most services on routes 66 to Salisbury, 67 to Petersfield and 68, 68A and 68B to Andover were operated by driver only buses but several journeys to Andover each day and the 1730 to Petersfield were worked by crews. We sometimes operated reliefs on the 66 but only as far as Hursley.

We had an extra morning and afternoon trip on the 47 route from and to Hiltingbury (between Chandlers Ford and Hursley) on schooldays. Wilts & Dorset also ran on the 66 and the 68/68A/68B routes. The 111 service to Basingstoke was run exclusively by Wilts & Dorset.

With only four main routes, learning the fares was reasonably easy. Where King Alfred buses ran on the same section we charged the fares set by them. Otherwise the only complication was the special tickets such as five and six day weeklies, transfers and day out tickets which we carried on a wooden rack.

At the end of two weeks I was deemed ready to go out on my own. A sleepless night was probably not the best preparation.



This is a sixpenny (old money) single ticket issued at fare stage 55 on the 13th of March from ticket machine 627 and numbered 315.

From Winchester Bus Station:

47 - North Walls, Jewry Street, Southgate Street, St.Cross, Bushfield Camp, Compton, Otterbourne, Chandler's Ford, Bassett, The Avenue, London Road, Above Bar, Southampton Bus Station (West Marlands). Journey time 48 minutes each way plus 12 minutes layover at Southampton. The 47 was operated by Winchester and Southampton crews.

48 - North Walls, Jewry Street, Southgate Street, St.Cross, Hockley, Twyford, Colden Common, Fisher's Pond, Crowd Hill, Fair Oak, Bishopstoke, Eastleigh Bus Station (Blenheim Road), Nightingale Bridge, North Stoneham, Swaythling, Portswood, Lodge Road (Stag Gates), London Road, Above Bar, Southampton Bus Station (West Marlands). Journey time 76 minutes each way plus 19 minutes layover at Southampton. The 48 was operated by Winchester and Southampton crews.

66 - North Walls, City Road, Romsey Road, Pitt, Hursley, Ampfield, Romsey (Market Place), Shootash, Sherfield English, Whiteparish, Whaddon, Salisbury Bus Station. Although Salisbury was shown as the destination, buses did not run through to Salisbury. On most journeys passengers needed to change buses to the 37 from Southampton at Whiteparish, on others to the Wilts & Dorset 36 in Romsey. The 37 and 66 were joint services with Wilts & Dorset.

67 - Chilcombe Corner, Warnford Corner, Beauworth (not all journeys), Old Cheriton, Bramdean, West Meon, Drayton, East Meon, Langrish, Stroud, Petersfield (Square). Journey time 78 or 85 minutes. Layover times in Petersfield varied.

68 - North Walls, City Road, Andover Road, Flowerdown, Worthy Down, Sutton Scotney, Bullington Cross, Barton Stacey Army Camps C and D, Barton Stacey Army Camp B, Longparish, Bell Road, Andover Bus Station. Journey time 55 minutes each way plus 5 minutes layover in Andover.

68A - North Walls, City Road, Andover Road, Flowerdown, Worthy Down, Sutton Scotney, Barton Stacey, Barton Stacey Army Camp B, Longparish, Bell Road, Andover Bus Station. Journey time 55 minutes each way plus 5 minutes layover in Andover.

68B - North Walls, City Road, Andover Road, Flowerdown, Crawley Down, Barton Stacey, Barton Stacey Army Camps C and D, Barton Stacey Army Camp B, Longparish, Bell Road, Andover Bus Station. Journey time 53 minutes plus 7 minutes layover in Andover. The 68, 68A and 68B were joint services with Wilts & Dorset.

69 - North Walls, Jewry Street, Southgate Street, St.Cross, Hockley, Twyford, Colden Common, Fisher's Pond, Lower Upham, Bishop's Waltham, Swanmore, Waltham Chase, Shedfield, Wickham, Fareham Bus Station (West Street). Journey time 79 minutes each way plus 16 minutes layover at Fareham. The 69 was operated by Winchester, Fareham and Bishops Waltham crews.

During layovers, as well as snatching refreshments, conductors had to deliver and collect parcels at the booking office. Parcels were carried between bus stations and were also collected from and delivered to agencies along the route.

I'm in charge but who's in control?

I had no idea where I was. The driver seemed to be taking whatever route he wanted, On the top deck of the bus I was desperately trying to find the fare on my fare chart but nothing seemed to match. I had a vague idea that people were getting on and off downstairs but I could not get to the platform to find out. And then there was the bell. Constantly ringing. In the darkness I reached out and found the alarm clock.



So this was it. From now on there would be nobody to ask if I did not know the name of a stop or how much it was to "where the Red Lion used to be". In fact the main thing on my mind was whether there would be time for breakfast after the first journey.

Living as I still did with my parents there was no chance of anything before leaving for work at that time of the morning. The problem now would be the traffic on the way back into Winchester. It was always slow moving and often made us late.

Meal and tea breaks quickly became priorities. On Hants & Dorset the conductor was responsible for time keeping so it was up to me to keep the bus moving to ensure that the driver and I got all the time we could at the end of each trip and at the points where we waited along the way.

The rule was that you could only ring the bell to start the bus if you were on the platform. It was also laid down that the driver had to stop at certain 'compulsory' stops even if there was nobody to get on or off. To keep the bus on time, both of these rules were ignored unless we had an inspector on board.



Bus conductors needed a licence and wore a numbered badge. The letters KK show that mine was issued by the traffic commissioners for the south-east, based at Eastbourne. Conductors' badges were green and drivers' were red. Drivers of pay-as-you-enter services wore both. (The conductor's badge is mine, the driver's badge is someone else's).

I walked to the bus station, clocked on and collected my ticket box. It was time to go out on the road.

Do you know where we're going?

There were 26 crews at Winchester. There were also a few drivers who worked the driver only services, a handful of inspectors and the depot superintendent who I would get to see when I got reported. A couple of people ran the office, checking our takings and paying out wages among other things. In the garage there was a foreman and his team including the cleaners. One of these, an old guy who lived out in the country with no electricity or running water, used to carry a dirty rag everywhere. With this he would clean your windscreen, wipe oil from his hands and imaginary dust from his mid-morning roll.

The foreman would never believe you if you reported a problem with a vehicle. He sent me out on the road once with a bus that had a leaking radiator. The engine overheated and eventually packed up. Another time a driver complained about his brakes. To demonstrate that there was nothing wrong with the bus, the foreman drove it from the garage into the bus station and applied the brakes. The bus continued out of the bus station and across the road. Luckily the only casualties were a group of drivers and conductors who suffered aching sides.

The crew rota consisted of duty numbers 1 to 26 and two columns of names, one for the drivers and the other for the conductors. Odd numbers were early turns, even numbers were lates. Drivers worked their way up the rota one week at a time while conductors worked down. This meant a different combination of drivers and conductors each week but every six months you worked the same duty with the same driver as before. A crew would therefore work together on the same journeys every day for a whole week except for the day off which varied from duty to duty.

Saturdays sometimes meant a variation, Sundays and Bank Holidays always did. The days off, we worked a six day week, were covered by what were called 'relief weeks', one early week and one late having a different duty each day. This did not include Sunday as there were fewer crews working on that day. It was easy to check the rota to see what you would be doing on any day or week in the future.

Some of the drivers were not keen on discovering they had a new conductor with them while others were very helpful. The Monday ritual was finding out who I had this week and trying to guess which type they were. Most were good. The few who resented having someone new on the back would ignore you all day and throw you around the bus at every opportunity.

A four-crew rota would work like this :-

Week 1

Driver	Conductor	Duty	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Black	Silver	1	1	1	Off	1	1	1	1
Brown	Pink	2	Off	2	2	2	2	2	2
Gray	White	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Off
Green	Gold	4	Off	4	4	4	4	4	4

Week 2

Driver	Conductor	Duty	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Brown	Gold	1	1	1	Off	1	1	1	1
Gray	Silver	2	Off	2	2	2	2	2	2
Green	Pink	3	3	Off	3	3	3	3	3
Black	White	4	Off	4	4	4	4	4	4

Week 3

Driver	Conductor	Duty	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Gray	White	1	1	1	Off	1	1	1	1
Green	Gold	2	Off	2	2	2	2	2	2
Black	Silver	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Off
Brown	Pink	4	Off	4	4	4	4	4	4

Week 4

Driver	Conductor	Duty	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Green	Pink	1	1	1	Off	1	1	1	1
Black	White	2	Off	2	2	2	2	2	2
Brown	Gold	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Off
Gray	Silver	4	Off	4	4	4	4	4	4

Week 5 (same as week 1)

Driver	Conductor	Duty	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Black	Silver	1	1	1	Off	1	1	1	1
Brown	Pink	2	Off	2	2	2	2	2	2
Gray	White	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	Off
Green	Gold	4	Off	4	4	4	4	4	4

Odd numbers were early turns, even numbers were lates.
 Not included here, there would need to be cover for days off.

A busman's holiday is no picnic.

When I started on Hants & Dorset employees and their wives (but not husbands) were issued with a quarter-fare pass after three months service. Up to two children could travel with them at the same fare. Travel to and from work was free if you were in uniform but only on the company's buses.

We could also apply for a limited number of free passes for one day at a time. There were restrictions on both quarter fares and free passes, particularly that we couldn't take advantage of them on bank holiday weekends. We were not supposed to travel free or at reduced rate within Southampton or Bournemouth.

The restrictions were largely ignored, often no fare at all would be collected. And nobody charged any driver or conductor in uniform no matter who they worked for or what bus they were on. Although the companies were rivals, the crews were all on the same side.

Certain inspectors were always keen to catch us but seldom did. The penalty if caught was for the passenger to have their pass withdrawn and the conductor to be disciplined. The solution was to keep an eye open for inspectors and quickly issue a ticket.

Eventually the quarter fare and free passes were dropped and travel became free for staff and wives but it took a while for husbands to be included and it would be many years before other partners were accepted.

Another advantage of working on the buses was being picked up and dropped off between stops. The driver would slow but not stop. I quickly got used to getting on open platform buses and getting off was not too difficult but I never liked jumping on buses with doors, particularly when the doors were at the front.

Rules 75 to 78 set out the regulations for staff travel.

75 FREE TRAVEL TO WORK

Conductors are required always to examine free passes and privilege certificates and to ensure that they are valid for the journey undertaken, and are being used by the person to whom they are issued. Employees in uniform or if producing a privilege certificate may travel to and from work free of charge provided they give up their seats to fare-paying passengers if the omnibus is loaded to full seating capacity.

76 QUARTER-FARE PRIVILEGE CERTIFICATES

A quarter-fare Privilege Certificate is granted to an employee, his wife and up to two children after he has been in the Company's service for three months, and is available for use subject to the regulations printed thereon, which are:

- (I) To travel on Stage Carriage Services only at one-quarter the ordinary adult single fare to the nearest Id. (the minimum payment to be 2d.)
- (II) To travel on Wills and Dorset vehicles as for (I) above, on services operated jointly with this Company, i.e. Nos. 37, 38, 66, 68, 68a, 68b, and Southdown Motor Service vehicles on Service 77 (Southdown Service 45) between Warsash and Fareham.
- (III) This certificate is not available for travel at reduced rates on:
 - (i) Easter Monday, Whit-Monday or August Bank Holiday Monday, or on the Saturday or Sunday immediately preceding these Monday holidays. The Certificates will also not be available for travel on Boxing Day.
 - (ii) At any time during the month of August on the following services: Nos. 7, 11, 58, 58a, 70, 103, 105.
- (IV) This privilege does not apply to any journey solely within either the Borough of Bournemouth or Southampton.

The quarter-fare rate is only applicable to single fares for the journey over which the passenger travels in one bus.

77 FREE PASSES

On Stage Carriage Services six Free Passes per annum will be granted to an employee and his wife, one of these Passes may include up to two of the employee's children.

Passes will not be issued on Bank Holidays or on the Saturday or Sunday immediately preceding, neither will they be issued at any time during the month of August. The following exception is made: that employees on annual holiday during August may be allowed two Free Passes during the period of holiday in that month. These however, are not available during Bank Holiday weekend.

All applications for Free Passes must be made to the Depot Official in writing at least four clear days before the date on which the journey is to be taken.

Should passes for more than six persons be issued for the same route on the same day, they will be endorsed with outward and return timings fixed to avoid more than six Free Passes being used on any one vehicle.

78 CONDITIONS OF ISSUE OF FREE PASSES AND PRIVILEGE CERTIFICATES

Free Passes and Quarter-Fare Privilege Certificates may be used only by the person in whose favour they are issued, and they are to be taken as evidence of an agreement that the Company is not to be held responsible for any pecuniary or other responsibility to the holders or their representatives for loss of life, personal injury or delay, or for any loss or delay or damage to property however caused, that may be sustained by such persons while using the same.

In the event of any breach of these regulations the persons travelling will be called upon to pay the full fare, and the employee in whose favour the Pass or Warrant is issued may be debarred from travel privileges for twelve months.

Hants & Dorset Winchester 1967.

I have been trying to remember the buses at Winchester when I started in 1967. Here is what I have been able to come up with so far. The double deckers are almost right but I have only a vague memory of the single deckers. I remember using an L6 on an Andover trip, the one where I dropped all my money! We used to call these buses 'spaceships'. I am sure we had an LS, one can just be seen lurking in the garage in the first photo on the Hants & Dorset bus photos pages in the Photos section. But I think we must have had three single deckers as they were used on 66s, 67s and 68s. Any further information would be gratefully received. The depot code was white on blue.

Number	Later	Reg.	Type	In service
?	?	?	L6 single decker.	?
?	?	?	single decker.	?
?	?	?	LS single decker.	?
1324	1387	LRU 53	KSW6B. Highbridge. Open back.	1952 - 1972
1327	1390	LRU 56	KSW6G. Highbridge. Open back.	1952 - 1972
1417	1480	YRU 56	Lodekka LD6G. 60 seats. Manual door.	1959 - 1976
1418	1481	YRU 57	Lodekka LD6G. 60 seats. Manual door.	1959 - 1976
1469	1205	4392 LJ	Lodekka FS6G. 60 seats. Electric doors.	1961 - 1977
1489	1142	4689 RU	Lodekka FS6G. 60 seats. Electric doors.	1963 - 1980
1533	1230	EEL 896C	Lodekka FLF6G. 70 seats.	1965 - 1980
1539	1236	FLJ 156D	Lodekka FLF6B. 70 seats.	1966 - 1980
1574	1271	LLJ 440F	Lodekka FLF6L. 70 seats. Semi Automatic.	1967 - 1980
1575	1272	LLJ 441F	Lodekka FLF6L. 70 seats. Semi Automatic.	1967 - 1980

After a gradual changeover during the previous decade, the introduction of full driver-only services meant the end for the last of the crew buses in 1980. Winchester bus station opened in 1935 and the site is expected to be redeveloped soon, the garage having already been moved to Bar End.



1324 at the back of the garage

Whose money is it anyway?

Before joining the bus company I had earned about eight pounds a week. Now my basic for 48 hours (six days) was twelve pounds eight shillings. Most of the duties were more than 48 hours and there was further overtime available if someone went sick or was on holiday. Of course my parents wanted a bigger share of my income even though I was often not around for meals and got little more than a bed in a an unheated room to sleep in for my money. But I still had cash left over and decided to spend some of it on a holiday.

My parents' reaction of course was hostile "Don't you think we would like a holiday abroad?". Mine was "With the money you're earning and the money you're getting from me for nothing, who the heck's stopping you?". They never did go abroad and didn't complain when any of my brothers did.

Like our duties, holidays were on a rota. We had two separate weeks each year. My first holiday was in May 1968. I had travelled all over Britain with and without my parents but had never been abroad. In the 1960s there were strict exchange controls, the amount of money you could spend abroad was very limited. I found a holiday to Luzern in Switzerland which appealed to me. It included train travel, hotel with full board and a discount ticket for the lake steamers and mountain railways.

The journey up to London was one I had made countless times and the boat train to Folkestone was straightforward. The ferries in those days were run by the railways and this one carried passengers and railway wagons, but not cars and trucks.



