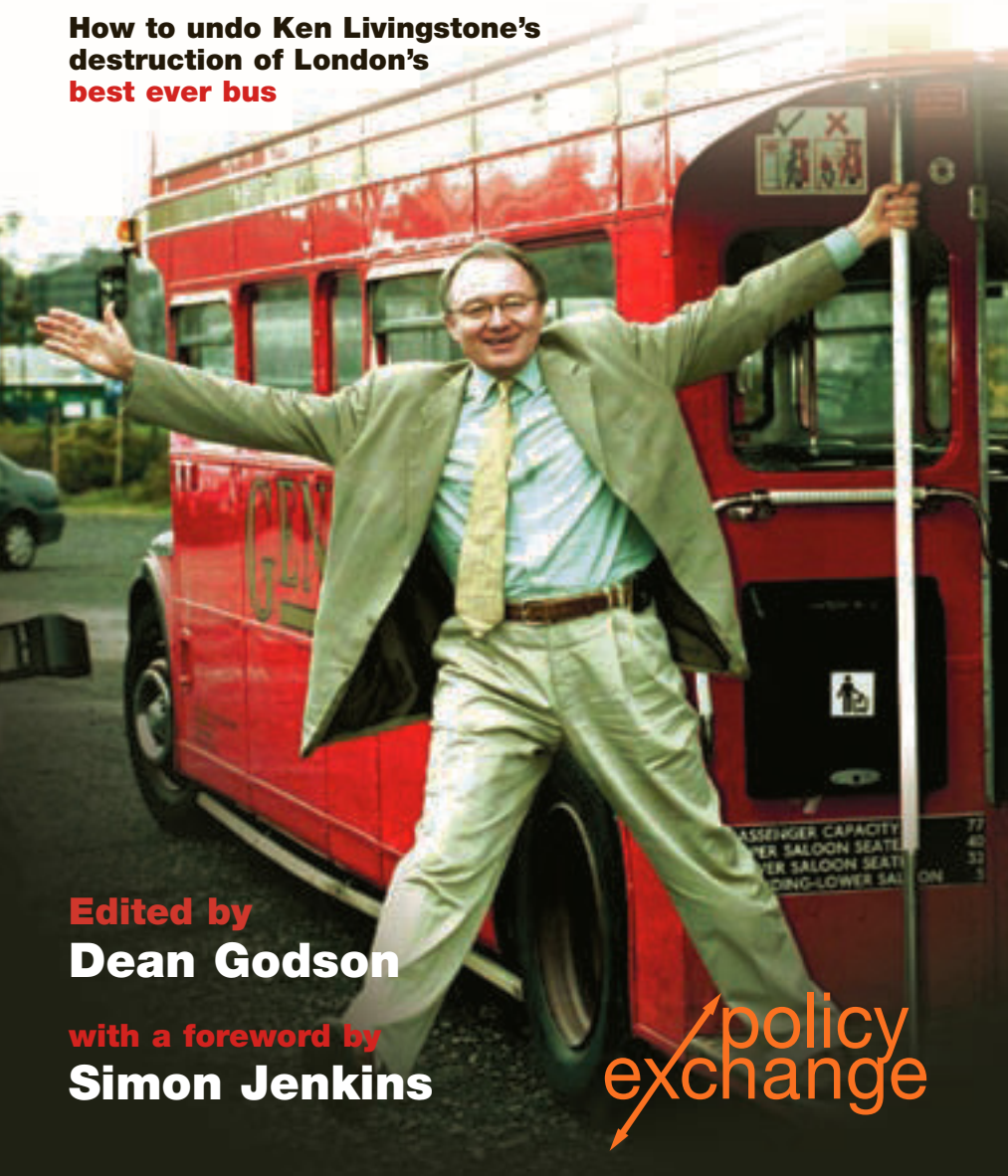
Replacing the Routemaster

How to undo Ken Livingstone's destruction of London's best ever bus



Edited by
Dean Godson

with a foreword by
Simon Jenkins

policy exchange

About Policy Exchange

Policy Exchange is an independent think tank whose mission is to develop and promote new policy ideas which will foster a free society based on strong communities, personal freedom, limited government, national self-confidence and an enterprise culture. Registered charity no:1096300.

Policy Exchange is committed to an evidence-based approach to policy development. We work in partnership with academics and other experts and commission major studies involving thorough empirical research of alternative policy outcomes. We believe that the policy experience of other countries offers important lessons for government in the UK. We also believe that government has much to learn from business and the voluntary sector.

Trustees

Replacing the Routemaster

How To Undo Ken Livingstone's Destruction of London's Best Ever Bus

edited by
Dean Godson

with a foreword by
Simon Jenkins

policy exchange

First published in October 2005 by Policy Exchange Limited

Policy Exchange
Clutha House
10 Storey's Gate
London SW1P 3AY
Tel: 020 7340 2650
www.policyexchange.org.uk

ISBN 0-9547527-7-5
Printed by Heron, Dawson and Sawyer, London

Contents

About the Authors

Kate Bernard is Features Editor of *Tatler*.

Colin Cramphorn is Chief Constable of West Yorkshire.

Andrew Gilligan is a Features Writer at the *Evening Standard* and Defence and Diplomatic Editor of the *Spectator*.

Dean Godson is Research Director of Policy Exchange.

Zac Goldsmith is Editor of the *Ecologist*.

Kate Hoey is MP for Vauxhall, the constituency which includes Waterloo Station

Simon Jenkins is a columnist for the *Guardian* and is a former Editor of the *Evening Standard* and a board member of London Transport.

Andrew Morgan is a co-founder of the Routemaster Operators and Owners Association and was chairman until earlier this year. He edited three volumes of the Routemaster Handbook and is the author of "Working with Routemasters".

Dominic Walley is Managing Economist at the Center for Economics and Business Research Ltd and is one of Britain's leading transport economists.

Foreword

Simon Jenkins

The London bus ranks with the red telephone kiosk, the black cab and the pillar box as icons of Britain's capital city. Commercialism has debased many with advertisements and overpainting. But the old double-decker survives in its mostly red glory, beloved and photographed by all. Nor was tradition confined to colour. Until now, the essence of the bus was the experience of climbing aboard and alighting. It was a civic ritual, an adventure, a taste of danger. The rear open platform of the stately Routemaster was unique among world buses.

Londoners live still in the vain belief that they are entitled to govern themselves. Hence in every independent poll and in every way they have declared their affection for rear-access Routemasters. They appreciate their ease of loading and unloading. They like the reassuring presence of a conductor.

Though the old throbbing, swaying RT vehicles have long gone, their offspring, the Routemasters, have proved supremely popular.

As a result, all major candidates at the 2000 mayoral elections, including the winner, Ken Livingstone, pledged to keep them.

Livingstone has not kept his promise, although as this pamphlet shows it was within his power to do so. He has capitulated to the commercial and special interest groups which he was elected to face down. A combination of health-and-safety dirigisme, the disabled lobby and heavy salesmanship from big European bus companies has inflicted on Londoners a sequence of poorly performing and claustrophobic buses, including the new single-decker bendies. The convenience and preference of the overwhelming majority is now to be sacrificed for that of interest groups and minorities. The people's mayor has become the lobbyists' mayor.

This pamphlet sets out the story and asks whether even at this late hour, it is not too late to save this most popular of London institutions.

Introduction

Dean Godson

The destruction of the Routemaster is one of the most controversial decisions taken by Ken Livingstone and Transport for London since the advent of a directly elected mayor. Yet despite the hundreds of articles and thousands of words written on the subject – not to mention the excellent work done by campaigning organisations such as "Save the Routemaster" as well as the *Evening Standard* – the overwhelming arguments in favour of its retention have never yet been consolidated in one place in a way that is of enduring value to policy-makers, journalists and the public.

One of the remarkable things about the debate over the Routemaster – London's much loved hop-on, hop-off double deckers complete with conductor – is that it is about much more than just a bus. It is highly revealing about so many aspects of public policy in Britain today. The first is the rising tide of the group rights agenda (or at least a particularly extreme interpretation of it) which has overwhelmed key public utilities and those who do business with them. This has been pushed to the point that it no longer even serves the interests of many of its

intended beneficiaries. The second is how small a role Londoners enjoy in key decisions about their day to day lives – especially when well paid technocratic elites within those public utilities make accommodations with lobbyists for group rights: truly a sign that the squeakiest wheel gets the most grease. Third, how important it is that when power is ostensibly devolved to localities that the structures are designed so that politicians and civil servants can properly be held to account.

The proponents of group rights referred to here are, of course, the representatives of the disability lobby. What an ascendancy they enjoy within many of our public services! When writing an article on the Routemaster for *The Times* (21 July, 2005 – see the Appendix) I asked the Transport and General Workers' Union whether it would back the retention of the bus. The answer, astonishingly, was no. Although hundreds of TGWU members – specifically, conductors – had already lost their jobs and many more were destined to do so with the advent of a 100% single-manned bus fleet, the union nonetheless believes that the interests of the workers must yield pride of place to the disability lobby's singular reading of the concept of disabled rights. Likewise, although Visit Britain should logically have a vested interest in the survival of the Routemaster as part of the "brand image" of London, it gave much the same answer as the TGWU.

As with so much of the group rights agenda, the disability lobby made some of its most significant gains during the latter years of the premiership of John Major – Ken Livingstone's friendly opponent from their Lambeth Council days – in the form of the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995. And then, of course, there is the ever-present shadow of EU health and safety regulations, further endangering open platform buses. Like so many forms of "consensus", this consensus snuffs out debate and creates fear – including, for

reasons that will be explained later, within the ranks of the disabled as well. To give but one example of the climate of moral pressure: in a notably ill-tempered reply to my *Times* article, the director of Surface Transport at TfL, Peter Hendy even questioned whether, because I am in favour of retaining Routemasters – by now a tiny percentage of the TfL bus fleet – I am against disabled people gaining access to public transport! (see the Appendix)

One of the delights of working for an independent think tank is that one can subject such claims to scrutiny without fear of the consequences. One manufacturer referred to in Andrew Morgan's excellent essay "Building the 'Son of Routemaster'": Some Real Alternatives Which Transport for London Passed Up" specifically refused to give us a copy of their admirable blueprint for a new double-decker (or even to tell us the name of the independent designer who drew it) lest TfL take umbrage and they lose future orders. In his essay on "The Politics of the Routemaster", Andrew Gilligan of the *Evening Standard* – perhaps the most knowledgeable journalist writing on the subject – further describes the heavy-handed treatment of one employee who spoke out.

Many disability activists are also privately unhappy with the destruction of the Routemaster. Why? For the obvious reason that disability is not synonymous with being in a wheelchair. To give but two examples: it is by no means obvious that the loss of the conductor represents a better deal for the blind or for someone who still walks, but with difficulty, such as an MS sufferer. Yet whilst the interests of different segments of the disabled lobby are not always identical (as in the case of the Routemaster) those components nonetheless believe that their collective interests are not served by falling out. Much better to present a united face to Government. So a lowest common denominator consensus is forged.

In fact, the new buses too often do not properly cater for the interests of wheelchair users either: as Kate Hoey, Labour MP for Vauxhall notes in her essay "The Horror of the Bendy", the latest breed of vehicles are frequently so crowded that the disabled sometimes cannot board (assuming the movable ramp is working). And then there is one unintended consequence of this very expensive capital re-equipment programme – at around £200,000 per bus: now that the TfL fleet is theoretically 100% accessible to the disabled, will all of the 32 London boroughs continue to feel it necessary to fund far more useful concessionary services to wheelchair users such as TaxiCard and Dial-a-Ride which of course provide door-todoor delivery?

So for the sake of a thousand wheelchair journeys per day, six million Londoners will lose their beloved Routemasters. Indeed, as Colin Cramphorn, Chief Constable of West Yorkshire, notes in his highly original essay "The Security of the Routemaster", much recent criminological research suggests that the demise of the authority figures generally, such as the conductor, has made the public space much less safe for *everyone*. TfL, of course, are not the sole villains here: the cost-cutting imperatives of the Thatcher era were also responsible for the demise of many Routemasters. And Zac Goldsmith shows in his analysis, "The Ecology of the Routemaster", that it remains the most environmentally friendly of London's big buses. Such contributions underline the point that saving the Routemaster is scarcely a conventional left-right, party political issue. Indeed, Kate Hoey, in her essay, notes that her low-income constituents are as angry as anyone over the apparent demise of the Routemaster and their replacement with Bendies.

Peter Hendy believes that the Routemaster's "iconic" status is not enough to warrant its continuation as a bus for the 21st century. Of course, the Routemaster is iconic, and the urban aesthetic ought not to

be overlooked (see Kate Bernard's charming essay on cultural and historical matters). But even if beauty and grace in the shared municipal space are irrelevant – as some TfL managers seem to suggest – the fact remains that the Routemaster is a gloriously *practical* vehicle. It represents an aspect of that concept which never enters TfL's discourse: *freedom*. In this case, it means the liberty to jump on and off when and where you want. Compare that to being trapped in traffic on a hot single-manned bus on a summer's day, fifty yards short of the stop – with a surly over-burdened driver refusing to let you off the bus for your own "safety". Indeed, I would use buses far more often if I could still embark and disembark at will. Like so many Londoners, I love the thought of being opportunistically able to hop on a stationary Routemaster at a traffic light. How much revenue is lost through being unable to do so? It is probably incalculable, but should have been taken into account. Indeed, Dominic Walley points out in his essay just how inadequate (and lacking in transparency) TfL's appraisal methodologies are. If an eminent transport economist has such difficulty in obtaining the necessary information, what hope for the ordinary citizen?

A recent personal experience further illustrates the problems with the new buses. I boarded a No 10 – a single-manned double decker – at Hyde Park Corner one Sunday night and reached inside my pocket for my fare card. I could not find it. All I found was a one pound coin and a ten pound note – scarcely exotic denominations nowadays. The minimum fare is £1.20. I duly offered the driver the £10. He refused it, claiming he did not have the change. He then refused the one pound coin as obviously insufficient. In the old days, a conductor would have let me on and if he did not have the change would have told me to pay when he obtained coins from other passengers at subsequent stops.

Instead, the driver ordered me off and told me to buy a ticket from a machine at the stop – and to get the next bus. The ticket machine was working (although many do not) but of course unlike machines on the Underground they do not give change – a point which the driver must have known when he instructed me to get off. In the course of all this, other passengers were delayed whilst I argued with the driver – something that would not have happened if a driver still did the driving and a conductor did the conducting, as on a Routemaster. I was left an angry dissatisfied customer, and the bus company lost a £1.20 fare. How many other taxpayers are similarly inconvenienced? Again, how much revenue is lost in this way?

Peter Hendy cites a bevvy of statistics to show how the number of bus journeys in London is rising – sure proof, he says that consumers are happy. The truth is that millions of us have to use buses and would be obliged to ride them even if TfL contracts specified that we all had to travel in open-air cattle trucks (incidentally, cattle trucks would certainly be better ventilated than the Bendies in July and August or the single-manned double deckers, with their boiling hot engines at the rear of the ground floor). A massive change has been made to the urban landscape with hardly any democratic accountability. The legislation creating the mayoralty also gave to the incumbent the power to appoint the TfL Board and it left the Greater London Assembly largely impotent to prevent such moves. The London Transport Users Committee, the official consumers' watchdog has feebly acquiesced. The creation of an elected mayor was supposed to bring Government closer to the people. Instead, Londoners enjoy about as much say in practice over a crucial part of the mayor's work as the residents of such remote Crown dependencies as Diego Garcia.

Our aim? To persuade all of the mayoral candidates for the next city-wide contest in 2008 to pledge to maintain existing Routemasters and to build a "son of Routemaster" — that will be as logical an evolution from the old design as the new London taxis are from their predecessors. As Andrew Morgan shows in his essay, it is not beyond the wit of humankind to devise something that reconciles the interests of the fully able-bodied and the disabled and that is good-looking street furniture as well. And, if we are successful in pushing the topic to the top of the agenda – well, who knows? Maybe Ken Livingstone, who began his mayoralty re-commissioning Routemasters, might just do another "U turn". Were that so, we would certainly applaud him. Better the sinner that repenteth….

One of the most pleasurable aspects of working on this pamphlet have been the spontaneous expressions of support from inside and outside the world of public policy. I would particularly like to thank Andrew Gilligan for his enthusiasm and encouragement; Andrew Morgan for his professorial authority; Zac and Ben Goldsmith and Robin Birley for their friendship and inspiration over the years; Lucy Ferry, Colette Hiller of Save the Routemaster for her time and goodwill; Joanne Cash for her sage and highly professional counsel; Matt Smith and Janan Ganesh, two outstanding interns, for their unstinting help; and to Nicholas Boles and his deputy, Jesse Norman, conductors-in-chief of the Policy Exchange orchestra, for understanding the importance of the Routemaster issue and for helping to keep it "mainstream" despite Transport for London's efforts to marginalise discussion. That is surely what think tanks are for.

The Politics of the Routemaster

Andrew Gilligan

"ONLY some ghastly dehumanised moron," said the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, "would want to get rid of the Routemaster."[1] That was in 2001. Two years later, in case we had misunderstood, Mr Livingstone pledged: "I will save the Routemaster."[2] Almost exactly two years after that, the final survivors of London's regular-service Routemasters will trundle into the depot for the last time, doubtless in a convoy of three.

The Mayor and his director of surface transport, Peter Hendy, are, as we shall see, sensitive about their own personal convoy of broken promises. But it is possible, too, to detect a certain impatience. Why is everyone so angry, they ask? After all, it's only a bus. Raise your eyes, protests Mr Hendy, to the "widely recognised success story" of the "rejuvenation of London's bus network;" don't let "sentimental

---

1 See, for example, Ross Lydall in the *Evening Standard*, 21 June 2005

2 Speech to London Region CBI, 2 December 2003, reported in Evening Standard, 3 Dec 2003.

affection" get in the way of an "acceptable public service;" save your pamphlets for "issues of consequence."[3]

Yet the Routemaster has always been more than a bus. Its fans have always been more than mere sentimentalists. And, as this chapter argues, its fate most certainly is an issue of consequence. Just as the Routemaster symbolises Britain to the world, so too does it tell us something important about our politics.

At its birth, the Routemaster symbolised an age of public-service idealism: a conviction made flesh, or at least aluminium, that something in the public realm should be the best thing possible, painstakingly and precisely crafted for the job it did, an object to grace the city it served.

During its life, so completely did it succeed in those aims that it has seen off five generations of new and shiny successors. Its age leads some to think it an anachronism on a par with the steam engine or the policeman's pointy helmet. In fact, for the specific role it performs, it remains the most efficient and the most practical bus ever made.