The ferries had first and second class sections which were completely separate, with seating out on deck. And the same kind of catering as on British Railways. Even though the ferry I caught was run by the French railways, the sandwiches were very definitely British.

Anyway, I found a seat on the deck and watched the white cliffs vanish.



Vous qui entrez ici, laissez toute espérance.

At Calais Maritime station I found my reserved seat on the train to Basel. Some international trains used to have letters instead of numbers so the night train from Calais to Basel was CB, the train running in the other direction was BC. The carriage was in the grey livery of Italian railways, others were green French coaches. The compartment had seats for eight, mine was next to the window which had a small table under it.

There was just one other person in the compartment and I settled back for the nine hour journey. At eight-thirty, on a Sunday evening, train CB pulled out of the station behind a steam engine. Steam was fast disappearing everywhere but this loco was different from those back home. It was oil-fired and poured out thick black smoke which hung menacingly over the buildings as we passed. It could have been an omen.

Although I would catch this train and others like it on many other occasions, I would remember my first ride on train CB and be prepared for what was to come. Sunday night was the night that everyone doing their national service heads back to base. We pulled into Calais Ville station and half the population of France seemed to be on the platform. A few minutes later and the platform was virtually empty. The conductor had a compartment from which he sold bottled drinks. I had planned to buy one but he was sold out in minutes. There would be no other chance for nine hours.

The train was packed and remained so as it made its slow journey down the eastern side of the country through Lille, Thionville and Metz to Strasbourg and Colmar where we arrived at about four o'clock in the morning and the last of the missionaries got off to catch the army buses to their camps in Germany. For the last part of the journey through Mulhouse to Basel, the train was almost empty and I was glad to be able to stretch my legs in the corridor and breath some fresh air from an open window. Arriving in Basel at about five thirty I had a welcome cup of coffee and a ham roll in the buffet, then caught a train to Luzern.



A class 141R steam locomotive at Calais Ville station.

First impressions.

Luzern, the first city I ever saw outside Britain. I left my suitcase at the hotel on the banks of the river and walked towards the lake in the spring sunshine. There were two things I had not expected. Some of the trolleybuses were articulated with the conductor sitting at the back to take the fares, although they were about to be phased out in favour of ticket machines at the bus stops. Many years later 'bendy' buses would be introduced in the UK as something new but this was my first sight of them.

Then there were the mail vans and also some trucks made by Saurer which were right hand drive. I thought that the mail vans might be to allow the driver to get out on the kerb side or it might be because not so long before the driver had sat on the nearside of postal buses so that he was close to the edge of the mountain roads. But I never did find out the real reason.

During my stay I had time in the evenings to wander away from the city centre and discovered that the smartness of the tourist area soon gave way to the parts where people lived and worked. But there was still something exotic about the building styles, even the newer ones were somehow different. Tired after the long journey, I spent the first day getting my bearings and finding out what I could do the rest of the week.



The dome in the last picture belongs to the railway station and would be destroyed along with the rest of this fine Victorian building in the fire on the 6th of February 1971.

Switzerland seemed very clean and well looked after compared with Britain and France. In 1968 it was still a very conservative country, as yet untouched by the social revolution of the swinging sixties. In most Cantons women had no vote and where they could it had been a recent development. Women could vote at Federal level from 1971 but the last Canton (Appenzell Innerhoden) to grant equality would not do so until 1990.

Vierwaldstättersee.

Armed with my pass giving three days of free travel and two at half price on the lake steamers plus discounts on the local mountain railways, I was able to spend all day enjoying the sights. The steamers were a great way to sit back and enjoy the scenery. Some were modern diesels while others were old paddle steamers. I visited the summits of Pilatus and Rigi and travelled on rack-railways, funiculars and cable cars.

As with all mountain regions, the weather varied from scorching sun to cold rain. And of course at the top of the mountains spring was only just beginning, the cloud could come down suddenly and the temperature drop like a stone. I set aside a day to relax on a round the lake cruise, a welcome rest from going up and down the mountains. I also found time to visit the transport museum and to take a train ride to Zurich.

In the evenings there was little to do except go for a stroll or have a drink in the hotel but wanting to make an early start in the morning meant that was not a problem. The holiday was over much too soon. On the last morning I checked out of the hotel and left my case at the station. I was booked on a train leaving in the evening so I had the day free.

But this was May 1968, the journey home would be very different from the one coming down.



Paddle steamer 'Gallia' at Luzern.

Lakeside scenery near Flüelen.

Summit of the Rigi and train to Arth-Goldau.

Alpnachstad with train to summit of Pilatus.

Better to travel hopefully

May 1968 and I'm about to find my journey home from Switzerland won't be as easy as I had expected.

I arrived in Basel to find there were no trains through France because of a general strike. It appeared that trouble had been brewing for some time but I only heard about it after I arrived in Switzerland. The student protests in Paris were a long way away but Winchester was even further away.

I caught an overnight train to Cologne. The view as we ran alongside the Rhine as the sun came up was amazing. Arriving in Cologne at about five thirty I wanted something to eat and drink. There was a kiosk on the platform containing a cheese roll and the largest lady I had ever seen. There did not seem room for anything else. I bought the roll and a cup of coffee. The next train took me through Aachen, Liège and Brussels to Oostende.

Oostende that afternoon was a scene of absolute chaos. The area between the railway platforms and the ferry departure point was packed with people stranded by the lack of ferries from French ports. After a couple of hours I finally found myself on the deck of a ferry. I tried to get to the cafeteria but it was impossible. Finding somewhere to sit was no easier. An argument broke out at one point between some British passengers and some French people.

From Dover trains were running one after another to London but the one I caught had no buffet car. Rushing from Victoria to Waterloo, I arrived just in time to catch the next train to Winchester. No buffet there either. That should have been the end of my problems but I had reckoned without my parents.

I got home after nine that night, tired and hungry, to be told I was too late to get anything to eat! My mother even complained that I had not phoned to say where I was. With no money? If I had reversed the charges on a local call I would never have heard the last of it. From Belgium? As if she was really worried about me anyway!

Counting the pennies.

One of the results of doing the same duty for a week was that many of the people you picked up on the Monday would be your passengers every day that week.

Our routes out of Winchester bus station operated via North Walls. Each afternoon a group of school kids caught the bus home to Chandlers Ford from here. On the Monday one of these sat at the front of the bus seemingly without a care in the world. But as soon as I reached him his nature changed and he said he had lost his bus fare. Throughout the week, same journey, same child, different story. His money had been stolen, dropped and forgotten. On the Thursday I happened to look back as we pulled away from the stop where he got off and saw him go up to a woman, presumably his mother, and walk away.

Friday afternoon and he had no money for his fare. As we approached the bus stop I could see the woman standing a short distance away. I called to her and before I could explain what had happened she said "Oh no, he hasn't lost his bus fare again has he? How much do you want?". I asked for and to my surprise got the whole week's money!

Some people would go to enormous lengths to avoid paying the whole fare, asking for one stop then getting off at another or looking out of the window hoping you would miss them. Many of these people were quite capable of paying and would complain if anyone stole from them. Like the woman who lived in an expensive house at Hiltisbury and claimed I must have pocketed a halfpenny when I showed her she had only given me seven halfpennies for her fourpenny fare. Bus conductors were somehow fare game and even wealthy people were prepared to steal from them.

Other tricks regularly employed to take money directly from the conductor included paying with a two shilling piece and claiming it had been a half-crown or with a ten shilling note and claiming it was a pound. The way to deal with these people was to keep the money in your other hand while counting the change to them otherwise you would have to make up for the shortage.

Often when challenged people would say something like "the bus company can afford it". They simply didn't understand that we had to make up the difference, the company never stood any loss.

Having said all that, we operated a more liberal policy when it came to other bus crews and their families. Before the days of free travel we were reluctant to take money from each other. Whatever the reason, if an inspector got on and you had a passenger without a valid ticket you got booked, so you had to be on your toes.

But sometimes any number of inspectors could miss something right under their noses

Crooked, however you look at it.

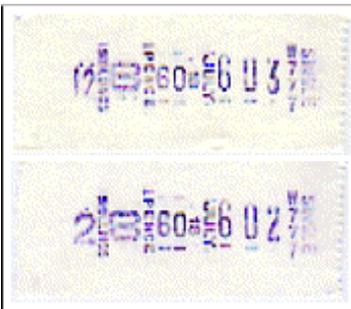
As well as single tickets and returns we sold weekly tickets. These allowed regulars to buy one ticket on a Monday or Tuesday for one journey each way until Saturday. Initially two of the journeys were free but later this was reduced to one and then the discount was abolished. Soon after I started, weekly and return tickets were phased out. Before this, conductors were instructed on certain days to collect tickets when used for their final journey so that usage could be assessed. Passengers would argue that we were stealing the ticket they had paid for, although it always remained company property and was only really a token.

Weekly tickets were carried loose and overprinted with the price, date and fare stage by inserting them in the front of the ticket machine. If the ticket was put in at an angle the extreme left of the price missed the ticket but of course the value still registered on the machine. But if you didn't set the price up in the first place

There was a possible fiddle on tickets priced above eleven shillings. If the price was set on the machine and the ticket was printed at an angle, the one was missing. Having spotted this, one conductor started deliberately printing the tickets at an angle. So if the fare was twelve and eight he would only set two shillings and eight pence on the dials. This gave him a profit of ten shillings (half of a pound) at a time when our weekly wage was about thirteen pounds. He printed a lot of tickets and made a great deal of of money.

Naturally this showed up in the takings whenever he was on a bus on a Monday morning but although I could spot these tickets easily and so could a conductress from Andover who I talked to about it, the inspectors could not.

It was clear from analysis of the takings where he was making the money and a lot of tickets were collected and examined but the inspectors simply did not know what they were looking for. He was eventually caught issuing a three penny ticket instead of a one shilling and three penny and sacked!



How to spot it? The problem with this particular fiddle was that there were only two dials on the ticket machine, one for the shillings and one for the pence. This means that the 12 had the same width as the 2 on its own. To put it the other way, the two on the dud ticket was too wide as can be seen on the lower ticket. Obvious when you know.

During the time the conductor was carrying out this fiddle, I was asked if I would change shifts with him on a Wednesday so that he could play football. I agreed, not knowing that the exchange had been set up by the inspectors. I went out on the first bus to Eastleigh and Southampton and was surprised to see an inspector waiting for me on the way out of Eastleigh. My first thought was that I had a passenger with one of the dud tickets. Technically I was at fault for accepting it and the inspector must have been taken to this point to catch me. I need not have worried. He didn't check any tickets but got off in Swaythling saying he was going to get some breakfast and would see me on the way back.

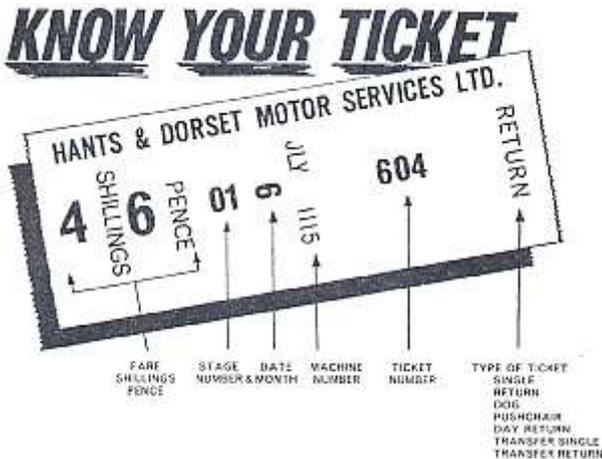
The return journey was one of the hardest I had ever known. Instead of simply clipping weekly tickets and selling some singles and returns, I had to collect every weekly and replace it with the correct fare and stages printed plus all the same journeys cancelled and the current one. The inspector collected all the other fares or let people off without paying. On arriving back in Winchester, instead of having a break, I had to calculate the cost of all these tickets and claim a credit for the total value.

Despite all this, nobody could see what was wrong with the tickets. Much later, when the fiddle was no longer possible, I finally showed the inspectors how it was done.

Those who can probably will.

Only a year after I started on the buses I was training new conductors, something I would do throughout the years. One of my first trainees was not really new at all. He had worked for many years on the King Alfred buses. Both companies used the same Setright ticket machine and all the fares in the Winchester area were the same. Since he was much more experienced than me, not to mention a lot older, I gave him my ticket machine and sat down. All I needed to do on our 69 journey to Fareham was identify the fare stages.

We went all the way to Fareham and got back as far as Lower Upham when I got the distinct feeling that something was wrong. I could not put my finger on it, but something was not quite right. I started checking tickets. To my horror I discovered they were all printed back to front. So instead of a one and threepenny he had issued a three and a penny and so on. I collected up as many tickets as I could and emptied the used ticket box. When we reached Winchester I counted the takings and the tickets I would pay in for credit. We were still short but we divided the loss between us and at least I had managed to get some back.



From then on I kept a closer eye on all trainees. Which was just as well because I caught one fiddling on his first day, issuing tickets of a lower value than the fare and putting the difference in his pocket.

Another had served for many years in the army. Several of us spent six weeks, three times the maximum allowed, trying to get him to take fares, watch the platform and ring the bell at the same time. Any one of these was ok but all of it together was simply impossible. Thankfully he found another job.

There is always somebody different of course. One trainee was so quick at taking fares and ringing the bell that he left me behind at Fisher's Pond when I got off to help someone with a pushchair!

Up the creek.

Fareham was one of the towns we visited regularly from Winchester with the 69 route operated by crews from both depots and the 'out-station', a group of crews and vehicles stationed away from any depot, at Bishop's Waltham.

One of the Fareham conductors frequently complained about the language in the canteen. Despite the fact that he had worked there for a few years, he had never got used to it. But no matter how much he complained, the other men and, of course, the women continued to swear. Most of us just joined in but he eventually went to the depot superintendent. The response, "It's a xxxing bus depot canteen, what the xxxx do you expect me to do about it?" was hardly what he wanted to hear.

A Fareham conductor with a very different background knew exactly what to do when he had a late night bus load of drunken sailors. He called the provost (navy police). They took the drunks and the bus away with them. The bus was returned next day and parked in the middle of the garage with a sign saying 'Do Not Touch'. It gleamed, it sparkled, you could use it as a shaving mirror. The guys had been up all night cleaning and polishing every last inch inside and out!

The nearest I ever came to something like this was on a journey to Andover on an old single deck bus. I dropped a coin on the floor, bent down to retrieve it and when I stood up I caught my money bag under a seat and tipped out all the contents. I picked up as much as I could but other hands were grabbing what they could too. The route passed through the army camps at Barton Stacey where most of the passengers got off. When I cashed up at the end of the day I was several pounds short.

A few days later I was called into the office expecting to be in trouble for this but to my surprise I was handed an envelope full of money. One of the passengers had apparently been a higher rank of some sort who had taken the names of the soldiers who had helped themselves. He later made them empty out their pockets and had relieved them of all their small change. Instead of losing the money from my wages I actually made a profit on the deal.

Some mothers do have them.

One of the biggest causes of problems were pushchairs. And big was the operative word. When I started on the buses, buggies were very new and definitely the exception. Most pushchairs were heavy, caked in mud and rusty. Many were simply small prams. All would trap an unwary finger or draw blood with a sharp edge.

Pushchairs under the stairs behaved like paper clips, no matter how carefully you stacked them they became entangled. The first one in was always the first one out and passengers with bags or cases would always place them on top of the pushchairs rather than at the side. On the front doored buses we had the front off-side seat adapted so that it folded down to provide more storage. Passengers invariably returned the seat to its original position so they could sit on it.

Sometimes we had so many pushchairs on board we had to leave others behind. They could cause other problems too, such as putting the wrong one off at a bus stop or seeing one roll off the platform as we went round a bend. One mother left her pushchair by the bus in Winchester bus station and assumed I would see it and load it onto the bus. I didn't and when we arrived at Andover she was most abusive.

Also at Andover, I left the bus to collect parcels and when I returned I found a baby on the platform. The mother had left him there when she realised she had forgotten to go to a shop. She assumed, correctly, that I would not pull away with a baby in such a dangerous position. I had taken the child to the office by the time she returned to the bus, but she was quite unconcerned about the risk she had taken.