And in the manner of its death, the Routemaster shows how, in modern Britain, something which works and is loved can be replaced by something which fails and is hated, for reasons which are entirely unnecessary.

* * *

When London Transport introduced the RM in 1956, it was after two years of market research and prototypes, with customers consulted at all stops along the route. Every detail was thought

3 Peter Hendy letter to Policy Exchange, 1 August 2005. See appendix

about, and every detail was tested on passengers, which is why nearly every detail is right. There are clear lines of sight, comfortable seats, effective ventilation, handrails in all the right places, and virtually no conflict between the paths of passengers going upstairs and those going downstairs. There is both speedy boarding, and sufficient seating. The Routemaster is a democratically-influenced bus.

The decline of the public service ethos, the lack of care, or thought, or consultation of passengers is, by contrast, immediately clear to anyone who steps inside a new-generation bus. The seats are hard, set on different levels, and some face backwards. The sightlines are poor. The colours are jarring; the air is filled with high-pitched beeping noises. Ventilation barely exists; in summer, these vehicles are saunas, especially at the back of the lower deck where the engine is located. The buses are badly-sprung, and brake sharply, throwing their passengers around. On double-deckers, the flow of passengers trying to leave the upper deck cuts across those trying to board on the lower. The upper deck is vandalised and filthy in a way no conductor-supervised bus ever could be. Slow, lumbering, and hard to manoeuvre, the new buses are almost comically unsuited to central London's streets.

Survey after survey shows that what passengers want most of all is a seat, but this is the most fundamental thing that new-generation buses fail to provide. Modern double-deckers have as few as 16 seats downstairs. And a bendy bus, though it takes up nearly twice as much road space as a Routemaster, has a third fewer seats. Transport for London press releases say that the bendies carry "60 more people" than the RM. What they neglect to mention is that every one of those 60, and more besides, is forced to stand.

To achieve the same speed of movement with a one-person bus that the RM managed as a matter of course, a vast and costly infra-

structure has had to be erected. Passengers in central London are no longer allowed to pay their fares on the bus, because without a conductor it slows things down too much. Instead, 1,000 ticket machines have been installed at bus stops across town, at a cost of more than £3 million.

Astonishingly often broken or vandalised, never able to give directions or change, described even by the Mayor himself as "completely duff "[4], the machines make a very poor substitute indeed for a bus conductor. The streets of the West End have a poignant new tableau: the enraged bus passenger, trying to fish his money out of the ticket machine that's swallowed it, as the bus he wanted to catch pulls away.

It is not difficult to imagine what Londoners would have said about all this. That, no doubt, is why they were never properly asked. Not only were the new vehicles largely untested on passengers, no passenger surveys at all appear to have been done – certainly, according to TfL's press office, none have been published - for routes which have been converted from Routemasters to bendy buses. "You wonder whether they haven't come out with anything because there might be less favourable reactions," says Alan Millar, editor of the trade magazine, Buses.[5]

TfL bases its claim that the withdrawal of Routemasters is popular on just two surveys, of 350 passengers each, carried out more than two years ago on the 436 and 453, two bendy routes in south-east London. The bendies outscored both Routemasters and modern double-deckers on every criterion – including, somewhat suspi-

4 People's Question Time, Greater London Assembly, 2 March 2004.

5 Interview with author, August 2004.

ciously, the number of seats.[6] But the 436 and the 453 were entirely new services, introduced as supplements, not replacements, for the existing double-deck routes. Passengers, in short, had a choice; the survey only counted those passengers who had chosen the bendies. And a brand-new service is not something anyone could reasonably object to.

The withdrawal of the Routemaster has turned into the most emotive issue in London's transport for many years, spawning a petition with thousands of signatures, hundreds of letters and emails to the London *Evening Standard*, and the formation of at least two pressure groups. But in this debate the bodies supposed to represent the voices of the public have been all but silent.

The board of Transport for London, composed of figures selected to represent the public interest, never discussed the subject, according to two of its members.[7] The London Transport Users' Committee, the statutory body set up specifically to represent the views of passengers, accepted the change after a perfunctory discussion with a London Buses manager.[8] The LTUC, its press officer admitted, made no attempt to ascertain the views of passengers on the subject. Nor did it commission any of its own research into the validity of TfL's claims, several of which were, at best, questionable.[9]

Not only were passengers never asked about their brave new bus world, in several cases they were never even told. TfL is known for its excellent publicity material, with even minor changes announced

6 "Bendy buses win passenger approval," TfL press release, 1 August 2003.

7 Professor Stephen Glaister and Susan Kramer, interviews with author, August 2004.

8 At its meeting of 16 April 2003.

9 Interview with author, August 2004. The questionable claims included one that it would cost an extra £350 million to retain Routemasters.

through posters on the buses, signs posted at bus stops, and a press release on the London Buses website. But some of the Routemaster conversions of 2003 and early 2004 were not announced at all. The first that passengers found out about it was when a new bus turned up at their stop in the morning.

After the *Evening Standard* suggested that the authorities were "ashamed" of what they were up to, TfL began a consultation on perhaps the most controversial Routemaster-to-bendy conversion of all, the 73. But it appears little more than a sham. Two weeks before the "consultation" closed, TfL officials told the Save The 73 campaign that the new bendy buses for the 73 had already been ordered.[10]

TfL also ran a big publicity drive on the 73, with posters and leaflets bearing a picture of a bendy bus and the slogan "Better from every angle." Sadly, this claim has now been banned by the Advertising Standards Authority on the grounds that it is false.[11] With only 2,009 seats available in the peak hour, as against 3,960 under the old Routemaster regime, the "new 73" was not better from every angle at all.

Lack of regard for the facts continues to play a part in the campaign against the Routemaster. In August 2005, Mr Hendy described claims that fare-dodging was greater on bendy buses as "profoundly untrue."[12] Exactly one day later, internal TfL reports obtained under the Freedom of Information Act showed that the rate of fare evasion on bendy buses was 7.3 per cent, against 3 per cent on other vehicles.[13] The studies were done in November 2004 and March 2005.

---

10 Meeting between Save The 73 campaign and London Buses, 17 February 2004; minutes on campaign website.

11 See ASA adjudication 11/05/05, http://www.asa.org.uk

12 Letter to Policy Exchange, 1 August 2005.

13 Evening Standard, 2 August 2005.

In summer 2004, motoring journalists, including the *Evening Standard*'s David Williams, were invited by TfL to a "road-trial showdown," test-driving both a Routemaster and a bendy-bus on a private track in Bedfordshire. "Hot, noisy, and greasy," wrote Williams after his turn in the Routemaster. "No wonder drivers fight over the keys to the bendy-bus."[14] Others came to similar conclusions – a PR result for the forces of change.

What Williams and the other reporters could not have known is that the test was scarcely representative. The Routemaster they were given to drive, number 2760, was the only bus out of nearly 400 in the London fleet at that time which still retained its original 1960s engine. Every other RM in the fleet has been re-equipped, some twice, with quieter, cleaner engines, modernised interiors and improved driver conditions. Because of its uniquely unreformed nature, RML 2760 is never used in normal passenger work. Its only use is for the occasional charter – and in this case, for bolstering TfL's case before journalists.

In the West End, last redoubt of the Routemaster, a sign has been placed on every bus stop saying: "Buy tickets before boarding on all routes." In fact, passengers on Routemaster services are not required to buy their tickets before boarding – they can still pay the conductor. But TfL wants to ensure that the conductor no longer has any work to do. When I interviewed Mr Hendy for the Evening Standard last year, this practice produced the following illuminating exchange:

14 Evening Standard, 6 August 2004.

Q: Why have you got signs at all the bus stops saying something that's not true?

A: Because we'd like people to pay before they board.

Q: But the sign says you've got to.

A: Well, why not?

Q: Because it's not true.

A: I don't want people to pay on board. I want people to buy a ticket before they get on, because it's a huge benefit…it gives us the opportunity of replacing RMs.[15]

TfL has been quick of the mark to stifel debate. Colin Curtis, the President of the Routemaster Operators' and Owners' Association, was threatened that if the RMOOA criticised the decision to scrap the Routemaster, then all the London bus companies could pull out of its grand fiftieth anniversary Routemaster rally in Finsbury Park last year. "Any suggestion of sparking an *Evening Standard* campaign or whipping up public support for [the Routemaster's] retention would be disastrous [for you]," they were warned.[16]

Most disturbingly of all, a London bus driver, Stephen Morrey, was threatened with disciplinary action after mildly criticising

15 Peter Hendy interview with author, July 2004.

16 Interview with the then RMOOA Chairman, Andrew Morgan, with author, August 2004.

modern buses on the Routemaster Exchange website. In a statement, John Trayner, the operations director of Mr Morrey's employer, London General, said:

> Mr Morrey posted a note on an Internet bulletin board. As a result of a personal complaint from Peter Hendy, we investigated his claim and found it was incorrect. He was called in for a fact-finding enquiry and told there would be further action against him, but he would have not have been sacked.[17]

With the threat of disciplinary action hanging over him, Mr Morrey suffered panic attacks and stress. He was prescribed anti-depressant tablets by his doctor, which meant he was unable to drive his bus. After four months off sick, he was told to return to work or be sacked. He was medically unable to return, so he was dismissed.