Another woman, this time in Romsey Square, swung her child onto the platform to stop the bus as we pulled away. I rang the bell to stop the driver. She complained that I had rung the bell to start the bus, not to stop it. She told her boyfriend, a bus driver who should have known better. He threatened me next time we met. Some mothers!

Incidentally, and nothing to do with buses, one of my earliest memories of television is a news item on the Hungarian uprising in 1956 when I was seven years old. There was a shop full of prams with its windows shattered and a Russian tank pointing its gun at the building. The meek may inherit the earth but not if the Red Army gets there first!

Go forth - and freeze!

In the winter open back buses were a place to watch your fingers curl up and turn blue. Heating, impossible to turn off in the summer, never worked in the winter. Handling tickets and cash became difficult and I was always looking forward to the next chance to grab a cup of tea.

I learned a lesson in human psychology. If the sun is shining and it's minus five the passengers will see the sun, assume it must be hot and open the windows so I freeze. In the summer if it's hot, humid and cloudy, there is no sun therefore it must be cold, the passengers close the windows I just opened.

In my second winter a sudden fall of snow early in the morning caused chaos on the roads. I left Winchester with the 0635 number 47 to Southampton via Chandlers Ford and got back at two in the afternoon. The journey should have taken 48 minutes each way. On our arrival, we were met by an inspector who told us "That's your next bus there" as he pointed to a full number 48 to Southampton via Eastleigh.

My driver and I decided to go to the canteen for a hot drink and a bite to eat. It was a good job we did. We left about twenty minutes later and made reasonable time to St Cross. Once we had turned off to go through Twyford and Colden Common our journey became much slower and from Fisher's Pond to Fair Oak we nearly got stuck several times. We struggled through Eastleigh, narrowly avoided a head-on collision with an out of control car in Stoneham Lane and eventually arrived in a deserted Southampton bus station at about half-past four.

I asked the inspector if he had any instructions and he said no, his depot superintendent had ordered all crews out on the road that morning, none had yet come back. We took a short break and then started the return journey. By now the temperature had fallen sharply, the snow was freezing and it was getting dark. We made it to Eastleigh bus station but from there on we slid and slipped all over the place. We finally arrived back in Winchester a little after nine o'clock. It had taken us fourteen and a half hours to do just two journeys. All services had been suspended for the rest of the day as soon as we had left on our second trip.

For me the problems did not end there. My driver and I had a quick drink in the pub outside the bus station and then I walked home. Having left at six that morning, without breakfast of course, I got home to be told there was no chance of getting anything to eat. And of course I would have to leave at six again the next morning, without breakfast just as I had done the previous day. At that moment I knew I had to leave home.

Just to rub salt in the wounds, we had picked up the passengers from another bus in Eastleigh bus station and then dropped the conductress off at her home. Someone in the warmth and security of their front room had phoned the depot to report that we had stopped where there was no bus stop!

One accident might be unfortunate

When you spend all day every day on the road accidents become a fact of life. Usually they are other people's accidents and only cause delay. Sometimes we would be the first on the scene and would have to take charge until the emergency services arrived. This included directing traffic, something I did on a number of occasions.

Inevitably I suppose, we had accidents of our own. Two of these happened just a fortnight apart on the old A33, then the main road north from Southampton. The first was on Boxing Day on the way back from Southampton with the 17:00 number 47. We had an almost full bus as there had been a football match at the Dell. Since there was no rush I was still taking fares as we travelled from Chilworth roundabout down the hill towards Chandlers Ford. I felt something hit the offside of the bus and made my way downstairs as the driver slowed and stopped.

I got off and started walking back the way we had come. As my eyes became accustomed to the darkness I found a Ford Cortina in the middle of the road, its offside badly damaged but no sign of any occupants. Realising that there must be another vehicle involved. I walked further up the road to find a BMC 1100 or 1300 with severe front end damage but again no people. Suddenly a police car arrived on the scene. A woman following us had remembered seeing it parked at the roundabout, picked up the children from the Cortina and gone back for help.

We found the two drivers and the wheel from the BMC which was what had hit the side of the bus, but nobody could explain how the accident had happened.

Two weeks later it had started to rain early one morning and then the temperature had dropped and it had become very foggy. On the return journey from Southampton we joined a queue of vehicles at almost the same spot. We had been stationary for about twenty minutes with other vehicles behind us when we were hit from behind by a Ford Anglia. The car had punched a hole under the stairs of the bus and was completely wrecked.

It appeared the driver had decided to get past all the traffic, found the road blocked and braked causing him to lose control on the ice. The police and an ambulance arrived from the opposite direction. They were picking up injured people from accidents stretching from Chandlers Ford to Chilworth and there were more accidents extending a mile each way along the A27.

Winchester bus services.

The Hants & Dorset bus company had its origins in Bournemouth and by the nineteen twenties had spread through Hampshire and Dorset, covering Bournemouth, Poole, the New Forest, Hythe, Southampton, Romsey, Eastleigh, Winchester and Fareham. The Tilling group and the Southern Railway became major shareholders. With railway nationalisation in 1947, The British Transport Commission became a shareholder. Shortly afterwards Tillings sold their bus interests to BTC and Hants & Dorset became a state owned company. In 1969 the setting up of the National Bus Company brought all the nationalised bus services into one big group.

The main bus operator in Winchester was the King Alfred Omnibus Company, owned by the Chisnell family. The company ran all the city routes, to Harestock, Highcliffe, Morn Hill, Oliver's Battery, Stanmore, Weeke, Winnall, and some outside the town, to Basingstoke, Broughton, Crawley, Fisher's Pond, Owselbury, Sparsholt, Sutton Scotney, Whitchurch. Some of the out of town routes were withdrawn, including the 1 and 2 routes to Fisher's Pond, or combined in the case of the 8 (Broughton) and 9 (Crawley). King Alfred buses ran from the 9th of October 1922 to the 28th of April 1973 when the routes and buses passed to Hants & Dorset.

Other out of town services were operated by:

Aldershot & District: 14 Aldershot.

Hants & Dorset: 47 Southampton, 48 Southampton, 66 Salisbury, 67 Petersfield, 68/68A/68B Andover, 69 Fareham.

Wilts & Dorset: 66 Salisbury, 68/68A/68B Andover, 111 Basingstoke.

Buddens Coaches, Greymfriars Coaches, Hursley Coaches.



There are a good number of preserved vehicles from each of the main companies, which can be seen at events throughout the year. These include enough King Alfred vehicles to operate a complete network of routes on running days in Winchester.

See Friends of King Alfred Buses.



Does anybody know where we are?

One of the advantages of working for a bus company like Hants & Dorset was the variety of routes. And if you were willing to be flexible, you could work from other depots and even get yourself hired out to other firms!

Most journeys on the 67 from Winchester to Petersfield were operated by driver only buses. But one trip each day, the 17:30, was on the crew rota and we used a double decker. The first time I made this run I had a driver who had never been on a 67 either. Going to Petersfield was easy enough, there were plenty of people on the bus to make sure we went the right way.

On the way back however, the last person got off just outside Petersfield and we were lost. There were no bus stops along the country roads we were driving along and no signs that meant anything to either of us. Until that is we saw one for Alresford, a town we both knew was in completely the wrong direction. We arrived in the bus station, twenty minutes ahead of schedule having missed out a large part of the route.

Another unusual trip from Winchester was to Farley. This operated one journey each way on Saturdays, with pay-as-you-enter buses. On this particular Saturday there was no one-man driver available so I and my driver of the week were sent out. We twice saw Farley across a field but having failed to find a way of getting to it turned round and went back to the bus station, agreeing that if nobody asked we wouldn't tell.

We had a late turn with a long lay-over at Southampton. For years the inspectors there had thought we were on an unpaid break and left us alone. One of our own drivers told an inspector that we were being paid and therefore spare (on standby). From then on we would be used whenever possible, the drivers to shunt buses to the garage and the conductors to do a local service 35 to Windermere Avenue.

One opportunity to go somewhere new happened while I was the spare conductor early one morning. We had two Aldershot & District crews with their bus stationed at Winchester. Very unusually, the conductor had not arrived for the first journey. I was asked if I would take the bus out and told that if I did I could work for that company all day. I jumped at the chance, got on the bus, put a roll of A&D tickets in my machine and took the first fare as we pulled out of the bus station. Then the conductor arrived, I missed out on the chance of a day out to somewhere different and got a roasting from a King Alfred inspector for stopping on one of their stops in the Broadway to change over.

On another occasion, while I was based at Southampton, I took some overtime at Salisbury, hoping to see some of the city. When I arrived the inspector sent me out on a number 37, straight back to Southampton!

If you think you can do better on your own

By the summer of 1969, at the age of twenty, I knew that what I wanted more than anything else was to leave home. My parents wanted more and more money but provided little other than a roof over my head. I discovered that I could rent a room for less, the question was where to go? I wanted to move away from Winchester to make a complete break with the past. My job which I had taken on the spur of the moment and only for a few months now provided the chance to live in another town.

My holiday that year was a trip around Britain staying in youth hostels and guest houses. With a Rail Rover ticket allowing unlimited travel, I took a night train to Scotland and visited Inverness, the Isle of Skye, Fort William, Glasgow and Edinburgh. In Fort William, an American and I put an Aga cooker together in a guest house although neither of us had ever seen one before.

It worked and we both got free bed and breakfast for the night, it was the kind of breakfast that really could be called 'all day'. After Scotland I travelled down to Devon, where I met two brave East End teachers giving a group of children a holiday at an Exeter youth hostel. I followed this with a trip to Cornwall and ended my holiday on the Isle of Wight.

With my taste for independence growing, that summer I visited all the other depots to check for vacancies and places to live. It quickly became clear that the choice was between Bournemouth and Southampton as both were large towns with plenty of rented accomodation. Both had big Hants & Dorset garages and Corporation buses as an alternative. I chose Southampton, found a bedsit and applied for a transfer. At first I was turned down but when I pointed out that I was moving anyway and would leave the company if necessary, the transfer went through.

Monday the 15th of September 1969. Freedom! It took a while to adjust, to shake off twenty years of neglect and obstruction but now I could eat at any time, go for a drink when I wanted to, even simple things like having a bath and clean clothes every day were new. Everything was possible and I never looked back, my only regret was not going sooner.

I had a new home, a room in a house in Shirley, and a fresh start at Southampton depot.

Life begins at twenty.

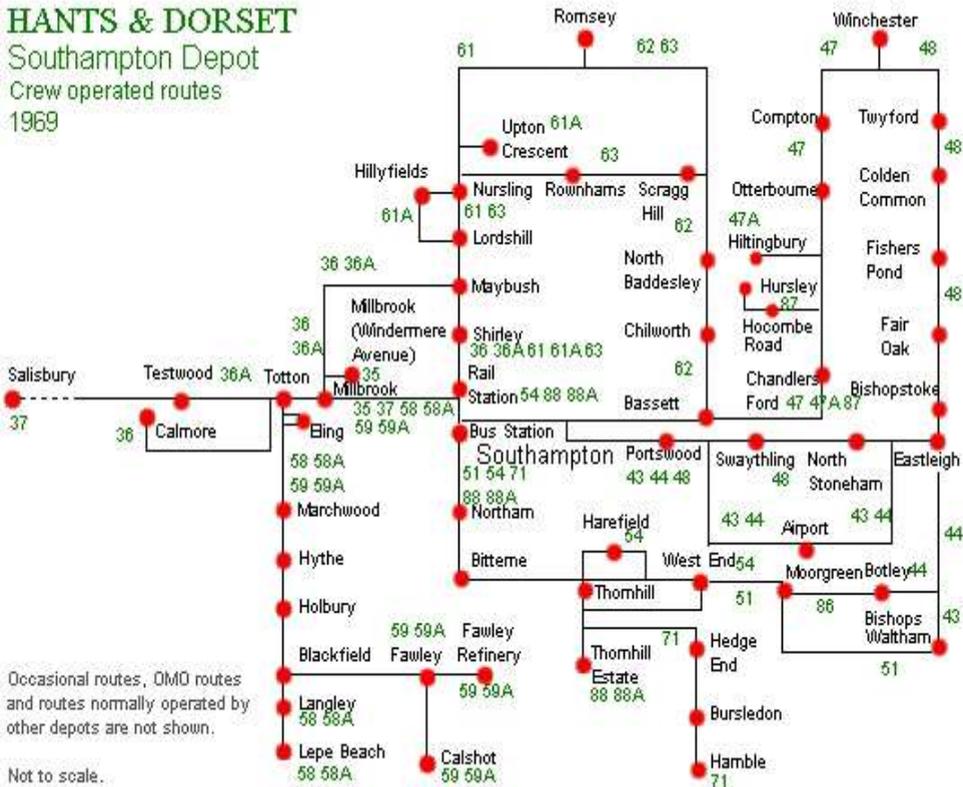
Southampton was a world apart from Winchester, both the city and the bus depot. There were far more crews, it took about three years to go round the main rota and there were other rotas. Staff shortages were normal and there was often so much overtime you could choose what to do. Sometimes an inspector would give you time off from your duty if you would do another shift immediately afterwards, even if this meant cancelling a service.

Other times they would give you a start time as 'spare' (stand-by) and sort out the actual journeys later. Double shifts were common as, unlike drivers who were restricted by law, conductors could work as many hours as they wanted. It was not unusual for the driver and passengers on one bus to be waiting for a conductor to arrive on another.

The bus station was at West Marlands while the garage was in Grosvenor Square. Mostly we operated routes to Millbrook (35), Calmore (36), Testwood (36A), Salisbury (37), Bishop's Waltham (43), Botley (44), Winchester (47) Hiltingbury (47A), Fair Oak or Winchester (48), Moorgreen (West End) (51), West End (54), Langley or Lepe Beach (58), Fawley or Calshot (59), Romsey (61, 62, 63), Nursling (61A), Hamble (71) and Thornhill (88, 88A).

There was a separate rota, known as the 'A' rota, for the Bournemouth services (13, 19, 20 and later on the 27). Some duties were set aside on the 'coach' rota for coach drivers when they were not away. Conductors on these duties never knew who they would be working with. There was also the 'S' rota, mostly schools and works buses. At times crews operated over the one-man routes 38, 39, 40 50, 56, 57 and 60 and also on some journeys between the Central Station and the Red Funnel or channel ferries (52). As at Winchester the one-man routes were on the 'X' rota.

HANTS & DORSET
Southampton Depot
 Crew operated routes
 1969



Hants & Dorset routes in and from Southampton in 1969

13 13A - Bus Station, Millbrook, Redbridge, Totton, Hounslow, Ashurst, Lyndhurst, Minstead, Castle Malwood, Stoney Cross, Burley, Picket Post, Poulner, Ringwood, St. Leonards, West Moors, Ferndown, Longham, Bear Cross, Kinson, Ensbury, Moordown, Bournemouth (Bus Station) . Some services do not serve all the places listed and not all services make the whole journey. Operated by A rota crews.

19 19A 20 20A - Bus Station, Millbrook, Redbridge, Totton, Hounslow, Ashurst, Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, Lymington, Milford on Sea, New Milton, Highcliffe, Mundeford (19 19A), Hinton Admiral (20 20A), Christchurch, Boscombe, Bournemouth (Bus Station). Operated by A rota crews.

19 19A 20 20A - Bus Station, Millbrook, Redbridge, Totton, Hounslow, Ashurst, Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, Lymington, Milford on Sea, New Milton, Highcliffe, Mundeford (19 19A), Hinton Admiral (20 20A), Christchurch, Boscombe, Bournemouth (Bus Station). Operated by A rota crews.

35 - Bus Station, Rail Station (downside), Millbrook, Millbrook Estate (Windermere Avenue). City service.

36 - Bus Station, Shirley, Maybush Corner, Millbrook Roundabout, Redbridge, Totton, Hammond's Green, Calmore.

36A - Bus Station, Shirley, Maybush Corner, Millbrook Roundabout, Redbridge, Totton, Testwood Crescent.

37 - Bus Station, Millbrook, Redbridge, Totton, Testwood, Ower, West Wellow, Plaitford, Nomansland (some journeys), Landford, Whiteparish, Whaddon, Alderbury, Salisbury (Bus Station). Joint service with Wilts & Dorset.