Mr Morrey, who is hoping to return to work as a bus driver, refused to speak about his case. But his friend, Barry Freestone, said:

> It's completely outrageous, a disgrace. It hit him right between the eyes. He didn't do anything wrong. What he said was very moderately worded. He used his own email address, did it in his own time, and did not criticise Hendy personally. [18]

Perhaps the reason why TfL feels it needs to employ these sorts of tactics is that its legitimate case against the Routemaster is weak. With the growth of pre-paid tickets, Routemasters have long been withdrawn

17 Interview with author, August 2004.

18 Interview with author, August 2004.

from the suburbs of London. But for decades, successive London transport authorities have repeatedly considered and rejected the alternatives to Routemaster operation on the busier city centre routes. Bendy buses, although quick to board, had inadequate seating. Modern double-deckers, although having adequate seating, were too slow to board. So, after declining steeply in the 1970s and 1980s, the number of Routemasters in London has been virtually stable from 1989 onwards.

As recently as between 2000 and 2003, TfL actually bought 49 more RMs on the second-hand market, saying that they were the most cost-effective way of improving services. "We can put three fully-refurbished and modernised Routemasters, running on the latest low-sulphur diesel, on the streets of London for the price of one brand new bus," said Dave Wetzel, chair of London Buses and vice-chair of TfL.[19]

Even Mr Hendy now admits that the Routemaster is not being scrapped for reasons of cost. It is only "a bit" more expensive than a modern bus, he says:[20] although there are strong arguments for saying that it is actually cheaper. TfL is also unable to argue, although it still sometimes tries to, that the Routemaster is worn out. The engines of every vehicle in the fleet, with the exception of RML 2760, have been replaced, some more than once. The saloons have been refurbished, repanelled, rewired and re-lit. Phil Margrave, director of engineering for one of the main London bus operators, says the RM can remain in frontline passenger service without difficulty for another decade.[21] Mr Hendy himself now admits they will "no doubt last forever."[22]

---

19 TfL press release, 22 September 2000.

20 Interview with author, July 2004.

21 Buses Focus, issue 31, summer 2004.

22 Letter to Policy Exchange, op.cit.

TfL is unable even to argue that the Routemaster is less fuel-efficient than its major rivals. Remarkably, according to its own figures, the bus does 8 miles to the gallon, against 5.5mpg for a modern double-decker,[23] and is actually quieter than any of its successors. It complies with all the latest emission standards. Mr Margrave says it is easier to maintain.[24] (See Zac Goldsmith's essay "The Ecology of the Routemaster" for more on this.

TfL has only two valid factual arguments against the Routemaster. It says that the bus is "not accessible" to the disabled, citing its legal obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act. It also claims that the Routemaster is more dangerous than modern buses, since passengers sometimes fall off the open platform at the back while the vehicle is moving.

These arguments fail the test not of truth, but of proportionality. Neither is untrue, but nor is either a remotely significant enough problem to justify a change of policy. The number of passengers killed by falling off the back of a Routemaster averages between one and two a year – usually because the person has disobeyed the explicit safety instructions displayed warning them not to stand on the platform.[25] The Routemaster is perfectly safe if used safely; indeed, as those figures suggest, it is pretty safe even if used unsafely!

The Routemaster is undeniably inaccessible to wheelchair users, but nearly every other bus in London, more than 98 per cent of the fleet, is fully accessible to them. Nearly every route served by RMs was and is covered over all or nearly of its length by frequent, alter-

23 Figures from TfL press office.

24 Buses Focus, op.cit.

25 Figures from TfL press office.

native services operated by accessible buses. The accessible alternative to the formerly Routemaster-operated 14, the 414, runs every eight minutes. The accessible alternative to the 36, the 436, runs every seven minutes, and so on.

Despite this near-universal provision for the disabled, which has now been in place for nearly three years, there is no evidence that wheelchair-bound (and other disabled) passengers actually want to use buses. While the use of Dial-a-Ride, subsidised taxis and private cars by disabled travellers is substantial, the number of wheelchair users on the London bus network remains close to nil, around a thousand out of six million passengers each day. And disabled passengers' groups, while certainly pleased that the RM is going, say that its demise was not a high priority for them.[26] The Disability Discrimination Act, incidentally, will not apply to the Routemaster until 2017.

Neither the safety nor the disability arguments is new; both were considered, and rejected, when TfL decided to expand the Routemaster fleet in 2000. The practical and legal position has not changed in that time. The men who are withdrawing the Routemaster are relying on arguments which they themselves dismissed only a few years ago.

TfL says a wider group of "mobility impaired" users, the elderly, will also benefit from the arrival of "more accessible" buses. Elderly groups beg to differ. Elizabeth Timms, spokeswoman for Help the Aged, points out that there is more than one way to achieve accessibility. "For the elderly, having a conductor to help you board is a big advantage. And as well as the accessibility issue, there is safety. Elderly people feel safer on a bus where there is someone to protect them."[27]

26 Interview with Faryal Velmi, DaRT campaign, August 2004.

27 Interview August 2004.

* * *

Since so many of TfL's reasons for scrapping the Routemaster feel like little more than excuses, there has been a great deal of searching around for the real reasons. Perhaps the best indication of the mindset inside TfL comes from Andrew Braddock, its former head of access and mobility: "Any bus which is quirky and old is iconic, especially in a country which is obsessed with history and Empire and has no real idea of its place in the modern world and its place in Europe…you have to ask the serious question why the good old double decker only exists in Britain and not in the rest of Europe?"[28] The Routemaster's crime, in short, is not that it is ineffective; it is that it is unfashionable. It does not fit with the modern, sleek, concrete-and-glass Euro-city that Mr Livingstone wants to create; never mind that this city exists only inside the Mayor's head. Like so many bureaucrats and politicians, they really believe they know what is best for us. They know so well that they need not trouble to examine the actual performance of their chosen solution. They know so well that they need not trouble to ask us what we actually think and want.

It is easy to understand Mr Hendy's and Mr Livingstone's confidence. With passenger numbers up 40 per cent, and hundreds more red buses on the streets, they have made a major success of the bus service during their five years in charge of it. But that success is not because people prefer the new buses to the Routemaster, or because they work better than the Routemaster does. Most of the growth took place before the latest phase of Routemaster withdrawals began,

---

28 Quoted in Travis Elborough, *The Bus We Loved*, pp156-7, Granta, 2005.

and has now, indeed, started to level off. It is because the Mayor has spent hundreds of millions of pounds of taxpayers' money to slash fares and increase the frequency of services. It is because he has introduced a congestion charge which discourages people from driving into central London.

The destruction of the Routemaster may rank low on the scale of global injustice. But it does exemplify the failings of our modern state: the political box-ticking; the disconnect between the priorities of the rulers and the priorities of the ruled; the bureaucratic arrogance; the instinctive recourse to bullying and deceit; the failure of institutions supposed to hold decision makers to account; the witless pursuit of fashion, and the indifference to function; and the way in which lobbies representing almost no-one can trump the wishes and interests of the wider community.

It exemplifies the dehumanisation of which Mr Livingstone once spoke: the preference for often half-baked technocratic solutions over human solutions. TfL's mantras, accessibility and security, could have been provided to almost all bus users by a human being called a conductor. Instead they are to be provided by CCTV cameras, non-functioning ticket machines, and a bus that will, if you're lucky and the electrics are working, lower a ramp for you.

How our aspirations have been reduced in the last 50 years.

Building the "Son of Routemaster":
Some Real Alternatives Which Transport for London Passed Up

Andrew Morgan

In the summer of 2000, the face of transport in London changed irrevocably. A Mayor was elected for the whole city, namely Ken Livingstone. With his inauguration, he brought pledges that the Routemaster would remain on London's streets. Gone were the years of uncertainty where the future of any bus route in London would only be secure for the length of a contract; not only was there now a commitment to the future investment in passenger travel in London, but also for the Routemaster.[1] A properly

1 From 1985 to 2000, London Transport (LT) offered individual routes to tender to potential operators. From 1996, the Routemaster operated routes joined this process. In July 2000, London Transport was replaced by Transport for London (TfL); although TfL had a much wider remit than LT to include the London Underground, Dockland Light Railway, Victoria Coach Station, London Trams, London River Services, Dial-a-Ride and Street Management. London Buses, as part of TfL, is responsible for the planning of bus routes and the monitoring service quality, and all bus services are operated under contract to London Buses, largely by private sector companies.

planned strategy was being formulated, rather than short term solutions. Or so it was believed.

Within two months of the poll, Routemasters began to be re-acquired for use in the capital by London Bus Services (LBSL), part of Transport for London.[2] This was in fulfilment of a key Livingstone election pledge. A press conference was held on the 22nd September 2000 to announce to reinforce the message that it was TfL's intention that Routemaster operations in London were to continue for many years. In a statement released for this press conference, TfL announced that the refurbishment programme of these newly acquired vehicles would allow for the "refurbishment of existing buses to be carried out where necessary without causing disruption". The TfL press release finished with the statement "Open platform buses do not contravene any current EU safety regulations".

An ambitious refurbishment programme was announced after which they were to be put into service on existing London Routemaster operated bus routes. This duly took place and, by the time of the introduction of the initial Congestion Charge zone in February 2003, forty-three vehicles had been refurbished and a further six were to be completed; all were allocated to existing routes to enable frequency increases to take place to the existing bus services.[3]

---

2 Sales of Routemasters from London Transport commenced in 1982 and from the mid-1980s many were acquired by operators around the British Isles as a competitive tool for use in the newly privatised and de-regulated world of bus operation. In 1994, the majority of those remaining with operators in London passed into private ownership upon the completion of the privatisation of the London bus operating companies.

Suddenly, with a new air of confidence, the London Routemaster fleet seemed to be safe for a further ten years service. Modern technologies helped. Cummins Diesel UK had developed a B-series engine with a capacity of 5.9 litres — the smallest engine to ever go into a Routemaster. It nevertheless offered more performance than most of the previous engine types fitted; and thanks to a modern fuel system and turbocharger technology, it promised fuel savings into the bargain without sacrificing durability or day-to-day reliability.

This was the first ever re-engining of a Routemaster with an alternative gearbox, and the first to add a torque converter transmission into the driveline.[4] Previous re-engining programmes in the late 1980's with Cummins C-series engines and Iveco engines, and in the late 1990's with Scania engines all retained the original mid-mounted gearbox installation.[5]

A diesel oxidation catalyst supplied by Engine Control Systems was fitted as standard but this conversion offered the flexibility that a particulate trap could be fitted if further particulate matter (PM)

---

3 At the 1st February 2003, the peak vehicle requirement (pvr) for Routemaster operated routes in London had been increased to 574 from a total of 509 in July 2000 when TfL came into existence; therefore an increase of 12.8% was required although in reality it is noteworthy that there were actually insufficient vehicles in London to achieve this total and newer doored vehicles were substituting by this time.

4 A torque converter is a device for transmitting and amplifying torque from the engine to the road wheels. The drive line is the mechanism that transmits power from the engine to the driving wheels of a motor vehicle.

5 The original gearbox as fitted to the Routemaster when built was a direct selection epicyclic or Wilson type, controlled by electro-pneumatic valves and air pistons for each gear band. It was carried entirely by the body floor framework on rubber mounting being located between the second and third crossmembers.

reduction was required.[6] At the end of December 2000 it became known that Cummins had been awarded the contract to re-engine Routemasters for LBSL and Transport for London. Cummins made significant investment at their Wellingborough facilities to handle this work as part of Transport for London's plans.

After some thirty-three vehicles, the transmission was updated with an electronic Allison gearbox. An option of a Telma retarder to be fitted was also available, if required by the operator; this assisted the life of brake linings.[7]

A Euro 3 engine package was developed by Cummins for the Routemaster; a single vehicle was completed in late 2002 and entered service alongside the initial Euro 2 conversions on route 13. This was probably the most technically advanced Routemaster ever to enter service; with an electronic engine control and fully electronic gearbox, those that have travelled on this Routemaster have all been duly impressed.

In total some ninety-six Routemasters in London were re-engined by Cummins by the end of 2003, although a third of these were withdrawn in 2004. This represented 14.7% of the London Routemaster fleet in 2003. This programme was cut back from a proposed total of 180 vehicles by TfL in 2002.[8]

---

6 A diesel oxidation catalyst (or DOC) is effective for the control of carbon monoxide (CO), hyrdrocarbons (HC), odor causing compounds, and the soluble organic fraction (SOF) of particulate matter (PM10). Engine Control Systems (ECS) is a division of Canadian company Lubrizol Corporation.

7 Telma Retarder is the world's leading manufacturer of electromagnetic frictionless braking systems.

8 It was detailed in the minutes from the TfL Board meeting from the 19th September 2002 that "The project to upgrade engines of Routemaster buses to reduce emissions and deliver environmental benefits has been reduced to 100 conversions from 180 due to a lack of spare parts". This problem of spare parts has never been backed up with any evidence.

In early February 2001 it became known that Marshalls of Cambridge had won the contract for the refurbishment of the bodywork from London Bus Services Ltd. Completed vehicles entered service from the end of June.

The refurbishment programme undertaken by Marshalls included a full re-wire, re-trim of the floor, side panels, seats, a new heating system, hopper windows in lieu of the original quarter drop wind-down type, fluorescent lighting, full repaint, CCTV cameras fitted, a new cab dashboard layout, new lights all round, and DiPTAC style yellow handrails throughout. In total forty-three Routemasters were completed by Marshall's in 2001/2002. The final six Routemasters were completed for TfL by Arriva between early 2003 and March 2004.[9]

During the Summer of 2001, Marshall Bus UK (as they had become known) were expecting an order to refurbish Routemasters for other London bus operating companies; but this order never came and it was soon obvious that the Routemaster was quietly falling from favour with those in power at TfL. This was all very strange considering that the July 2001 TfL Transport Strategy was still pro Routemasters and the conductor.

Go-Ahead's London subsidiary London General[10] looked into various alternative engines and fitted a Caterpillar unit. They even fitted an LPG engine although the commitment for this one-off

---

9 Arriva plc is one of the leading transport services organisations in Europe; they are based in north east England in Sunderland and are one of the top three largest bus operating companies in the UK. They currently operate 19.31% of all bus services in London for Transport for London.

10 London General is a subsidiary Go Ahead based in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and is one of the top five operating companies in the UK. They currently operate 17.30% of all bus services in London for Transport for London.

seemed to be very limited as it did not remain in service very long. Perhaps it was due to the fact that by the time it entered service, Transport for London's enthusiasm for the Routemaster had disappeared. However, this example is yet another illustration of the flexibility of the Routemaster and how easy it is to modify and fit other engine types to the existing vehicle design.

London General also carried out the refurbishment of twenty-two Routemasters after the re-award of the route 14 contract from September 2002 with the intention that they would remain in service until at least September 2007; yet they were all withdrawn in July 2005. This programme was in addition to the one completed for the route 36 contract and also by Arriva for the route 159 contract. The latter refurbished vehicles were sold in July 2004 at the insistence of TfL that the slightly larger 72-seat vehicles were retained until the end of the route 159 contract in December 2005. The retained vehicles had not been refurbished since 1992-1994 and had Iveco engines fitted in a programme over fifteen years previously.

In the 2000 Mayoral election campaign, Ken Livingstone also pledged to develop a suitable replacement for the Routemaster; and the project name "Child of Routemaster" was born, and with this in mind the refurbishment programme for the existing Routemaster fleet, as well as the acquisition of additional vehicles, was understood to be a sensible stop gap until the replacement vehicle was available. It was understood that the new "Child of Routemaster" had to be low-floor to allow wheelchair access, but with a conductor.

Of course, with this ten year time period to get the design right for London, and with the Disability Discrimination Act deadline of 2017 still some seventeen years away, there was no rush to replace the

existing Routemaster fleet.[11] Or so everybody thought at the end of 2000.

There is no known evidence of what Transport for London did to achieve their promise of developing a suitable replacement for the Routemaster but there were several alternatives on offer that could have been developed to suit TfL's own requirements. It is understood that TfL was offered these alternatives but chose to push on regardless with the off-the-shelf current early generation low-floor one person operated double deckers or "bendy" buses. Each batch of vehicles delivered seemed to vary in some way or another and there was little or no commonality or standardisation across all of the fleets across London. This standardisation was a distinct advantage in the Routemaster era particularly for the elderly, infirm and partially sighted for providing a standard vehicle that would give confidence to the passengers who knew where every step or handrail was positioned.

From 2000, the retired former London Transport chief Engineer Colin Curtis OBE, together with Edgar Coleman, marketed a double decker design by the name of Q-Master. This was similar to an existing design but brought up-to-date with current suppliers and with side-mounted engine placed under the stairs. In addition, it had many common Routemaster components although with flat floor throughout. The design was to be modular to allow flexibility of the entrance / exit and staircase position, and would have sub-frames to support the mechanical units. Other design features included familiar Routemaster characteristics such as independent suspension, trailing link rear sub-frame with coil suspension, power hydraulic brakes and

11 The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 states that all double deck buses in the UK must be accessible by the 1st January 2017.

fluid transmission. It was noteworthy in being low weight (9t verses 11.5t i.e. the Q-Master would be some three quarters the weight of current double deck vehicles) and therefore would be likely to accomplish an estimated 10% gain in fuel economy.

The initial Q-Master design had its origins back in the early 1970's when London Transport looked at similar proposals, under the project names of XRM and QRM. Possibly a factor against this design was the 1960's style schematic drawings produced to illustrate the design. A 21st century marketing exercise could have brought the cosmetic appearance of this design up-to-date and have possible made it more appealing.

It is known that several meetings took place with Transport for London from 2000 to discuss this design, but no commitment from them was forthcoming. Unfortunately, being a private design, funding of at least £2m was required so that a prototype vehicle could be built, tested and proved. This funding was never available and no backing from a manufacturer or operator was ever received for this design – including, sadly, from TfL. Therefore no prototype vehicle has ever been built.

It is believed that Transport for London were more interested in backing existing designs – that had already been developed into production rather than producing a home-grown product specifically for the streets of London.[12] Manufacturers in Germany,

12 Transport for London specified one person operated double deckers and generally these have been supplied as British built Dennis Tridents and polish built Volvo B7 vehicles, all with British built bodywork. For the Bendy type of vehicles, the existing design of Mercedes Citaro vehicles have been delivered to all operators and existing designs from Volvo and Scania that could have been supplied with UK sourced bodywork were not chosen. TfL state that Dennis would not build a Bendybus for London and that only Mercedes had the production capacity to take-on the London orders.

including Mercedes and MAN, receive subsidies to assist in the development of new products. However, in London we are still awaiting to see a fully low-floor double decker, never mind one that is flexible enough to accommodate a rear platform or entrance.