39 - Bus Station, Millbrook, Redbridge, Totton, Hammond's Green, Calmore, Tatchbury, Copythorne, Furzley, Bramshaw, Long Cross, Godshill, Fordingbridge. Operated by X rota drivers.

40 40A - Bus Station, Millbrook, Redbridge, Totton, Hammond's Green, Calmore, Tatchbury, Winsor, Cadnam, Castle Malwood, Minstead, Lyndhurst, Brook, Bramshaw, Nomansland (40A), Fritham. Operated by X rota drivers.

41 - Bus Station, Bassett, Bassett Green, North Stoneham, Eastleigh, Allbrook, Colden Common. Operated by X rota drivers.

43 - Bus Station, Portswood, Southampton Airport, Eastleigh, Bishopstoke, Fair Oak, Horton Heath, Durley, Bishop's Waltham. Also operated by Bishop's Waltham crews.

43A - Bus Station, Portswood, Southampton Airport, Eastleigh, Bishopstoke, Fair Oak, Lower Upham.

43B - Bus Station, Portswood, Southampton Airport, North Stoneham, Nightingale Avenue. Operated by X rota drivers.

44 - Bus Station, Portswood, Southampton Airport, Eastleigh, Bishopstoke, Fair Oak, Horton Heath, Boorley Green, Botley. Also operated by Bishop's Waltham crews.

47 - Bus Station, Bassett, Chandler's Ford, Otterbourne, Compton, Bushfield Camp, St. Cross, Winchester. Operated by Southampton and Winchester crews. Through booking to Alresford, Alton and Aldershot via Aldershot & District service 14.

47A - Bus Station, Bassett, Chandler's Ford, Kingsway, Hiltingbury.

48 - Bus Station, Portswood, Swaythling, North Stoneham, Eastleigh, Bishopstoke, Fair Oak, Fishers Pond, Colden Common, Twyford, Hockley, St. Cross, Winchester. Operated by Southampton and Winchester crews.

50 - Bus Station, Northam, Bitterne, Moorgreen, Fair Oak, Lower Upham, Bishop's Waltham, Waltham Chase, Swanmore, Droxford, Corhampton, Warnford, West Meon, Drayton, East Meon, Langrish, Stroud, Petersfield. Operated by X rota drivers.

51 51A - Bus Station, Northam, Bitterne, West End Road (51) or Thornhill Park Road (51A), West End, Moorgreen, Horton Heath, Durley, Bishop's Waltham, Waltham Chase, Swanmore. Some journeys terminate at Moorgreen.

52 52A 52H - Rail Station (downside) to Royal Pier for Red Funnel ferry to Cowes (52) or Coach Station, Rail Station (downside), Bus Station to Continental Ferry Terminals for P&O and Townend Thoresen ferries to Cherbourg and Le Havre (52A) or Rail Station (downside) to Seaspeed Hovercraft Terminal for service to Cowes (52H). These services do not make any other stops.

53 - Bus Station, Northam, Bitterne, Thornhill, Hedge End, Botley, Curdridge, Shedfield, Wickham, Fareham (Bus Station). Operated by Fareham crews.

54 - Rail Station (downside), Civic Centre, Northam, Bitterne, Harefield Estate, West End (New Inn). City service operated jointly with Southampton City Transport Department.

56 - Bus Station, Millbrook, Redbridge, Totton, Hounslow, Ashurst, Lyndhurst, Bank, Emery Down. Operated by X rota drivers.

57 - Bus Station, Millbrook, Redbridge, Totton, Netley Marsh, Woodlands, Bartley, Cadnam. Operated by X rota drivers.

58 - Bus Station, Millbrook, Redbridge, Totton, Ealing, Marchwood, Dibden, Hythe, Holbury, Blackfield, Langley, Lepe Beach. Operated by crews from Hythe and Southampton.

59 - Bus Station, Millbrook, Redbridge, Totton, Hounslow, Marchwood or Pooksgreen, Dibden, Hythe, Holbury, Blackfield, Fawley, Fawley Refinery (some journeys), Calshot. Operated by crews from Hythe and Southampton.

60 - Bus Station, Millbrook, Redbridge, Totton, Testwood, Ower, Romsey, Cupernham, Braishfield. Operated by X rota drivers.

61 - Bus Station, Shirley, Maybush Corner, Nursling, Romsey (Market Place).

61A - Bus Station, Shirley, Maybush Corner, Hillyfields, Nursling, Upton Crescent.

62 - Bus Station, Bassett, Chilworth, North Baddesley, Scragg Hill, Romsey (Market Place).

63 - Bus Station, Shirley, Maybush Corner, Nursling, Rownhams, Scragg Hill, Romsey (Market Place).

64 - New Docks (King George V Graving Dock), New Docks (No.8 Gate), Old Docks (No.4 Gate), Old Docks (35 Canteen).

70 - Bus Station, Northam, Bitterne, Thornhill, Bursledon, Sarisbury Green, Park Gate, Lock's Heath, Titchfield, Stubbington, Lee-on-Solent, Privett, Gosport (Ferry). Operated by Fareham crews.

71 - Bus Station, Northam, Bitterne, Thornhill, Hedge End, Pilands Estate, Hound Corner, Hamble (Square).

76 - Bus Station, Northam, Bitterne, Thornhill, Hedge End, Botley, Curbridge, Burridge, Swanwick, Park Gate, Segensworth, Catisfield, Hill Park, Fareham (Bus Station). Operated by Fareham crews.

82 - Bus Station, Northam, Bitterne, Thornhill, Pilands Estate, Hound Corner, Hamble. Operated by X rota drivers.

86 - Bus Station, Northam, Bitterne, Thornhill, Hedge End, Boorley Green, Botley, Curbridge, Bishop's Waltham.

87 - Bus Station, Bassett, Chandler's Ford, Hocombe Road, Hursley (some journeys).

88 88A - Rail Station (downside), Bus Station, Northam, Bitterne, Thornhill, Thornhill Estate (Tatwin Crescent 88 or Burgoyne Road 88A). City service.

93 - Bus Station, Northam, Bitterne, Bursledon, Sarisbury Green, Warsash, Titchfield, Stubbington, Lee-on-Solent, Privett, Gosport (Ferry). Operated by Fareham crews.

96 - Bus Station, Millbrook, Redbridge, Totton, Rushington, Foxhills, Ashurst, Woodlands. Operated by X rota drivers.

141 - Southampton Docks Tour, departing from the Civic Centre. Joint with Southampton City Transport Department.

226 - Bus Station, Millbrook, Redbridge, Totton, Hounslow, Marchwood, Clay Meadows Estate, Hardley (Fawley Refinery). Works service with limited pick-up and set-down. One return journey Monday to Friday.

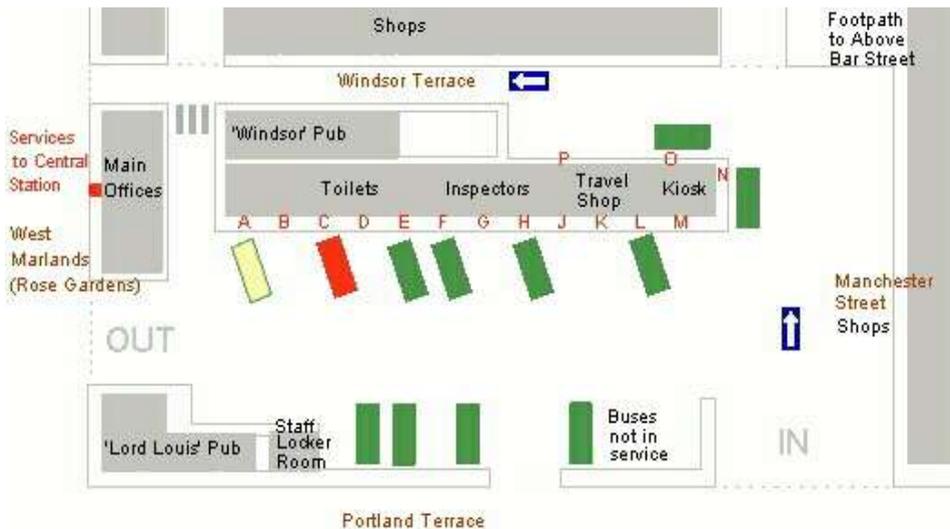
The future Marlands Shopping Centre.

Southampton bus station opened in 1933. In the mid 1960s a new building was built but the old office block was retained. The new structure was only temporary as was the Lord Louis public house as the site had been earmarked for redevelopment. Originally intended to be a single storey, a staff area including a canteen and a snooker room was added above.



For some reason, although staff toilets were included a locker room was not. This was placed on the opposite side of the bus station, next to the Lord Louis. Manchester Street and Windsor Terrace were open to traffic in the direction of the arrows.

Of the surrounding buildings, I remember Percy the gents hairdresser in Manchester Street. He moved to Highfield. Also on that side was the Co-op Travel Agency, where some of us went to a beer tasting in the rooms above. Opposite the Windsor pub was the optician Dollond & Aitchison. Towards the other end of Windsor Terrace was Plesteads pie shop which still has branches in East Street and Shirley.



Bus Stands - around 1970 but from memory so not 100% certain:

A - 19 20 27
B - 39 40 40A 56 96
C - 37 57 60
D - 36 36A
E - 58 58A 59 59A
F - 35
G - 41 43 44 48
H - 47
J - 47A 87
K - Spare
L/M - 61 61A 62 63
N - 71 82 88 88A
O/P 50 51 51A 53
O/P 70 76 86 93

The plan above is from memory and a diagram in the May 1979 timetable. When I was a child, before the new buildings were built, the buses stopped around the office block and out in the Rose Gardens between the bus station and the Civic Centre. Even after the new bus station opened, for a time there were houses opposite and down the hill to the power station, so we had to be quiet first thing in the morning. The houses have been replaced by the Asda supermarket, offices, a car park and student accommodation. Toys 'R' Us occupies the site of the power station.

The bus station site is now occupied by the Marlands Shopping Centre. Inside there is a row of shopfronts from the old Manchester Street. The path from Above Bar is still there, forming the entrance to that side of the mall. The Rose Gardens disappeared long ago to make more room for traffic.

The National Bus Company.



In 1968 the Labour government under transport minister Barbara Castle set up the National Bus Company to run the state owned bus companies, by then most of the non-municipal operators, in England and Wales. One of the results of this was the merger of Hants & Dorset and Wilts & Dorset under the Hants & Dorset name. The Gosport and Fareham Provincial company also came under Hants & Dorset's control but for legal reasons retained the name Provincial.



The combined Hants & Dorset fleet was renumbered and painted in NBC poppy red, although one Daimler based at Southampton and used on route 54 to West End was initially painted in apple green and Southampton took delivery of a couple of green Leyland Nationals diverted from London Country. The buses lost their old fleet number plates and were given new stick-on numbers with coloured discs to denote the garage.

Provincial buses acquired the NBC apple green livery. The tours department was merged with Shamrock & Rambler and handed over to National Travel.



Under a Conservative government the NBC was broken up, then privatised. Just before this, from 1983 the bus services of Hants & Dorset were split into Wilts & Dorset in the south and west, Provincial in the Gosport and Fareham area and Hampshirebus for the remainder. Shamrock & Rambler, which had become part of National Travel, was taken back and the engineering department was set up as a separate company.

Hampshirebus went to Stagecoach in April 1987. Wilts & Dorset was sold as a private concern which in August 2003 was bought by Go Ahead. Provincial was sold to its management and staff who sold it to the First Group in October 1995.



In 1986 Southern Vectis set up a subsidiary company called Musterphantom trading as Solent Blue Line in direct competition for the Southampton area routes. Southampton Citybus responded with increased frequencies including the use of ex London Transport Routemasters with conductors. As a result, Hampshirebus pulled out of Southampton in October 1987 leaving Solent Blueline with the former Hants & Dorset routes in Southampton, Eastleigh and the Waterside.

Shamrock & Rambler and Hants & Dorset Engineering were also sold and, with all the component companies gone, Hants & Dorset was wound up.

Hants & Dorset / Wilts & Dorset.

In 1971 the combined Hants & Dorset, Wilts & Dorset and Shamrock & Rambler fleet was renumbered with the fleet number plates replaced by stick-on numbers and coloured discs.

Depot	Old	New
Southampton	1512	Yellow
Eastleigh	1282	Yellow, Grey
Fareham	1557	Yellow, Black
Winchester	1489	Yellow, Orange
Woolston	1538	Yellow, Pink
Poole	1540	White
Bournemouth	1608	White, Black
Blandford	?	White, Grey
Lymington	1524	White, Orange
Ringwood	1419	White, Pink
Swanage		White, Brown
Salisbury	238	Cyan
Amesbury	812	Cyan, Pink
Andover	610	Cyan, Orange
Basingstoke	245	Cyan, Black
Pewsey	637	Cyan, Grey

Blandford plate colours are not known. Swanage was previously a Southern National depot.

Fleet numbers are for effect only and may not have been allocated to the depot shown.



Newly painted in NBC poppy red, numbered 1457 and sporting a yellow Southampton disc, the former 1393 (UEL714) is in Grosvenor Square.

Buses still in Tilling green have been renumbered and given new style fleet names but in yellow rather than white. The mudguards have been painted green instead of the original black and the wheels grey.

These older Lodekkas originally had a destination display including a route via blind.

Outre Manche ... une autre vie.

The first Thoresen car ferries from Southampton to Cherbourg were small and nowhere near as well equipped as the modern mini-liners which crossed the channel by the end of the twentieth century.

They were followed by newer Townsend Thoresen ferries but these were still small in comparison to the ships which would eventually be introduced.

The small ferries often meant an uncomfortable crossing. On a particularly rough night one winter no vehicles could be loaded at Le Havre, the ferry left from a pontoon with just a handful of foot passengers.

We were not allowed to leave the lounge area and all food and drink was brought to us, on paper plates and in plastic cups. The only safe place to sleep was on the floor.

P&O introduced the slightly bigger Leopard and Dragon but the services of both companies from Southampton were often cancelled. Later P&O would absorb Townsend Thoresen and move to Portsmouth.

Despite the problem of reliability, I often travelled by ferry from Southampton for a weekend in Cherbourg, Le Havre, Rouen or Paris. But if I wanted to go anywhere else the only way was via London and Dover or Folkestone. On Hants & Dorset we worked six days a week but every few weeks we had a weekend off. Because of the way the rota worked this would mean an afternoon finish on the Friday and a return to work on the Monday afternoon.



By travelling overnight I could be in Brussels by nine o'clock on Saturday morning and if I wanted to go further Amsterdam, Cologne and Strasbourg were easily reachable. I could then stay Saturday night and did not need to leave for home until late on Sunday, arriving home usually about eight on Monday morning. A few hours sleep and I was back at work again.

I sometimes caught a train called the Night Ferry. It ran from London Victoria to Paris via Dover and Dunkerque with one sleeping car going to Brussels, the only passenger train to cross the channel (freight wagons also did). I travelled in an ordinary seat and these coaches did not go on the ferry but the sleeping cars and luggage vans did. Getting the carriages on and off the ferry was very noisy. It was an expensive way to travel but there was no guarantee of any sleep.

One morning, after leaving Dover for London, the train stopped at a red signal. Hauled by a small electric loco and reportedly the heaviest passenger train in Britain, we were stuck. Eventually another train was brought up to push us. We passed through commuter stations with crowded platforms. On arrival at Victoria the announcement 'The delayed 22:00 service from Paris has arrived at platform 2' - welcome to Britain and British Rail.

At that time you could catch a train in Switzerland showing London on the destination board. Of course the train had to stop at the Channel coast but one day we would be able to go to London and catch a train to anywhere on the continent as easily as going anywhere in Britain. That's what they used to say.

Weekends and holidays.

Brussels: I used to stay in an old hotel, Le Béarne in Rue des Bouchers / Beenhouwersstraat, close to the central station and within easy walking distance of everywhere. Good restaurants and of course good Belgian beer. Excellent train services to everywhere so visits to Amsterdam, Liège, Aachen, Cologne, Luxembourg as well as the coast at Oostende, Knokke and Blankenberge. I once saw a parade in the Grand' Place / Grote Markt and as it finished I walked round the corner to see the televisions in a shop showing the event with the credits rolling. Every set was tuned to the BBC.

Lille: Further than Calais, no special reason, just within easy distance for a short break and not full of Brits on booze cruises. Cheaper than Brussels with frequent trains for a day trip. I once went to the ABC cinema, three screens with a choice that shows how long ago it was. 'Orange Mécanique', 'Raid sur Entebbe' and the one I chose 'Les Fous du Stade'. A home made comedy about a village which gets the Olympic Games. Ridiculous, funny and helped greatly by the noisy, mostly teenage audience.

Mulhouse: Unknown to most people from Britain, Mulhouse is about 25 minutes north of Basel by train. Handy base for Alsace including Strasbourg and Colmar, and for Basel and the north of Switzerland. Less expensive than these. Freiburg and the Black Forest are nearby. Home to the musée français du chemin de fer and the musée national de l'automobile, the (in)famous Schlumph motor collection. Known in the nineteenth century as 'le Manchester français' for its cloth industry. Nothing to do with the rain then. Once independent, Mulhouse has the unique distinction of having voted (under some duress) to become part of France. Originally Mülhausen, locals call it Milhüs.

Luzern: Expensive to stay in but worth saving for to be within easy reach of some of the best scenery ever. I found Olten to the north was a conference centre, had plenty of hotels and excellent rail connections all over the country. It just means starting out a little earlier if I want to take a trip from Luzern. I once stayed in a hotel overlooking Olten train station. Big mistake, trains all night and announcements too. Nice walks along the river.

I also made many shorter journeys to Cherbourg, Le Havre, Rouen and Paris.



Isn't that one of ours?

Hants & Dorset were famous for their coach holidays which they had run for many years. The coach drivers were carefully selected to look after the customers and the tours stayed at top class hotels. Even the daily newspaper was included in the price for tours in Britain.

As well as holidays in Great Britain there were holidays and short tours on the continent. I once saw a Hants & Dorset coach in Luzern and on another occasion nearby in Alpnachstad.

The kiosk under the Eiffel Tower sold only non-alcoholic drinks. I tried an alcohol-free beer and it was horrible. Looking round for somewhere to get rid of it I saw a Hants & Dorset coach driver. Job done. And as we were catching the same car-ferry home from Le Havre that night, he let me put my luggage on the coach so that I did not have to carry it round all day. That afternoon I went to Longchamp and lost twenty francs on the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe.

In September, when most of the holidays were over, the company let us have a coach for the weekend. We supplied the driver, space on the ferry was already booked in case of a holiday tour, so we only had to pay for the fuel. One year we had a tour of Normandy, staying overnight in a hotel in Lisieux. The guy behind the bar got drunk so we had to pour our own drinks and work out how to use the till. I don't know what time the bar was supposed to shut but I went to bed at one o'clock and people were still drinking.



The 1972 timetable advertises
3 days Lincolnshire Tulip Fields
4 days Isle of Thanet and Canterbury
5 days Norfolk Broads and East Coast
6 days Buxton and Peak District
6 days Devon and Cornwall
6 days Harrogate and Yorkshire Dales
6 days Welsh Highlands and The Lakes
7 days Wye Valley and Pembrokeshire Coast
7 days North Wales
7 days Edinburgh and Trossachs
8 days Edinburgh and Loch Lomond
8 days John O'Groats and Loch Maree
9 days Western Highlands and Isle of Skye
4 days Normandy (Carteret)
4 days Normandy (Rouen and Honfleur)
10 days Rhine Valley
10 days Switzerland
11 days Austrian Tyrol
11 days Italian Lakes
12 days Austria

Fifteen minutes of fame.

One of the strange things about being a bus driver or conductor was the way people saw you. It may be true of other occupations but this was my first experience of it. Because they knew who you were, you're the bus conductor, people would talk quite openly about their lives, their families, just about anything without having to really get to know you.

Another aspect of this was that women and girls hung around the crews on the buses and in the bus stations. A few of the married men ran into trouble over this, even if they had done nothing more than talk.

Once after I had finished for the day a conductor came into the Windsor pub where I was having a pint and asked me to do a trip to Romsey and back so he could spend the time with a girl. The outward trip was uneventful but at the Horns Inn in Nursling on the way back an inspector jumped the bus. Seeing the name on the waybill was not mine and seeing the look on my face he quickly reassured me that he was not supposed to be there either. He signed the waybill, I signed the other conductor's name in his book and he went back to the pub and whoever he was with.

On another occasion, I illegally took a can of petrol on the bus to rescue a colleague who had abandoned his car the night before. He had told his wife he needed to work late that night and early again next morning. He need not have bothered and could have saved me a headache from the fumes. His wife told me later that she knew all about his trips to the country.

For all of us there was a more serious danger, many of the teenage girls were under age but dressed to look older. It was quite funny to see them going home from school as kids and then again in the evening, pretending to be grown up. The law wasn't the only danger, the dads could get quite angry too. One pub landlord barred all bus crews after he found out his daughter was riding on buses.

Another thing that was odd was seeing one of these girls, many years later, on a bus with her husband and children. She surely can never have told him, maybe she had forgotten about it. A good job too considering the things the girls were called.

The best idea was not to mix work with relationships.

Did you learn to drive on the dodgems?

With a high turnover of staff, many conductors trained as drivers as soon as they were old enough at twenty-one. Since many of these had never driven a car let alone a bus the number of bumps and scrapes was pretty high. It was the conductor's job to exchange details and get witnesses. After one accident I had two lists of 'eye witnesses', one for those who saw the other vehicle come from the left, one for those who saw it come from the right!

I worked with one driver on his first week after passing his driving test. On the Monday, with a bigger bus than the one he had learned on, we clipped a wall. I picked up all the debris I could find and put the slab straight on the top, but I left a piece of black mudguard behind and we got reported. The second time I worked with him, on the Tuesday we knocked a cyclist off his bicycle. The third week we should have had an accident on the Wednesday but it was early closing day so we went without. The fourth week we got all the way through a late turn on the Thursday, I got off at the bus station and congratulated the driver for breaking the jinx. He drove the bus to the garage, collected the bus to take the staff home - and knocked down a lamp post.

Fortunately most accidents were not our fault. In The Avenue one day, the driver of a Hillman Imp tried to turn left, right through the middle of the bus. He claimed we were to blame as he had signalled. He insisted on calling the police, they arrived, they noticed that he had no tax disc. Another time my bus was hit in the middle of the nearside by a car which stuck its nose too far out of a side road. The car driver said we had pulled into the road to hit him.

Of course drivers were not the only ones to have accidents, conductors could too. When I was at Winchester it was common practice early in the morning for conductors to bring the buses out of the garage onto the bus station stands. One conductor, driving a semi-automatic for the first time, hit the depot superintendents office. My contribution was purely passive. Faced with a new type of bus, my driver remarked that there was no hand brake. I spotted a blue lever sticking out from the steering column and suggested this might be it. The driver released the handle and drove a brand new bus into the railings.

Any injury to a passenger was classed as an accident and the conductor would have to fill in a report. Mostly these were minor slips or trips. I did have one serious incident during an industrial dispute. We had been instructed by the union not to carry standing passengers. Knowing there was one seat left upstairs, I picked up a passenger and rang the bell. The passenger climbed the stairs but stopped at the top, unable to see the vacant seat. As we turned a corner, she fell backwards down the stairs. I phoned for an ambulance and found myself being charged by a policewoman over the incident. A union representative asked me to plead guilty (they would pay the fine) so that they could argue against the new 'standee' buses with fewer seats, but the charge was dropped.

What's that in old money?

In 1971 we changed from the old pounds, shillings and pence to pounds and new pence. Many people found the changeover difficult. Some had decided it would be difficult, others were against the change for various reasons. The two sets of coins are shown below.



On top of a one pound note are:

A half-crown (2/6d), a two shilling piece (2/-), a shilling (1/-), a sixpence (6d), a penny (1d) and a threepenny bit (3d) (old money).

A fifty pence piece (50p), a ten pence piece (10p), a five pence piece (5p), a two pence piece (2p), a penny (1p) and half penny (1/2p) (new money).

The word 'NEW' would later be dropped from the coins and the silver ones reduced in size.

The pound note would soon be redesigned and a bit later replaced by a coin.

The first decimal coin was the florin, or two shillings, introduced way back in 1849. In 1965 the decision was taken to change the currency completely. The farthing had been withdrawn in 1960. In 1968 five and ten pence coins were introduced to replace the shilling and two shillings. In 1969 the ten shilling note was replaced by a fifty pence coin and the old halfpenny was withdrawn. 1970 saw the withdrawal of the half-crown.

The bronze two pence, one penny and half penny entered circulation in 1971 when the old threepence and penny ceased to be legal tender. The old sixpence was kept until about 1980 and used as a two-and-a-half pence coin. We had samples of the new coins a few weeks before the change so that we could practise handling them.

We had to work for one week using both currencies side by side which was very confusing for the passengers and by the Saturday evening we were all running very short of change. We also had to watch out for people trying to use old halfpennies as two pence pieces.

The new half penny and the old sixpence were withdrawn around 1980. In 1982 a twenty pence coin was introduced and in 1983 the pound note was replaced by a coin. A smaller version of the five pence piece arrived in 1990 followed by a smaller ten pence in 1992. In 1998 the fifty pence was also replaced by a smaller version and a two pound coin introduced.

1/2p = 1d	14 1/2p = 2/11	28 1/2p = 5/9 1/2	42 1/2p = 8/6
1p = 2 1/2d	15p = 3/-	29p = 5/9 1/2	43p = 8/7
1 1/2p = 3 1/2d	15 1/2p = 3/1	29 1/2p = 5/11	43 1/2p = 8/2 1/2
2p = 5d	16p = 3/2 1/2	30p = 6/-	44p = 8/9 1/2
2 1/2p = 6d	16 1/2p = 3/3 1/2	30 1/2p = 6/1	44 1/2p = 8/11
3p = 7d	17p = 3/5	31p = 6/2 1/2	45p = 9/-
3 1/2p = 8 1/2d	17 1/2p = 3/6	31 1/2p = 6/3 1/2	45 1/2p = 9/1
4p = 11d	18p = 3/7	32p = 6/5	46p = 9/2 1/2
4 1/2p = 11d	18 1/2p = 3/8 1/2	32 1/2p = 6/6	46 1/2p = 9/3 1/2
5p = 1/-	19p = 3/9 1/2	33p = 6/7	47p = 9/5
5 1/2p = 1/1	19 1/2p = 3/11	33 1/2p = 6/8 1/2	47 1/2p = 9/6
6p = 1/2 1/2	20p = 4/-	34p = 6/9 1/2	48p = 9/7
6 1/2p = 1/3 1/2	20 1/2p = 4/1	34 1/2p = 6/11	48 1/2p = 9/8 1/2
7p = 1/5	21p = 4/2 1/2	35p = 7/-	49p = 9/9 1/2
7 1/2p = 1/6	21 1/2p = 4/3 1/2	35 1/2p = 7/1	49 1/2p = 9/11
8p = 1/7	22p = 4/5	36p = 7/2 1/2	50p = 10/-
8 1/2p = 1/8 1/2	22 1/2p = 4/6	36 1/2p = 7/3 1/2	55p = 11/-
9p = 1/9 1/2	23p = 4/7	37p = 7/5	60p = 12/-
9 1/2p = 1/11	23 1/2p = 4/8 1/2	37 1/2p = 7/6	65p = 13/-
10p = 2/-	24p = 4/9 1/2	38p = 7/7	70p = 14/-
10 1/2p = 2/1	24 1/2p = 4/11	38 1/2p = 7/8 1/2	75p = 15/-
11p = 2/2 1/2	25p = 5/-	39p = 7/9 1/2	80p = 16/-
11 1/2p = 2/3 1/2	25 1/2p = 5/1	39 1/2p = 7/11	85p = 17/-
12p = 2/6	26p = 5/2 1/2	40p = 8/-	90p = 18/-
12 1/2p = 2/8	26 1/2p = 5/3 1/2	40 1/2p = 8/1	95p = 19/-
13p = 2/7	27p = 5/5	41p = 8/2 1/2	£1 = £1
13 1/2p = 2/9 1/2	27 1/2p = 5/6	41 1/2p = 8/3 1/2	
14p = 2/9 1/2	28p = 5/7	42p = 8/5	

A currency converter from 1971.

Amounts are rounded to exact coins, for instance 1p = 2.4d but is shown as 2.5d

A near neighbour and a close call.

I worked from Eastleigh on a number of occasions. The atmosphere was more relaxed than Southampton and the local routes were quite short, in one case too short. I should have known better, having lived in Eastleigh until I was nearly eight. The 123 from the bus station, at that time between Southampton Road and Market Street near the site of the current Swan Shopping Centre, ran via the train station to Campbell Road. I got on the bus, rang the bell and took out my ticket machine. The driver missed out the station as was apparently normal on this journey and went straight to Campbell Road where everyone got off. Without paying.

A conductor at Eastleigh got himself promoted to inspector. Due to take up his new appointment on the Monday, he spent the Sunday riding on buses in his new uniform. On Monday morning we all gathered in the rest room in front of a poster reading "For One Day Only, Eastleigh Hants & Dorset Social Club Is Proud To Present: 'H' The Great, Buses Will Run On Time". When 'H' came in his faced dropped and he looked horrified but one of the drivers assured him the poster was because he was one of the lads made good. He accepted this and went to work happy!

Another time, a driver and I were sent to Eastleigh in a hurry, taking a bus with us rather than catching a service bus, to save time. When we reached the bus station we were given a school run to do. Already late, we set off and picked up about a hundred children who we took to Colden Common. Empty, we headed back to Eastleigh but screeched to a halt at a railway bridge which was too low for our bus. The Eastleigh depot only had the old fashioned, low height buses with the upstairs gangway on one side. Our type of bus was forbidden on these routes. The only reason we had gone through the arch on the way out was because of the weight of the children!

Fleas love your head, don't lose it!

The near low bridge accident on the school bus from Eastleigh was far from unique. Some drivers were a lot less lucky.

Woolston Hants & Dorset depot closed before the Itchen Bridge was opened. As a result we ran the 81 and 81A between Woolston and Hamble from Southampton. Normally the service ran as a 71 from Southampton to Hamble then an 81 to Woolston and back before returning to Southampton as a 71 again. Some journeys starting from Woolston, particularly first thing in the morning, meant running empty from the city centre via Bitterne. Just before Woolston all buses had to turn left to avoid a low bridge.

Early one dark morning I was sitting on the back seat writing the day's journeys on my waybill. I looked up just in time to see the turning pass our nearside and the bridge heading right for us. There was a loud 'crump' sound from above and I looked back expecting to see pieces of bus falling to the road. None did. When we got to the terminal at the floating bridge I went upstairs on the bus next door. From there I could see all the roof ventilators were flattened and the strips between the roof panels had no paint. I suppose it's too late to report the incident now!

One City Transport driver became a sort of hero after taking a wrong turning and the top off his bus under Central Bridge. At least to the two school children sitting upstairs who apparently thought it highly exciting and got themselves in the local paper. The envy of their classmates too I would imagine.

Not content with getting stuck under bridges, some people have to go over the top. One driver, running late at Woolston, was told by an inspector to take his bus directly to the city centre for his next journey. He promptly tried to drive onto one of the two floating bridges and became wedged, putting the bridge out of action in the middle of the evening rush hour.

PLEASE LOWER YOUR HEAD

It was quite common to find this particular sign altered with parts of the lettering scratched off to change

PLEASE LOWER YOUR HEAD

to

FLEAS LOVE YOUR HEAD

I wonder how many people thought they were the first one to think of that?

All things come to those who wait?

As a 'spare' or stand-by conductor one morning, I was taken in the inspectors van to Romsey. The inspector drove off leaving me with the bus and half a dozen or so passengers.

I checked the bus over, set the destination indicator, climbed into the cab and started up. We were already late and as I wondered where the driver had got to a passenger came round to the cab and asked what time I was going to leave. I replied "as soon as the driver gets here" only to be told that he was not going to. It turned out that his conductor had been in the habit of driving the bus from the bus station until it reached the stop near the driver's home.

Now I had broken a few rules by then. But this was asking too much, I didn't even have a car licence. I stayed put and eventually the driver arrived and took over. To say I was not popular hardly covers it.