Meanwhile, at roughly the same time (in early 2000), Leeds based manufacturer Optare made it known of its intent to complete its secret design for an all-low-floor double decker that would be available in late 2002. What was special about this design was that it was to be side-engined with the engine positioned behind the driver and under the stairs. The front doorway would be wide enough to accept a wheel chair and if required a further entrance at the rear with doors that could be locked in the open position if so required; and thus a rear entrance bus could be possible.

It was rumoured in early 2001 that bus body builder East Lancashire Coachbuilders of Blackburn was working on a similar concept. Unlike the integral design from Optare it was thought to be utilising a DAF / VDL chassis which is already available in Europe. This chassis already had a side-mounted engine albeit on the UK nearside, so would require redesigning to suit the UK market.

The Transdev Enviro 200 was a new fully low floor 10.4 metre midibus with an entrance at front and rear; it first appeared in completed form in 2003 at the Coach & Bus show and trials in London commenced in 2005. However, so far, Transport for London has been unenthusiastic. With this layout, Transdev announced that it would be possible for a double deck vehicle to be built if a customer or operator so wished.

Interestingly, although these are the most recent likely contenders for a suitable Routemaster replacement, there have been some other notable ideas since London Transport's own design team was

disbanded in the late 1980's. The first was in 1987 by a London Buses subsidiary, Selkent. Their Alternative Crew Vehicle (ACV) was to have been based upon on an ERF urban delivery low-frame 16t chassis. With interest from the manufacturing industry, including Northern Counties to build the bodywork, a prototype could have been built. However, with no serious commitment from London Transport and no funding being available at the time, a re-engining programme was commenced for the remaining fleet of some 600-700 Routemasters and then a refurbishment programme for the 500-strong 72-seat Routemaster (RML) fleet was undertaken between 1992 and 1994.

In 1991, French transport design company, Quirin SA, submitted a new design for a Routemaster to London Transport in the hope that their design might be commissioned. However, whilst being described at the time as adding 'a dash of something quintessentially French: panache', it retained an open platform and high steps as well as all the features of the existing familiar 1950's design.

The LoBUS urban bus concept was generated by Eric Woodcock in the summer of 2000 following correspondence in the Ian Allan Buses magazine. With a low-floor throughout and centre entrance / exit, this vehicle would work well with London's latest pay-before-you-board ticketing systems. However, the front wheel drive and small diameter twin rear axle would make it a new concept for buses in the UK.

At the Canadian International Autoshow in 2004, Blake Cotterill, a British design student from Coventry University, won a prestigious second prize with a concept for a Routemaster for 2015. Numerous 21st century features were included such as an electrically powered retractable glass sliding roof and dispensers for camera film, head-

phones, and disposable cameras all with the idea of generating revenue. Again it was proposed to be front wheel drive with space saving single tyres, centre and rear entrance / exit, fully low-floor, and have interactive screens so that the passengers always know where they are. Also included would be places to store your approved fold up bicycle. It would be powered by an electric hybrid unit utilising a 6.7litre V6 bio-diesel driving through a continuously variable transmission system with regenerative braking.

With Britain double deck bus market being controlled by orders from London, as simply the vast majority of double deck buses are built for London, the rest of the UK has to accept the London design with only minor changes. Small batches are ordered and with no backing from an operator or Transport for London themselves, the prospect of a suitable replacement for the Routemaster – possibly the most exciting double deck bus design – has still not been seen in public. Realistically this seems more and more unlikely as the demand from London for a new design of bus has gone with the demise of the Routemaster fleet. However, an increased order of over 1000 vehicles could cover the whole of zone 1 in the central London area and would provide benefits of this type of vehicle for other routes as well. Therefore this new bus could still happen.

So the original pledges from Ken Livingstone in 2000 have been broken . . . but the designs and the technology are there to build a worthy successor to the Routemaster. The Bendies et al are not inevitable!

Appraising the Routemaster

Methodological Shortcomings In Transport for London's Economic Analysis

Dominic Walley

Transport for London has decided to replace the Routemaster. Critics argue that the Routemaster bus is not only a unique part of British culture and heritage, but a practical and cost effective bus and should stay in service.

The Mayor and Transport for London have performed a policy U-turn. Whilst at first upgrading and refurbishing the Routemaster, Transport for London has changed its mind and is now in the process of replacing the Routemaster fleet with modern buses: single-decker; double-decker; and 'bendybuses' — an 18 metre articulated bus with three sets of doors.

A capital scheme of this size should be the subject of a transport appraisal to decide on the best option. Given the change in policy and the controversy surrounding Routemaster replacement it is essential that Transport for London publishes a full and transparent

assessment of the Routemaster replacement programme. Nevertheless, surprisingly little information has been published by Transport for London on this subject and no publicly available appraisal information at all.

Transport modelling and appraisal

Transport modelling and appraisal provide a framework for assessing, scoring and weighing different transport options. It should act as a fair arbiter of which is the 'best' bus — taking into account how the travelling public respond to the different offers and their impacts on the rest of the economy and society.

> All new policies, programmes and projects, whether revenue, capital or regulatory, should be subject to comprehensive but proportionate assessment, wherever it is practicable, so as best to promote the public interest.[1]

Appraisal is based on the modelled consequences of a transport change. This transport change is usually described in terms of changes to journey times, frequencies of services, reliability and other measures of service quality. Within these, there is clearly scope to address many of the arguments both for and against the Routemaster. For example these include issues of: capacity, crowding and time spent waiting at bus stops; time taken to stop, open doors and pick up and set down passengers; and the convenience of being able to hop on and hop off

1 First sentence of first chapter of The Green Book, the Government's guide to appraisal in central Government

the bus whenever it has stopped to shorten journeys. In practice, most transport modelling only considers these factors in a fairly general way and would probably only take into account changes in the frequency of services and any route alterations which affect journey times. Much less is known about customer preferences, especially between different types of vehicles, and these are rarely incorporated within transport models. Where they are included it is often only between clearly different modes of transport (such as trams and buses). The consequences of this are usually measured in terms of the number of passengers using services, how far they travel and how long they take.

The appraisal takes into account all of the costs and benefits of these consequences (such as the capital costs for new buses and the benefit of higher frequencies reducing waiting times) and calculates whether it is worth the money. An appraisal is only as comprehensive as the modelling that supports it.

Current practice

Current practice in transport appraisal is based on a framework set out in:

- **The Green Book**: The Government's overarching appraisal guidance for all forms of public spending. The latest version is the 2003 edition.
- **NATA**: Simply, New Approach To Appraisal in transport, launched in 1998
- **Transport Analysis Guidance**: This grew out of the Government's Guidance on the Methodology for Multimodal Studies and is now a regularly updated living document on the internet

Together, these describe how to set up the appraisal problem and what should and should not be considered as social costs and benefits. Once options have been developed, and their outcomes derived from transport model, appraisal guidance describes how to assess the value of these outputs and compare them with the costs.

> Appraisal is required for all 'Major Schemes' (local transport schemes greater than £5m) and other schemes that require Government approval, for example road user charging. For other local transport schemes, the appraisal guidance should be considered to be best practice.[2]

The Routemaster bus replacement must be considered to be a major scheme requiring appraisal because the cost of replacing the Routemaster vehicles is many times greater than £5 million.

The Government requires this appraisal 'wherever it is practicable, so as to promote the public interest'. If 'doing things by the book' Transport for London should have developed a transport model to predict the response of passengers (and other road users) to the replacement of the Routemaster and weighed up the costs and benefits of these changes within the Government's appraisal framework.

When we spoke to Transport for London, they justified the decision to replace the Routemaster on the grounds of accessibility and meeting the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act, confirming what they have said in other public comments. This neatly sidesteps all of the other issues in the debate surrounding the Routemaster: security; fare evasion; heritage; and dwell times to name but a few.

---

2 Transport analysis guidance, department for transport, Major Local Transport Schemes including Public Transport Projects (http://www.webtag.org.uk/overview/mltschemes.htm)

Table 1: Appraisal elements

	Should be included in an appraisal of Routemaster replacement	Usually included in appraisal?	Usually published?	Published by TfL?
Transport modelling				
Review of options	Yes	Yes	Sometimes	No
Journey times, frequencies, dwell times and reliability	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Quantified customer preference between vehicles	Yes	No	No	No
Impacts on other road users	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Appraisal				
Appraisal summary table	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Costs	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Time savings	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Quantified benefits of improved safety	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Quantified impact of security on passenger demand	Yes	No	No	No
Heritage and tourism impacts	Yes	No	No	No

We find it highly unusual that no information has been made available by Transport for London about the appraisal of the Routemaster. Capital schemes the size of the Routemaster replacement programme would normally be subject to a full and public appraisal process. For example, the Highways Agency publishes appraisal summary tables for all road schemes with a capital cost of over £5 million.

Given the policy U-turn and the controversy surrounding the Routemaster replacement, a full and open transport appraisal is imperative. This would allow the public to know exactly what they are getting for their money and why it represents the best value.

Does Current Practice do Justice to the Routemaster?

Even if a 'by the book' appraisal was published by Transport for London, it is likely that this would not do justice to the Routemaster. Many of its unique characteristics do not fit comfortably within current appraisal guidance. Nevertheless, appraisal could clearly answer whether the Routemaster should be replaced.