One evening, on a journey from Romsey to Southampton, a grey police Hillman Husky tried to overtake us as we drove along the 'Mile Wall' which runs down one side of Broadlands Estate. For some reason my driver decided to race the van but it eventually got past and made us stop. One policeman went to talk to the driver and the other headed my way. I was expecting trouble but it turned out they were looking for someone who had escaped from a remand centre.

Quite what they would have made of me and another driver on our hands and knees in the middle of Romsey Square, in the snow at eleven o'clock at night I'm not sure. We were looking for and found a contact lens lost in a snowball fight.

Cold comfort

Winter brought many problems. Drivers and conductors might become so cold they could barely function, but the buses suffered too. We borrowed buses from Southern Vectis one winter. The buses they sent over were of course for summer services and had no heaters. They also had twelve volt electrical systems instead of our twenty four volts. This meant the conductor often had to push the bus to get it started.

Another problem arose at outstations. These were small sub-depots outside the main towns with local crews but no garage. The buses were typically parked overnight on the site of old railway stations. This was true of Hythe where some of the buses were parked up right through the weekend. Arriving at half past five on a frosty Monday morning, the only way to get them started was to wrap a rag round the dip stick, soak it in diesel, set light to it and place it in the air intake. With the valves shut, one of the crew sat in the cab pressing the starter while the other got ready to open the valves as soon as the engine was warm enough to turn over. This practice was against the rules as it could lead to a vehicle fire but it was the only means available. It could also lead to a very black face, but I was alright, I was the one in the cab!

At least at Hythe we had a hut on the site where we could make tea and toast. Many outstations had no facilities at all.

The bus terminus at Hythe was at the pier. People ignored the large sign saying this was a bus terminal and parking was not allowed. We would leave buses in a position so that cars parked on the bus stand could not get out without a struggle. Petty? Puerile? Of course it was. Fun? You bet!

Some journeys operated via Eling toll bridge. At one point a dispute arose between our company and the owners of the bridge. The result was a ruling that passengers had to get off the bus and walk across. On dark nights, when the toll booth was unmanned, we would sometimes dash across without stopping. This could lead to trouble because somebody living nearby often watched and would report us. Well there were only four television channels in those days, so maybe there really was nothing else to watch.

We often had to exchange travel warrants issued to military personnel, particularly from Marchwood.

This involved issuing a ticket for the bus journey and a transfer warrant like the one here for the rest of the journey.

The next leg of the journey might be by any of the bus companies listed but more often than not the main part of the trip was by train.

HANTS AND DORSET MOTOR SERVICES LTD.		B 66702	
TRANSFER WARRANT			
Please issue tickets <i>Cross out not applicable</i>		Single Return 5-day 6-day	From :
			To :
Original Warrant No.		Transfer Warrant issued by	
Tick or insert Authority		Admiralty Air Ministry Ministry of Labour Post Office War Office	Depot
			Date
Accepted by		Serial Nos. of Tickets Issued	Fare: s. d.
Depot	Date		Total Amount
			s. d.

Holy city - but where's the soul?

When the King Alfred company pulled out of running bus services in Winchester in 1973, Hants & Dorset were given the licences. By the end of the year they were short of staff and asked Southampton to provide some on loan. A number of us were misguided enough to volunteer.

Winchester city services were still being run on a separate rota but most of the former King Alfred buses had been replaced. The routes mostly followed the King Alfred ones but had been renumbered which was slightly confusing for me because I knew the old numbers. We operated services to Harestock, Highcliffe, Oliver's Battery, Stanmore, Weeke, Winnall, and out of town to Owslebury and Whitchurch. The Fisher's Pond services had been withdrawn earlier.

Some of the former King Alfred buses were still in use, although now in Hants & Dorset red livery, but we had mostly Hants & Dorset vehicles including Leyland Nationals.

Unfortunately the people of Winchester proved to be the most unhelpful and pompous any of us had ever met. Although they made the same journey regularly they would not tell us the fare. If their stop was not on the fare chart they would not tell us where it was. They sat silently in their seats until we had driven past their stops and were then extremely abusive.

Most of the other conductors refused to go back after the first day. I stuck it out for a week but that was enough. No wonder they could not keep conductors if they looked down on them like that. With such an attitude I would be surprised if they still had any servants at home!

I am certain there must have been some nice people in Winchester. I just didn't meet them during that week and I met a lot of people. If this was the impression I got even though I had lived there as a teenager and managed to survive the week, then how bad must it have seemed to the others? But that was in the early 1970s, it would be different now, right?



The holy city was a name used by Southampton crews to describe Winchester. It was not meant as a compliment.



Hants & Dorset Bristol VR number 3397 pictured in the Broadway a few years later, on a 187 to Oliver's Battery.

And on your right is a red faced conductor.

Docks tours were a joint venture between Hants & Dorset and Southampton Corporation, with each operating half the journeys. The route picked up at the Civic Centre Rose Gardens.

They then ran via Western Esplanade past the Royal Pier and South Western House to dock gate 2. A circuit round the old docks included a pause at the Ocean Terminal. From the Old Docks the trip continued via the Royal Pier which we could drive along in those days. We sometimes stopped here for refreshments.

From the Royal Pier the journey concluded with a circuit round the New or Western Docks and then returned to the Rose Gardens. The conductor took the fares and handed out leaflets. He then gave a running commentary throughout the journey.

This entry in the 1967 leaflet lists some of the numerous liners still calling at Southampton.

SOME OF THE LINERS WHICH MAY BE SEEN DURING THE TOUR				
Vessel and Owners		Gross Tonnage	Length Ft.	Breadth Ft.
CUNARD LINE	Queen Elizabeth	83,673	1,031	119
	Queen Mary	81,237	1,019	119
	Curonia	34,172	715	91
	Sylvania	22,017	608	80
	Carmania	22,595	608	80
FRENCH LINE	France	66,348	1,035	110
UNION-CASTLE LINE & SAPMARINE	Windsor Castle	37,640	783	92
	S. A. Vaal	32,697	760	90
	Edinburgh Castle	28,629	747	84
	S. A. Orange	28,625	747	84
	Pendennis Castle	28,582	764	84
	CapeTown Castle	27,002	734	85
	Southampton Castle	13,152	597	77
	Good Hope Castle	13,152	597	77
UNITED STATES LINES	United States	52,072	990	102
SHAW SAVILL LINE	Northern Star	24,733	650	84
	Southern Cross	20,304	604	78
ROYAL MAIL LINES	Andes	26,435	669	83
P. & O. ORIENT LINES	Canberra	45,270	820	102
	Oriana	41,915	804	97
	Iberia	29,614	719	91
	Chusan	24,261	672	85

Before I did my first docks tour I studied the shipping movements in the local paper. The trip started out all right but I got a bit behind with the fare collection and was trying to point out places of interest at the same time. Having successfully explained the history of the Westgate, the oldest bowling green in the world and the former South Western Hotel, I got taught a very important lesson - eyes first, mouth second.

Head down, still handing out leaflets as we passed through the dock gate, I confidently announced "... and if you look to your left you will see the railway berths with ..." at which point the plan had been to name the ship which I knew would be there.

I glanced up and there was nothing. No ship, not even a small boat, just water!

There were other times when my heart rate increased during a docks tour. On one we had stopped at the King George V graving dock in the New Docks. Passengers were not allowed off at this point because of the depth of the dock but we always stopped so they could take photos. However, I did not speak Japanese. Ignoring my protests, one man got off. However much I insisted, he just got nearer and nearer to the edge so he could get the full scale of the empty dry dock with the solitary worker sweeping the last of the water. I was very relieved when he had enough pictures and went back to his seat.

On another occasion I went out on a special docks tour for patients from the Tatchbury Mount Hospital. The patients had a variety of problems and some would wander off if left unattended. They were accompanied by several nurses who counted the passengers constantly. Despite our best efforts we lost one person at the Ocean Terminal while everybody was watching the giant floating crane being moved. A frantic search followed but he was eventually found sitting quietly in the cafeteria, enjoying a cup of tea.

The strangest Docks Tour of all was the one where we arrived at the Ocean Terminal to find the France was about to set sail. Nobody wanted to leave until she had gone. Unfortunately this was at the start of the trip and left us with about five minutes to dash round the rest of the route. Although they had seen very little of the docks, these passengers gave me my best ever tips.

Power to the people.

We ran many services into Esso's Fawley refinery. The area south of Hythe was built up as a result of this huge plant and our fifteen minute frequency, much like that of a town service, was always busy. Later, Esso would buy a fleet of old buses to run its own local service to Hardley cinema and social club.

Early in the seventies, a new power station was built between Fawley and Calshot. The men employed on the site worked extremely hard and when they stopped they wanted to drink. On the last bus to Calshot one of the passengers collected the fares from the others in the pub at Blackfield and handed the collection over when they got on the bus. Anyone who did not pay walked, as did one conductor who insisted on counting the money to see if it was all there. He was unceremoniously dumped at the side of the road to wait for the bus on its return to the depot.

The men lived in the labour camp at Calshot. Some local people objected to the name but that was what it said on the sign. Calshot also had an RAF station with married quarters. A volcanic eruption on the island of Tristan da Cunha had forced the evacuation of the population. Many of these people were housed for a while at Calshot. On their island they had no money, if someone did something for you, you did something for them. It took a while for them to adjust and most returned home. Nice people, a road in Calshot was renamed Tristan Close in their honour.

The car park at Calshot was one of the places where conductors sometimes had a go at driving the bus. Outside summer weekends the area was almost deserted. There was a one way system in and out of the car park which you could drive round in reasonable safety. Most people who did this got away with it but there was a ditch alongside the road and every now and then a driver would have to come up with a reason why he wanted his bus towed out



The beach at Calshot was popular in the summer and at the time it was possible to walk all the way to Lepe.

Even in winter it was good to take a short stroll and get some sea air before making the next trip.

One Sunday I was on a 58 to Lepe Beach with a driver who didn't want to do the next part of the shift. We had a bus stand to park on but he spun the wheels so that they dug in to the sand and we were stuck. This made us very unpopular with the crew on the next bus who had to pick up our unhappy passengers.

Kids and animals - as in 'never work with'

A driver and I are sent out one afternoon to do a school run in the New Forest. The kids are great, telling us turn right here, turn left there, stop at this corner, drop me at that house. Fine, until the last one gets off. Help!

And I thought I was forever young. Apparently not. A small boy is playing with a toy car. I ask if I can see how fast I can make it go along the floor of the bus. He says "You can't play with toys, you're not a little boy". I say "I was once", to which he replies firmly and with absolute certainty "Oh no you weren't!". Charming!

Upstairs, travelling between Langley and Lepe Beach, a mother frantically trying in vain to divert her young son's attention from the double decker horses in the field. Or the bull at Nursling, which despite having a big field prefers to stand right next to the bus stop proudly displaying what may impress the cows but embarrasses a lot of people. Brilliant!

On a number 35 from Windermere Avenue about eight thirty one morning, a black labrador gets on the bus. It goes upstairs and sits at the front so it can see out of the window. At Green Park the dog comes down stairs and gets off - without paying. Cheek!

At Brinton's Road on an 88 and running late. I am upstairs and ring the bell a soon as the woman gets on. The woman stands on the platform although there are seats. I go downstairs to see what is wrong. Her dog is running alongside the bus with the lead trapped in the doors. We stop and the dog seems to have enjoyed it, the woman less so. Sorry!

The end of term, Swanmore school. A girl with a box, the box has holes in it. "I've got a rabbit, do you want to see?" says the girl. I say "No thanks" but she shows me anyway. The girl no longer has a rabbit but I do, under the stairs and just out of reach. Every time I try to grab it, it growls (are rabbits supposed to growl?) and shows its teeth. It takes ten minutes to get the rabbit back in the box. Thanks!

If you can't stand the heat, get out of the bus.

In Lymington bus station one afternoon, a cigarette in one hand and filling the radiator of a bus from a watering can in the other, a passenger reported me for putting petrol in the bus while smoking. This gave everyone a laugh at the time but vehicle fires can be serious. And this was one of the things we were supposed to cope with, without any training.

Stuck in the traffic that used to clog Lance's Hill in the morning rush hour, smoke started pouring from a car just in front of us. I grabbed the extinguishers from under the stairs and from the driver's cab. The engine compartment was well alight and the interior was beginning to burn. As other buses went by the crews gave me their extinguishers and I stayed until the fire brigade arrived. When I reached the bus station and reported the incident I was in trouble for not taking the car driver's name and address so they could be sent the bill.

One car driver in The Avenue had a small fire. I put it out and a passing motorist disconnected the battery. The driver wanted to know if it was possible to drive the car. Another driver I came across in Shirley, desperately pouring bowls of water over the bonnet of his car, wasn't going to get very far either.

At the bus stop at Stag Gates, a driver and I were sitting on the edge of the rear platform while the front of the bus quietly got on with the business of being hidden by clouds of smoke. A woman pushed between us and boarded the bus. Meanwhile, a fire engine raced past in the opposite direction. It eventually returned but by this time a couple of fitters had arrived with fire extinguishers.

I was on a bus as a passenger one evening when a car driver spotted that the bus was on fire. An off duty driver and I got the few other passengers off. The rear engine Bristol RE was well alight by the time we got to the side flaps to turn off the power and fuel. With the vehicle full of thick black smoke and flames round the sides and rear, I found the driver of the bus was still inside carefully packing up his ticket machine and paperwork.

One day, as I pulled away from Vincents Walk, a driver jumped onto the platform to hitch a ride to the canteen in Poundtree Road. As he got off I went inside to collect fares and he threw the match he had just used to light a cigarette into the used ticket box. Flames shot up the back of the bus and I rang the bell several times. The driver looked round, I pointed to the flames but he carried on to the next bus stop. I dashed round to the cab to get his extinguisher and put the fire out. When I asked him why he had not stopped straight away, he said that the correct signal for an emergency was three bells, not four!

'Allo, 'allo, 'allo, what's all this then?

You might think that if you were walking along the road at four o'clock in the morning, wearing a black jacket with yellow stripes, white cuffs and a green badge plus black trousers also with yellow stripes that any passing policeman would think 'That looks like a bus conductor going to work'. And of course you would be wrong. I was stopped more than once on the way to work.

There was a time when I thought I could play darts. The fact was that I was only brought along by the team because they knew I would show up and could fill in for anyone who was missing. That and I sometimes played 'for the gallon', an extra game after the main contest, for drinks. One night, having missed the last bus home from West End, I was walking down Mousehole Lane when a police car drove by. A few minutes later it passed me in the opposite direction. Then it returned and this time it pulled up onto the pavement to stop me. The driver, who was alone, got out and asked me to turn out my pockets. Finding nothing of interest, he told me there had been reports of someone shooting at police cars. If I had been armed he could have been in serious trouble. As it was he gave me a lift home, or at least as far as he could without crossing divisional boundaries.

A conductor was attacked one Friday night at Nightingale Bridge in Eastleigh on the last 48 to Winchester. This had never happened before and some of us wondered what the conductor had done to provoke the incident. The police decided to provide the journey with an escort on Friday nights. This turned out to be a magnet for all the local trouble makers, every Friday night there were arrests. When it came round to my turn to go out on this bus I was told there would be no police escort. Strangely, or maybe not, there was no trouble either.

We used to run the last journey from Southampton to Fareham as far as Botley where we handed over to a Fareham crew and crossed the road to take their bus to Southampton. The run was known as the Botley Changeover. No depot liked to give its good buses to another garage and the Botley Changeover often got some of the worst. A police car pulled up behind me in Bitterne on the return journey one night. The police driver leaned out and asked if I knew I had no tail lights. I did. I also knew we had no dynamo and therefore no front lights, no interior lights, no bells and if my driver stopped the engine I would have to get out and push.

Maybe the police driver of a grey Hillman Husky thought he had seen me in the cab of a number 71 in Hamble one night, maybe he didn't. He flagged us down but stopped some distance in front of us and by the time he reached the bus I was definitely on the platform!

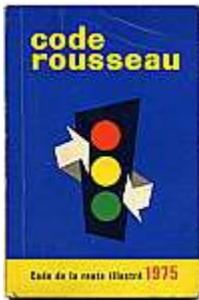
One policeman we all loved to see was affectionately known as Tiny. Monday to Friday he could be found on Lances Hill, a main road into Southampton. The traffic jams in the 1970s were terrible, but Tiny knew a thing or two about getting traffic moving. When he said stop, you stopped. When he said go, you went. And heaven help anyone who didn't!

Flic storys - Attracting unwelcome attention.

Travelling frequently, young, alone and not behaving like a typical tourist can lead to trouble.

Crossing the road against a red light with other people in the middle of Luzern I got stopped. As soon as the policeman discovered I was English he tells me all about his holiday in Devon a couple of years earlier. And other people continued to cross against the signal! At least he let me off.

I have no idea how many times I had walked along the Boulevard de Strasbourg in Le Havre. Early one Sunday morning, with hardly any traffic, I stepped off the kerb against a red light. Not just any red light, the one by the Sous Préfecture, with two police officers watching me. No point in going back, they stepped forward ready to book me. The conversation went something like "Vous connaissez le Code de la Route?" (well, yes, I did but ...), "Sorry, I don't understand", "Le Code de la Route, vous le connaissez?", "Sorry?", (turning to his colleague) "Vous parlez anglais?", "Non", (to me) "Passez!". Good job neither of them spotted that I was holding a French newspaper! I had completely forgotten about it.



Les devoirs des piétons. Respecter les feux, spécialement ceux qui sont destinés aux piétons. (page 28).

Another trip, another trip-up. Having checked out of my hotel in Mulhouse and planning to catch a train to Lille in the early hours of the next morning, I took my suitcase to the station. I was going to spend the day in Switzerland then catch a train back that night. The station, like many, had separate arrival and departure halls. I put my case in a locker on the arrivals side intending to come from one train, collect the case and go back to the platform.

I came back earlier than I had expected and went into the town for a drink. Returning to the station just after one in the morning, I entered via the arrivals door and retrieved my case. The lockers were right next to the police office, where I spent the next thirty minutes standing while three officers puzzled over my ridiculous story. They ate their sandwiches and read the paper. Finally, they let me go just minutes before my train left.

Flic Story: a novel by Roger Borniche, published by Fayard in 1973 made into a 1975 film starring Alain Delon and Jean-Louis Trintignant. Un flic is a cop. And yes, I know that in English the plural of story is stories.

Specials - schools, works and events.

Not police specials but school and works specials.

Works journeys fell into two categories. Those where the firm paid the full cost of the bus so we did not collect fares and those where the firm made up the difference between the fares collected and the cost of laying on the bus. On the first type we only carried workers from the firm involved while on the second we picked up other passengers along the way.

School buses were of the same two types. Passengers would get on a school service and then complain about the children.

One school special for primary school children but not on service to passengers ran between Worthy Down army camp and North Walls in Winchester. There were no fares to collect but the children had to be counted. There were about 120 on a 60 seat bus.

Fights would break out but the conductor dare not leave the platform to sort out the problem. If he did, he would return to find children hanging out of the back of the bus, trying to knock their brains out against passing road signs. The mothers would complain bitterly if little Johnny arrived home with a cut eye or a bloody nose.

SOUTHAMPTON CITY		TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT	
Available	SCHOLAR'S SPECIAL TICKET No. T	805	
between	and	inclusive	
This Ticket entitles the holder :—			
Name		
Address		
to travel on the Corporation buses to		
 School via		
before 9.30 a.m. and on the reverse journey between 3.30 p.m. and 5 p.m. on			
SCHOOLDAYS ONLY (Mondays to Fridays) during the School Term.			
This Ticket is issued subject to Statutory rules and regulations and is			
NOT TRANSFERABLE			
W. S. LEWIS, B.A., M.C.I.T.			
General Manager			
Signature of Scholar		

Other specials ran for events such as the New Forest Show where we ran a shuttle service between Brockenhurst train station and the show ground.

Not strictly a special, we ran buses between the Central Station and the channel car ferries. Many people arriving in the country from France had only large denomination English bank notes. As I used to make frequent trips across the channel, I would carry no change on these journeys but I did have my own fare chart in French francs. This made sure that I always had plenty of change in French money, all I had to do was pay in the fares in sterling from my own pocket.

Fire first, ask questions after.

Christmas Day was the only day with no bus service although we ran a reduced timetable on Boxing Day. New Year's day was not yet a public holiday and a full service ran. Or it would if everybody turned up for work. One year it was announced that anyone who reported for duty more than an hour late would face dismissal.

Although I was normally good at getting in for early starts, even after going out for a drink, when I woke that morning I knew I was going to be over an hour late. When I reached the inspectors' office there was utter chaos with drivers looking for conductors and vice versa. I pushed my way into the crowd and one of the inspectors saw me. He told me that my driver still had not arrived and I should go and wait in the canteen until one was available. A close shave, several people lost their jobs that day.

One night I was on the last bus to Warsash. Along Bursledon Road we passed an accident with the police in attendance. Shortly after this the street lights ended and the driver switched on his headlights. (The use of headlights on lit streets was not compulsory and the street lights now extend further). All the lights on the bus went out and the driver stopped. Unable to continue, I walked back to a phone box to call the garage to find the coinbox full due to a strike and the phone unusable.

I carried on until I reached the scene of the accident and asked an officer if he could relay a message for me. This done, I walked back to the bus and waited. And waited. Some passengers got off and walked home. The rest of us waited. More people got off and eventually there were only two passengers left. Finally a Shamrock & Rambler coach pulled up.

The guy from the garage was as surprised to see us as we were to see him. The message had gone from the police to the bus station but bus had become coach. The inspector on duty, deciding the call was nothing to do with him, had phoned the garage. We completed our journey with the coach, the driver dropped me off at the Rose Gardens and headed for the garage. I walked round to the office to find it locked, the inspector had gone home. This left me to walk home at one-fifteen in the morning with my ticket box and the day's takings.

When I arrived for work the next day, I was sent straight to the depot superintendent's office where I was told I was to be sacked for not paying in my money! By the time everything was sorted out, they had sent another conductor out on my first journey so at least I got some time off.

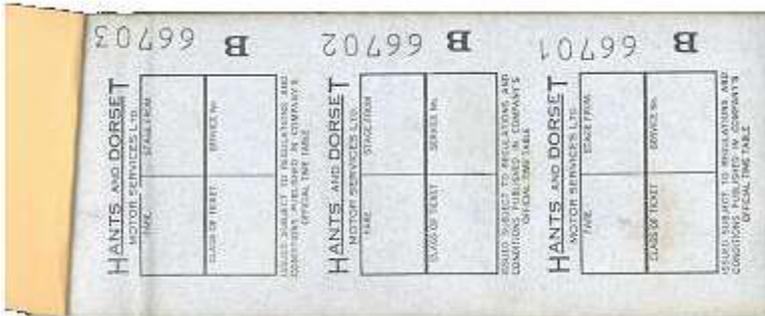
Getting in a jam over rolls.

On Hants & Dorset each conductor and one-man-driver had his or her own ticket machine which was kept in a numbered box along with ticket rolls, other tickets and money bags. Among the other tickets were five and six day weeklies, transfers to Aldershot & District and Southdown routes, Day Out tickets giving unlimited travel and emergency tickets.

The ticket machines were fairly robust but there were a few things that could go wrong. One was self inflicted, running out of tickets. To be avoided at all costs but it sometimes happened. The first thing to try was flagging down another bus and asking the conductor for a roll. Most would oblige but a few would refuse. I also dashed into the office in Salisbury bus station one day but was told I could not have any tickets as they were printed with Wilts & Dorset. I took a roll anyway. Although part of the same group of companies, the two often acted like enemies.

Another problem with the ticket machine was that it sometimes jammed, usually near the beginning of a busy journey. If all else failed you just had to use emergency tickets.

These were in the form of a book, you filled in the details of the journey and gave the passenger the bottom copy. It was impossible to take fares quickly this way, an absolute nightmare on a full bus.



The people in the office blamed the conductor for any mechanical problem, changing a ticket machine meant extra work for them. I went out one day to do three return trips on the number 54 from the Central Station to West End.

On the first journey I noticed that the shillings counter was not turning so when we got back to the Rose Gardens I ran upstairs to change the machine. "You conductors always blame the ticket machine when your money is wrong" was what I was told. So I had to do the other two journeys. When I got back, I paid in my takings which were far more than was shown on the waybill since we sold a lot of one shilling tickets on this route. Under the rules at the time the extra cash was returned to me, but now they wanted to give me another machine!

If you can't take a joke you should never have joined.

In the early 1970s there was a comedy show called 'On The Buses'. This was centred round the antics of a bus crew and their arch enemy, the inspector. The show became compulsive viewing, so much so that we had to see the end before going out on the next journey. The canteen in Southampton was upstairs and passengers on the top deck of the buses could see in. It didn't matter, we and they were going nowhere until the programme ended. You can always make up a quarter of an hour.

There was a spate of sabotage on unattended vehicles. A crew would come back from the café to find all the seats removed. One crew suffered a variation on this. They found the branch of a tree had been dragged upstairs and pushed the length of the top deck. The branches had opened out under the seats. The only thing to do was take the bus to the garage and find a saw.

A wet afternoon, we were late and the people seemed to be taking forever to board the bus. I was upstairs and as soon as I saw the last woman get on I hit the bell. The driver pressed the button to close the electric doors and pulled away. I watched the woman walk from the platform into the bus. She had a pole under her arm. It stuck out behind her. I looked out of the window. For some strange reason there was a heap of leaves by the bus stop.

Traffic lights could be fun. Not looking what I was doing, head down collecting fares on the top deck, out of the corner of my eye I could see the mirror. Someone got on. I rang the bell. The driver pulled away. Through the red light we had been waiting at.

A variation on this game was played by certain drivers. They would pull up in the wrong lane at traffic lights. The driver of a following bus, knowing they were on different routes, would automatically take the lane alongside. Then, to the first driver's amusement, the second would set off in the wrong direction when the lights turned green.

No. I'm waiting for a green bus.

We went through a stage one winter where we were short of buses. The solution was to hire some from neighbouring operators. Southern Vectis was the favourite as they had buses that they only used in the summer. These buses had no heaters and we sometimes had to push them to get them started as they had 12 volt electrical systems instead of the normal 24 volts. They were also geared for the island's hills and so had a low top speed.

When we could not get enough buses from the Isle of Wight we had to go further afield.

We tried not to use Wilts & Dorset buses because they were red and the public confused them with Corporation buses. I used one once on a journey to Romsey. When I pulled up at the Hants & Dorset bus stops in Shirley, people ran from the Corporation stops and then complained that we were not going their way.

One morning the only bus left in the garage was a Royal Blue express coach. We used the coach on a peak period journey from Calshot. We left a lot of passengers behind, partly because the coach had less room than even a small single deck bus, but also because some people flatly refused to believe that we really were a number 59.

My favourite episode from this time was on a 36 to Calmore one night, for which we had a Bournemouth Corporation bus. These buses were conspicuous for two reasons. Firstly, they were yellow while buses in Southampton were red or green. And then there were the stairs. Bournemouth buses of that period had an open rear platform and doors at the front. A passenger who had been to the pub got on at Maybush Corner and went up the back stairs. Having just collected a fare at the front, I went up the front stairs. The man turned, fled down the rear stairs and jumped off the bus.



Demon drink - and going hungry.

I once spent a Saturday night in Cologne. In the evening I went for a meal and had a knuckle of pork with dumplings. If that was the size of its knuckle I would not have wanted to argue with the pig. Afterwards I got talking to some people in the bar and we carried on drinking and talking until one thirty in the morning. All I could remember about the hotel was that it was beyond the railway station, over a dual carriageway and the end of the row of buildings was painted in black and white checks.

I walked through the precinct, found the railway station and there in the distance were the black and white checks. I climbed over the railings in the middle of the road. The hotel door was locked and inside I could see an old man reading a paper. I rang the bell, he looked up and then went back to his paper. After a few more tries I convinced him to come to the door. My next task was to convince him I had a room. I knew the number, it was fifty seven but what was it in German? Finally the few brain cells still awake got together and came up with the answer. I got to my room, closed the door and woke up at nine o'clock.

After a much needed shower I went downstairs for breakfast. All the other guests had eaten and left long ago. Just one place was left, the rest were being made ready for lunch. Feeling very conspicuous I drank the orange juice and all the coffee but left the rolls uneaten. I would regret that later. After breakfast I checked out and went to the station to catch a train to Brussels.

There was a ticket inspector at the gates leading to the platforms. I produced my ticket and it was clipped. On the train another ticket inspector checked and clipped the ticket. At Liège a Belgian ticket inspector got on, looked at the ticket and asked why I was travelling on a single from Brussels to Cologne in the wrong direction. I had asked for a return but had not checked the ticket. An on-the-spot fine.

What I needed now was something to eat and drink, so I went along to the buffet car. The train had started from Brno, then in Czechoslovakia. The buffet car belonged to the east European 'Mitropa' organization and I discovered that the supplies which should have been put on the train at Prague had not been there. There was only hard boiled eggs and black coffee. I had an interesting chat with the East German woman working in the buffet car. A great trip, but I was glad to get back to Brussels and some food.

Two pints of lager and a packet of extra strong mints.

Drinking on duty was, of course, not permitted. Indeed we were not even allowed on licenced premises. Even so

There were two pubs at the bus station in Southampton and crews on standby often had to be fetched to do a journey. Most of the termini on Hants & Dorset routes had pubs too. Sometimes inspectors would be sent out to catch crews drinking, often we were tipped off. I had a narrow escape one evening at Fair Oak, a place where I and the driver I was with that night had stopped for a pint on more than one occasion. For some reason we had decided not to go to the pub and were sitting on the bus when the inspector's car pulled up.

Bus companies like Hants & Dorset carried parcels as well as passengers. We collected and delivered parcels at bus stations and at parcels agents along the major routes. A conductor, with many years service, was caught in The Shoe at Plaitford but before he had time to buy a drink. When he was summoned to the office, the depot superintendent asked him why he was in the public bar. His reply that the pub was too busy for anyone to come to the side door was readily accepted, not least because he had been caught by a Wilts & Dorset inspector and not one of ours.

But you have to obey orders. Another conductor, told by his driver that there was something wrong with the brakes, found the nearest phone was out of order. The phone in the pub was working and when he asked what he should do was told to stay exactly where he was. He did not argue.

One of the breweries held a beer tasting in the rooms above the Co-op Travel Agency across the road from the bus station. The idea was that people would take a sip of several different beers and then score them. Unfortunately the event had not been publicised so the people running it came over to the bus station for volunteers. But as there was a lot of beer and a limited number of drivers and conductors, we had to drink a pint of each.

There was one time I was particularly glad when the pubs opened in the morning. And not because I wanted a drink, just a smooth ride. At Winchester we had a driver who at six thirty in the morning could not drive to save his life, let alone mine. With erratic steering, wild gear changes and sharp braking he threw me round the bus. Until he managed to get a couple of drinks inside him. Then all was peace and calm for the rest of the day.

Oh brother!

At Winchester one bus each day was completely checked over in the garage and so we had very few breakdowns. Southampton being a much bigger depot, this routine was not possible. In fact at one point maintenance became such an issue that a driver being dismissed for not taking out what he believed to be a defective vehicle caused a weekend strike. We mounted a picket outside the bus station while the union committee sat in the Lord Louis pub. The driver got his job back, then left!

On another occasion we had a 'work to rule'. This meant doing everything by the book which made us late and very unpopular with the passengers. It was also hard work.

The Corporation crews went on strike for more money. They belonged to the Transport and General Workers Union while we were in the National Union of Railwaymen, sometimes known as 'No Use Rushing'. We also ran city services but the union said we could not join the dispute or ask for a higher rate on these routes. We had to work as normal but could not cope with the number of passengers and were always glad to get out of the city.

Eventually the Corporation crews won a substantial pay increase while, classed as country services, we fell behind. In 1974, with inflation rising and against the wishes of the union, a dispute flared up. Lightning stoppages and an overtime ban lasted for several weeks but we were forced to back down. The company employed extra staff and altered the rotas to cut our hours. Drivers and conductors began to leave, many of them going to the Corporation. I decided that was what I should do too.