Costs

The treatment of costs in current appraisal practice is well developed. An appraisal performed 'by the book' would include the costs of: buying new buses (and their expected lifespan); refurbishing existing buses; changes to depots, ticket machines and other pieces of capital equipment; fuel, maintenance and repair; and wages of drivers and conductors.

Together, it should be possible to determine how the costs of different options compare in the long term.Indeed, even Transport

for London have stated that the long term cost implications of replacing Routemasters are small, with new capital costs of reequipping the fleets and assorted vital accessories roughly balancing the savings derived from the shedding of conductors.

Boarding and dwell times

Supporters argue that Routemasters have no doors, so passengers can hop on and off quicker allowing Routemasters to get through the congested streets of London more quickly. They also argue that conductors remove the need for passengers to pay on entering, speeding up boarding. Critics of the Routemaster argue that Bendybuses have three sets of doors and can therefore load larger numbers of passengers more quickly. However, this requires passengers to buy tickets in advance, inconveniencing these passengers.

Boarding and dwell times should be part of a properly specified transport model. Routemasters are faster for loading and unloading small numbers of people, whereas Bendybuses can board and set down large numbers of people more quickly at popular stops or major termini. Appraisal can solve which of these characteristics is more valuable.

Whilst the time difference at each stop could be minimal Transport for London's bus network carries six million passengers per day leading to substantial savings.

Safety

Routemasters are alleged to be less safe than other types of buses — the accident rate is approximately twice as high. This is because people tend to fall off the back of them when making dangerous decisions to jump aboard or jump off.

Transport appraisal accommodates a quantified and monetised evaluation of safety consequences. This means that the differences in the number of accidents on Routemasters and other buses could be assessed, valued and incorporated in appraisals.

The argument that the Routemaster is safe, but that people make their own rash decision to jump on or off in dangerous situations holds no water with the Department for Transport. Road accidents often occur because of risk taking, but these are treated the same as any other accident in appraisal.

Heritage, tourism and symbolism

Supporters of the Routemaster say that it is a well-known icon and symbol of London and should be retained because they are a visual pleasure and attract tourists. Critics argue that "Nobody drives to work in a Morris Minor because it's a design classic".[3]

The heritage value of the Routemaster could be of value and is not taken into account in transport appraisals. People could simply take pleasure in seeing the Routemaster on the streets of London, much as they value good architecture in a city. Whereas in architecture, planners have a say in the visual impact of buildings, good design and visual pleasure is not captured in transport appraisal. As a symbolic image the Routemaster may also attract tourism, investment or a flow of workers to London.

Although methods exist to tackle these issues, they are complex and likely to return a broad range of values. They are consequently well outside the scope of ordinary appraisal. In economic terms, good design is a positive "externality" which people benefit from

3 Peter Hendy, Director of Surface Transport, Transport for London

even if they do not pay for it. Although the sizes of any benefit is very difficult to assess, it does make up a considerable part of the Routemaster debate and quantification should be attempted.

Conductors and security

Conductors deter violence, vandalism and anti social behaviour and provide confidence about personal security. This factor would not normally be part of a quantified cost benefit appraisal. Instead it would be taken into account qualitatively.

However, it would be quite straightforward to compare the crime rates on buses with conductors and buses without and to estimate the cost associated with additional crime on driver only buses. In London in 2002/3 there were 9,500 criminal incidents on London's buses. However, Transport for London has not published the different crime rates on different types of buses.

Accessibility and wheelchair access

Critics of the Routemaster argue that they are not accessible to wheelchair users, contravening the Disability Discrimination Act. This is the prime motivating factor behind the replacement of the existing Routemaster buses.

However, having a conductor available to help passengers increases accessibility for these passengers who may otherwise not use buses. Examples may include the frail and the blind. Some supporters of the Routemaster argue that the practical consequence of adopting this non-discriminatory legislation is to reduce the number of disabled bus users by removing conductors and discouraging many other disabled users. Supporters of new buses say that other users (such as people with push chairs) also benefit from low-floors.

Wheelchair access is a matter of law – and transport appraisal does not assess the value for money that it provides. However, there are ways of assessing the importance of different kinds of accessibility. One way would be to segment potential bus users into those that benefit from conductors (such as the frail and the blind) and those that benefit from low floors (such as wheelchair users and those with pushchairs), ask both groups which they prefer and assess the strength of that preference and to how many passengers that applies. Moreover, in what areas of the city? Are Routemasters more suitable for central London, with its tourists and business travellers, than they are in more residential outlying areas?

All this should have been addressed when Transport for London considered different options for their future bus fleet. An alternative would be to investigate the cost of developing a successor to the Routemaster which shares its positive qualities and is accessible to wheelchair users.

The attractiveness of the Routemaster and other buses

Some argue that passengers simply prefer the experience of travelling on a Routemaster. This is not due to different levels of safety, security or comfort, but just personal preference. If this is strong enough to encourage or deter people from using buses then it should be incorporated in an appraisal.

Preferences and their strength can be determined by asking passengers. Many of the reasons passengers cite for preferring the Routemaster have already been discussed under the headings of security and accessibility. However, these may not pick up all of the factors that make people prefer one bus over another.

In transport modelling, when comparing different modes, modellers

use what is known as a 'mode specific constant' to reflect the fact that one type of transport is preferred over another. However, this is usually only used when comparing different modes such as trams and buses. However, there is no reason why a similar technique should not be used to model people's preferences between different types of bus.

Although Transport for London has done some work to gauge customer reactions to the new buses, it has not published whether the people it surveyed preferred the new buses or the old Routemasters.

Hopping on and off

Being able to hop off a bus away from a bus stop allows people to shorten their journeys. With a small amount of effort, this could be incorporated (or at least approximated) in a standard transport model. The value of this time saving would be relatively easy to calculate and would contribute to the case for keeping the Routemaster.

This factor would almost certainly not be included in an appraisal, although it could be significant. The potential negative safety implications, and ways of valuing them, have already been described.

Wider impacts on congestion

Supporters of the Routemaster argue that Bendybuses are not suited to London's narrow streets, frequent junctions and heavy traffic. They argue that Bendybuses frequently get stuck in traffic across junctions and block important traffic routes. They also argue that passengers are able to quickly hop on and off the Routemaster so that when it does stops it causes a shorter disruption for other

traffic. Nonsense, say the Routemasters' critics: Bendybuses are much faster at loading and unloading large volumes of passengers — exactly what is needed to keep the capital functioning.

Although buses carry many people who may otherwise travel by car, they do take up road space and do contribute to congestion. Ignoring for a moment the effect of reduced car traffic, buses will affect road congestion depending on how large they are and how long they take at stops, amongst other things.

Another important feature is carrying capacity. Bendybuses can carry almost twice as many passengers as the Routemaster, so when full the correct comparison would be between the congestion caused by one Bendybus or two Routemasters. However, for much of the time, buses are not full.

This is a complex issue that is best addressed through detailed modelling at a street-by-street level. This can be achieved through microsimulation — a technique that models the passage of road users through streets and junctions and past obstacles. It can model the knock-on impacts of a junction being blocked by a large vehicle or the impacts of a bus taking less or more time to stop and start again.

The impact on average traffic speeds could be derived from a microsimulation exercise and the costs and benefits of different buses to other road users can be assessed.

Again, this is a case of getting the transport modelling right. If these effects were assessed as part of a Routemaster replacement appraisal, we have certainly not been told.

Conclusions

The most astonishing aspect of Routemaster replacement is the lack of transparency with which the decision has been made. Bear in mind that re-equipping TfL's surface transport fleet is no small matter. TfL and its predecessor organisations have always been the largest transport authorities in the country – the 300 buses purchased in the run up to the implementation of congestion charging cost around £50 million and only increased the fleet size by less than five per cent. The procurement choices that they make, for good or ill, are not merely of enormous significance in their own right by virtue of the bulk orders that they entail; TfL's choices also exert an enormous gravitational pull on other transport authorities. The economies of scale that derive from a TfL decision to buy new fleets make it easier for regional companies to afford the same equipment. That is why its decisions need to be clearly understood by the paying public – whose tax and fare money is at stake here – and done according to the highest standards. On the basis of the information released so far, TfL's approach seems to fall well short of "best practice".

The Ecology of the Routemaster

Zac Goldsmith

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the Routemaster – the point which most rescues it from charges of anachronism – is that in many respects this 50-year-old vehicle is more environmentally-friendly than the vehicles which are replacing it.

According to Transport for London (TfL), the Routemaster does 8 miles to the gallon, as opposed to the 5.5mpg of a modern double-decker.[1] London's buses travel 273 million miles every year,[2] the majority of this mileage operated by modern (single-man, conductor-less) double-deckers. If all modern double-deckers were replaced with Routemasters, TfL would save at least 10 million gallons of fuel every year.[3]

---

1 Figures from TfL press office.

2 TfL Annual Report, 2003/4.

3 A conservative estimate to reflect the numbers of non double-deck vehicles (eg minibuses) in the bus fleet. These are more fuel-efficient than modern double-deckers (though, of course, carry fewer passengers.)

The reason for the Routemaster's greater fuel economy is essentially the same as the reason that it is popular with passengers: it is better designed. Its revolutionary aluminium body is lighter by more than 3 tonnes than a lumbering modern bus, which weighs in at 11.5 tonnes. Yet it carries 72 seated passengers, two more than a modern double-decker. The Routemaster has none of the modern bus's other complicated systems and functions which consume engine power. For instance, ill-ventilated modern buses have had to be equipped with air-cooling systems; the Routemaster is equipped with a rather simpler and greener alternative – windows which open.