Not long after I joined the Corporation buses they had another dispute, this time over the bonuses to be paid on conversion of any routes to driver only operation. There were many stoppages for mass meetings. We all knew that one day there would be no more conductors but that was still a few years ahead. In the meanwhile, we wanted our share of the savings being made.

A different world - Changing sides.

After more than seven years with Hants & Dorset, Southampton Corporation was a culture shock. On Hants & Dorset the conductor had been in charge of the bus. In particular the conductor was responsible for time keeping and it was possible to go several days without seeing an inspector on the road. The Corporation put drivers in charge and had inspectors and regulators to make all the important decisions. The inspectors and regulators did not seem to be there to assist the crews, the relationship was more confrontational than I had been used to.

We had our share of rough drivers on H&D but here there seemed to be a rule that conductors must be bruised. I worked with one driver who would leave late so that he could drive flat out. One kept his foot on the clutch pedal all the time giving a rough ride, another hit the kerb on almost every corner. Another driver never took a tea break. He drove so slowly that I was always busy while the next bus followed almost empty. So I didn't get tea breaks either. The co-operation which was normal on the old company seemed to be completely missing here.

One reason for this may have been the fact that new drivers and conductors did not go on the rota but were given work one day at a time. It could take months before a vacancy arose. Once on the rota a crew, whether they got on or not, stayed together until one left or the conductor became a driver or the driver went on the one-man routes. Even on the rota there was a difference, the week was made up of a different duty every day.



The ticket machine was different too, the Ultimate. This machine took pre-printed rolls of tickets, each a different colour and with a different value.

Some fares required a double ticket. To print this you had to press the button under the counter as you flicked the lever to issue the ticket. This way the fare stage only printed on one of the tickets and a double ticket could be distinguished from two individuals.

The Madhouse and the Boys' Route.



In April 1975, when I moved from Hants & Dorset to the Portswood depot of Southampton City Transport, we had two sets of routes operated as circuits.

Crew changeovers took place in Portswood shopping centre, although this would eventually move to Vincents Walk in the city centre once only the Shirley routes were left crew operated.

The first circuit was known as 'The Madhouse'. The routes were City Centre to Bassett Green via The Avenue (15), Bassett Green to Docks via St.Mary's (13), Docks to Townhill Park via Lodge Road (14), Townhill Park to Docks via Lodge Road (14), Docks to Bassett Green via St.Mary's (13). Bassett Green to City Centre via The Avenue (15).

The second, known as 'The Boys' Route' because it was supposedly easier, was City Centre to Glen Eyre via University (11A), Glen Eyre to Royal Pier via Swaythling (11), Royal Pier to Glen Eyre via Swaythling (11), Glen Eyre to City Centre via University (11A), City Centre to Bullar Road (12), Bullar Road to City Centre (12). On Sundays the number 12 was not run between the two 11A journeys but was added to the madhouse between the two number 15s.

Personally, I preferred the Madhouse.

Our buses were the rather ugly Park Royal bodied Leyland PD2A and the much better looking AEC Regent V, the early ones with East Lancs bodies and the later ones with a similar but longer Neepsend body and semi-automatic gearbox.



In 1981 the last rear-platform buses were withdrawn and the Leyland Atlantean became the standard double-decker for both crew and PAYE routes.

The 12 route varied over the years, sometimes operating via Northam and Bitterne, sometimes via Portswood and at different times to Bullar Road or Townhill Park.



SCT also had crews on services 7, 9 and 17 from Shirley depot with the remainder being one-man operated routes often referred to as Woolston depot although they were actually based at Portswood.



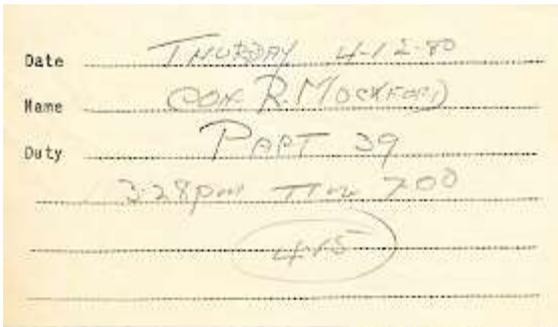
Decidedly indecisive.

Southampton City Transport was something of a culture shock. On Hants & Dorset we had always made decisions ourselves and the conductor was in charge. Crews on the Corporation (as it was still known) were used to asking inspectors what they should do and conductors simply collected fares. The problem was that nobody was willing to make any decision except carry on as you are.

One morning I came up from the docks on a number 14 to Townhill. We had only picked up a few passengers which was strange for the time of day. When we arrived in Vincents Walk I heard a passenger on the number 12 stop say "Not another 14!". There were a number of people waiting there but nobody on our stop. It turned out that there were two buses immediately in front of us. I suggested to the driver that we run as a 12 instead. Both services went to the same place but by different routes. The driver eventually agreed on condition that I took the blame if there was any problem.

When I got back to the depot I reported what I had done and was told that if I thought that was the right thing to do then fine. The fact was that H&D crews had been welcomed by the Transport Department precisely because we didn't need to ask first.

Of course not every inspector or old-time SCT driver grasped this change. On a Sunday evening I was running twenty five minutes late on a 15 with a thirty minute frequency. I wanted to wait for the bus behind, put our passengers on that bus and run empty to pick up our next journey. My driver would not do this without consulting the office. The inspector said no, that would inconvenience our passengers. We were to continue into the city centre and then cancel the next trip (a 12 to Bullar Road and back), leaving those passengers without any bus at all.



A handwritten overtime slip on a yellowed form. The slip has several lines for text, each with a dotted line underneath. The text is written in blue ink. The first line is "Date" followed by "THURSDAY 4-12-80". The second line is "Name" followed by "CON R. MOCKFORD". The third line is "Duty" followed by "PART 39". Below the "Duty" line, there is a line with "3:28pm TIME 7:00". Below that, there is a line with "4:15" circled in blue ink. There are several more empty lines at the bottom of the slip.

About the only time you wanted to see an inspector was when he was bringing you an overtime slip. This one gave me half of duty number 39 after my own early turn on the 4th of December 1980.

Four and a quarter hours at time and a half was worth doing and I would still have most of the evening free. Our hours were always rounded to the nearest quarter hour.

Another backwards step is seen here, the Corporation still used the 12 hour clock.

Settling in and getting out and about.

One of the reasons why I could not afford to stay on Hants & Dorset had been that I wanted to save the deposit for a home of my own. For more than five years I had lived in a bedsit in Shirley. House prices were rising and I needed a guaranteed income and some overtime in order to save and get a mortgage.

Even on SCT saving was not easy. Overtime was patchy, as inflation and unemployment began to rise staffing levels remained high. Eventually I had enough to buy a flat rather than the house I had originally wanted. I found a place near Portswood, within easy walking distance of the bus depot.

With this out of the way I was now able to start taking long weekends off. I had travelled on the continent as usual during my holidays but I had needed to work every day possible between. Unfortunately, although we had a five day week the rota was over six. The only way to take a long weekend off was to hand back the Friday and Saturday duties of the weeks where this was allowed. This gave Friday, Saturday and Sunday off.

But for travelling there was a problem. The Friday and Saturday were on the late week and the Sunday was on the early week. This meant I worked late on the Thursday and started early on the Monday. I could not travel until during the day on Friday and needed to travel back during the day on Sunday.

The result was that I now only had Saturday at my destination instead of Saturday and Sunday when I was on H&D despite having Friday as an additional day off. On H&D, when we had a weekend off, we finished on the Friday afternoon and returned to work on the Monday afternoon. This allowed overnight travel on Friday, all-day Saturday and Sunday at the destination and overnight travel home. Sometimes it is not the amount of time you have off that matters but how useful it is to you.

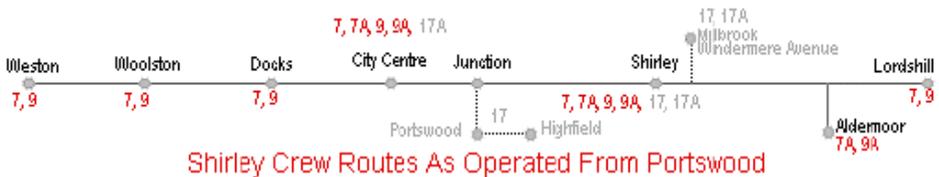


A change of direction.

The march towards driver only buses increased as operators struggled to keep costs and fares down. All the Portswood routes were converted and the Shirley depot was closed. The Shirley routes now operated from the Portswood depot which meant travelling to and from the city centre to start and finish.

Initially the routes included the 17 and 17A to Millbrook. The 17 was the only direct link between Shirley and Portswood. The service ran from the Town Junction via Bevois Valley and Portswood to Highfield while the 17A ran via the city centre and Royal Pier to the Docks.

When the 17 and 17A route was converted we were left with just the 7, 7A, 9 and 9A operating between Weston, Woolston, Docks, City Centre, Shirley and Lordshill or Aldermoor.



In 1981 these routes were also converted but a number of crews were kept on to run weekday, daytime journeys. All our double-deck buses were now Leyland Atlanteans and ready for driver only operation.

The last rear platform bus was withdrawn from service at the end of August 1981 but these duties were still crew operated when I left in 1983.



Seen here in Portswood depot are 162 (EOW 395L), 194 (HTR 558P), 265 (DBK 265W), 177 (PCR 300M), 153 (WOW 543J) and 179 (PCR 302M).

We all need goals.

One of the perks of working on the Corporation was the chance to do football specials. The overtime pay was not very much but we got in to see the match free. The downside was that we had to leave ten minutes before the end so that we were on our buses before the fans came out. There was also a time when an official at the Dell told us we could not get in to see a cup game. Until, that is, we threatened to take our buses away.

Our own fans of course were always well behaved but visiting ones could be trouble. Generally the two sets were kept apart but one Saturday as we left the ground a group of Chelsea supporters caught up with us. If we could have pulled out into the main road we would easily have got away but a special constable stopped us. We had to sit there while the bus was kicked and rocked from side to side. It needed one of his colleagues to step out and stop the traffic so we could escape.

May 1976. The day we won the cup I had a late turn. I took a radio with me so that I could listen to the match. During the afternoon the city was almost completely deserted. We drove around, stopping frequently to avoid running early. Then the final whistle and it's Southampton 1 Manchester United 0.

As if from nowhere thousands of people appeared in the streets. Cars jammed the roads, pedestrians spilled out from the pavements. Driving into the city from Portswood I abandoned any idea of collecting fares after London Road. We moved forward only very slowly and people were getting on and off the bus all the way. An amazing evening of absolute chaos and joy.



A matter of life and death.

When I started on the buses I was warned that every conductor at some point had to deal with a birth. I was told tales of babies arriving into the world on dark winter nights, a million miles from anywhere. My plan for this was simple. I would leave the driver in charge and go for help. No matter how far, no matter what the weather. I would be brave.

In the event I was never put to the test. In all the years I worked as a conductor nobody gave birth on my bus and I never knew anyone who actually had this happen to them. But still every new recruit was told that sooner or later

If births can be unpredictable, sadly death can hit suddenly too. My first fright was in Eastleigh when I had been in the job only about a year. It was in the evening and we were quiet. A passenger upstairs had gone past the stop he had asked for. I went upstairs and he appeared to be asleep. Suddenly he fell forward and I realised something was wrong. Fortunately the ambulance crew revived him.

On an early morning bus to the docks a young man collapsed. A diabetic, he had been late and had skipped breakfast. Another ambulance, another fright but a good outcome.

And then one Saturday morning on a busy trip into the city from Shirley, a passenger was taken ill upstairs. This looked serious and I immediately called for an ambulance. We were only a few minutes from the ambulance station but it seemed to take forever for them to arrive. Another passenger tried to help but this time it was too late.

We had no training for this kind of thing and no counselling afterwards. We were just expected to take it in our stride and of course that was what we did. Whatever happened we filled in the appropriate forms and then took on our next bus.

100 years of city transport.

Over the bank holiday weekend at the beginning of May 1979 Southampton Transport celebrated its centenary. Although horse drawn buses had operated in the town, typically carrying passengers from the Docks railway station to their hotels, true public transport started in 1879.



One of the AEC Regent double deckers (BOW 507C) was given the new fleet number 100 and was repainted in the old blue and cream livery.

On the Sunday and Monday we held a bus rally on The Common with preserved and modern buses and coaches from all over the country on display.

I spent a couple of hours on car park duty.



Southampton Corporation Transport Department ran trams and buses in Southampton from 1879. Southampton's early double deck trams were of the open-top variety. When enclosed trams were purchased, they were of a unique low chassis, domed roof design to allow them to pass under the city's mediaeval Bargate city gate.

The tram network was abandoned in 1949 but, unlike some other local authorities, Southampton did not replace their trams with trolleybuses, but switched directly to diesel buses. While operating trams, Southampton Corporation, in common with many authorities, ran their own power station. This was opposite the down or docks side of the central train station but has since been demolished.

1879 - First horse drawn trams operated by the Southampton Tramways Company.

1896 - Southampton Corporation purchases the Southampton Electric Light and Power Company.

1898 - Southampton Corporation takes over Southampton Tramways Company.

1900 - First electric trams run between the Junction and Shirley and between Holyrood and Stag Gates.

1934 - Southampton Corporation purchases the Floating Bridge Company.

1938 - Last tram to pass under the Bargate.

1949 - End of tram services.

1977 - Opening of the Itchen toll bridge and the last crossing of the floating bridges.

From 1934, the Corporation operated the floating bridges (chain ferries) across the river Itchen between Chapel on the city side and Woolston. These two bridges ran side by side from 1833 to 1977 when the new road bridge was opened, but the originals had been replaced in 1962. Until the new road bridge was opened, separate bus routes ran from the Woolston side although, unlike Hants & Dorset, there was no garage here. On the last night of the floating bridges there was a celebration on board with a jazz band and fireworks.

Good at reversing - has trouble driving forwards.

I applied for the driving school on Hants & Dorset as soon as I was old enough at twenty-one. Like a lot of conductors I had not driven any vehicle at that point. We started by driving round a disused airfield in the New Forest, getting used to the feel of the bus and the crash (or 'clash' as the instructor called it) gear box.

One group had a very old Hants & Dorset bus. The rest of us went on a Wilts & Dorset bus. Both buses were weighted with concrete to simulate passengers. I survived the first week but was not making enough progress to carry on.

I then booked lessons with BSM. My instructor said I would have no problem but the warning signs were there the day I had to go out with someone else. Having to show somebody what I could do, I became nervous. This happened on each of the three tests I took. At the time there was only the practical test and I should have been able to get through it.



When I went on to Southampton City Transport I applied again. Despite all the lessons I failed the test again. But I know how to reverse a bus round a corner finishing parallel to the curb.



Fearing the worst, hoping for the best.

All good things come to an end, but it would have been nice to have chosen when. In the spring of 1982 I became unwell with flu like symptoms. I took a few days off and went back to work. A couple of weeks later the same thing. This kept happening and eventually in July I went to the doctor. He found nothing wrong.

In September I had the worst attack yet and realised that I was having problems walking. My knees had become extremely stiff and painful. Again I went to the surgery. My own doctor was not there, a locum was standing in for him. How he came to be a doctor I have no idea. He did not have a clue. First he gave me a prescription for pills, before he had decided what was wrong and claiming there were no side effects. No side effects? It would be the first drug ever. I asked the pharmacist and he said there were several possible side effects.

By October I could barely put one foot in front of the other. I tried going to work but after three days I was forced to give up. The doctor now sent me for tests. These proved nothing. He came out with two comments that I thought were quite extraordinary. One was "I don't know what the future holds for you", very reassuring. The other was "I think your best bet is to throw yourself in the river". Was he mad? I lived downstream from a sewerage works.

And so it was that without knowing what was wrong with me and getting no help from the medical profession, at the end of June 1983 I had to leave the job that had changed my life. I had frozen on unheated buses in winter and baked on crowded buses in summer. I had directed traffic and tried to put out car fires. I had had a passenger die on the bus and I had somehow avoided having someone give birth. So many things I had done that working in a factory or an office I would never have dreamed of.

Now I was going to have to start again somewhere else. What new adventures awaited me? First I had to learn to walk again. After that, well that's another story