The Routemaster's original AEC engine did not meet modern emission standards. But since the early 1990s, the engine of every Routemaster in London passenger service has been replaced. Cummins Diesel UK developed a repower programme to meet the Low Emission Zone proposals then under discussion with the City of Westminster. Uniquely, this Euro 2 conversion obtained Reduced Pollution Certificate approval and such conversions were entitled to a substantial grant form the Energy Savings Trust. The Department of Transport had introduced tax incentives on Vehicle Excise Duty from 1999 onwards to aid the reduction of harmful particulate emissions from diesel powered vehicles. As part of these incentives, the RPC was introduced with for vehicles that had an approved device fitted to the exhaust system. This is not something that can be said for approximately 10 per cent of the "modern" fleet.[4]

The engineering flexibility of the RM, with its "slot-in" engine, makes it easily capable of yet further greening and reinvention. One RM was fitted with the very latest Euro III-standard engine in 2002

4 TfL Environment Report 2004.

and another with an ultra low-emission liquified petroleum gas engine. Unfortunately, by this time TfL had decided to scrap the fleet and no further conversions were undertaken.

The replacement of the Routemaster by less fuel-efficient buses is being undertaken despite the fact that TfL describes "reducing the energy consumption of transport" as one of its "Tier One objectives."[5] In its Environment Report 2004, TfL says:

> A key aspiration underpinning TfL's vision of being a world leader is to take account of environmental impacts and opportunities in managing the transport network. The Government has set a goal of reducing CO2 emissions by 20 per cent on 1990 levels by 2010 and the Mayor is committed to ensuring that London plays its part in meeting this target. Therefore, reducing the energy consumption of transport is an important part of the Mayor's Energy Strategy.[6]

Another "Tier One objective," according to the same report, is to:

> reduce noise and vibration by promoting the use of quieter travel modes and vehicles, reduce the noise generated by vehicle use and control the levels of transport noise impacts on sensitive location….TfL is taking steps to reduce the negative impacts of its services on London's ambient noise and vibration levels.[7]

Once again, however, TfL's declared "key aspirations" bear little relation to what it is actually doing on the ground. Not only is the

5 TfL Environment Report 2004.
6 TfL Environment Report 2004.
7 TfL Environment Report 2004.

Routemaster more fuel-efficient than any modern bus, it is also quieter. Tests carried out for the *Evening Standard* in 2005 by the UK Noise Association and Transport 2000 measured the RM at 89.6 decibels, quieter than a modern double-decker (90.6 dB). TfL's favoured "bendy bus" was even noisier, clocking in at 92.1 dB.[8]

John Stewart, of the UK Noise Association, says:

> Ironically, with the Mayor's push to get more buses on London's roads - which is a laudable move - it is now making a significant difference to noise levels we all experience. It is very disappointing that new vehicles are actually noisier than those produced 50 years ago. While car manufacturers have been under pressure to produce quieter vehicles with lower emissions it seems buses have been left behind because of their 'cuddly' image.[9]

Yet another piece of TfL enviro-rhetoric is a commitment to encourage cycling. "The Mayor's vision is to achieve an 80 per cent increase in cycling," says the Environment Report.[10] Some progress has been made towards this goal, with the introduction of more bike racks and some more cycle lanes, but the introduction of bendy buses has been a step backwards. The London Cycling Campaign (LCC) calls the buses "cycle lane eaters," citing several instances where

> cycle lanes have disappeared or been segmented into useless splinters…because the horrible new articulated "bendy-buses" need longer bus stops. [11]

---

8 Evening Standard, "Routemaster quieter than modern buses," 23 February 2005.

9 ibid

10 TfL Environment Report 2004.

11 "Cycle lane eaters," item on LCC website, 25 November 2004.

Among the places to have suffered loss or part-loss of their cycle lanes is High Holborn in the City, where bendy buses replaced conventional modern double-deckers on route 25, and parts of the route along the formerly Routemaster 73. Not only have the bendies reduced cycle lanes, the LCC says they are actively dangerous to cyclists because of their trailing end and because the bus driver can see less easily when turning.

In a crowded city, the amount of road space taken up by a bendy bus has a significant environmental impact. The buses are 59 feet long, nearly twice as long as the longest Routemaster variant, and something like 400 are now in service. They do, of course, carry more passengers – albeit standing and in very uncomfortable conditions – but they spoil the flow of traffic for other road users, including other bus passengers.

On busy streets, such as New Oxford Street, where there will soon be three high-frequency bendy routes providing a total of up to 50 buses an hour in each direction, there will be a significant impact on traffic. Bendy buses have been described by some pressure groups, including the Save The 73 Campaign, as "mobile roadblocks,"[12] and there has already been significant localised difficulty in some narrow streets in Islington and Stoke Newington served by the new bendy 73.[13]

Terminal and stopping points are another persistent difficulty. On the bendy route 453, for example, there is no room for the buses to turn at Deptford Broadway, the theoretical terminus. So more than 130 buses every day run on, empty of passengers, for another mile, simply in order to turn round. The impact on the environment of

12 Evening Standard, "Barmy bendies," 6 August 2004.

13 Highbury & Islington Express, 12 Sep 2004.

this unnecessary "dead running," amounting to nearly 100,000 miles a year on this one route alone, is obvious.

TfL has achieved significant success in environmental matters, increasing bus travel by 40 per cent in five years. But this has nothing to do with its policy of phasing out the Routemaster. The ecological costs supply yet more reasons why the replacement of the Routemaster is an idea without merit.

The Security of the Routemaster

Colin Cramphorn

Growing-up in the late 1950s and 1960s, my childhood was full of authority figures for whom one had respect . They did far more to shape and form the behaviour of us kids than the apocryphal 'bobby on the beat', largely because even in those days we rarely saw one, contrary to the popular myth so widely subscribed to today. They ranged from the caretaker, who not only worked but also invariably lived on the site of the school and was therefore present at all times, through to the 'parkie' to be found in every municipal park, to the ever-present 'clippie' on the buses. At the first signs of any delinquency they were able to – and did – intervene. They thereby prevented whatever misdemeanour was in the making and acting as an effective instrument of social control promoting confidence and cohesion. And this was not just with children and young people; it included many adults whose behaviour the public found threatening and distressing, such as vagrants, drunks and beggars. As we know to our cost, these once ubiquitous figures are largely gone from the

landscape of our lives, driven out by the weight of the monetarist economic theory that underpinned Thatcherism. They were sacrificed on the alter of 'efficiency', which as Professor Janice Gross-Stein articulated so convincingly in her 2001 Massey Lectures for the CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), had, by that time, become a cult with many unintended deleterious consequences.[1] One exception to this general rule had been the survival of the conductor on the capital's ever-dwindling number of Routemaster buses that are themselves a product of the 1950's and 1960's.

There are, however, some signs that there is now a growing recognition that narrow cost benefit analysis was flawed in so far as it did not recognise the benefits such authority figures brought as agents for crime control and social cohesion. It is increasingly being recognised that this makes them worthy of being re-invented, where they have been lost, and preserved where they have managed to cling on. So, for example, CABE (the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) have just launched their 'parkforce' campaign with a report calling for all parks to have a team of dedicated staff to reduce levels of graffiti, vandalism and crime. And what is more, this campaign for a return to the days of the 'parkie', has the support of the politicians, in the form of the Local Government Association. This is because local councils recognise that the considerable capital investments they have made in recent times, reviving neighbourhood parks will ultimately be wasted if people do not feel confident enough to use them.[2] It is an example of the wider economic criteria now being

1 Janice Gross-Stein "The Cult of Efficiency", CBC/SRC Anansi Press Ltd, Toronto, 2002

2 For more on the 'parkforce' campaign visit www.cabespace.org.uk and for LGA endorsement see Local Government First, issue 263, 10 September 2005, p.2

factored into political judgements; far from being an operating cost that must be managed down, if not completely out, the "parkie" is once again seen as an asset in building community confidence and promoting "user footfall".

Underpinning this trend is a body of criminological evidence that has been built up over the last thirty or so years, on both sides of the Atlantic. Collectively referred to as "situational crime prevention", this wide concept incorporates a diverse set of strands. It includes Oscar Newman's use of architectural form to provide 'defensible space', developed by C. Ray Jeffery into CPTED (crime prevention through environmental design);[3] Herman Goldstein's POP (problem-oriented policing),[4] in which problem solvers are invariably not the police; and the so called 'rational choice' and 'routine activity' theories that emerged from Home Office studies conducted during the 1970s.[5] This diverse material has been brought together by Ronald Clarke into the so called 'twelve techniques' of situational crime prevention, sub-divided into four techniques for each of three purposes – increasing the effort, increasing the risks and reducing the rewards of offending.[6] The four techniques to increase the risks of committing crime are entry/exit screening (border searches, baggage screening, automatic ticket gates, merchandise tags, etc), formal surveillance (police and security patrols, informant hotlines, burglar alarms, curfew stickers, etc), surveillance by employees

3 Ray Jeffery, "Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design", Sage, Beverly Hills, CA, 1971 second edition 1977

4 Herman Goldstein, "Problem Oriented Policing", McGraw Hill, New York, 1990

5 See R. V. Clarke. & D. B. "Cornish, Crime Control in Britain: A Review of Policy Research", State University of New York Press, Albany, NY, 1983

6 Ronald V. Clarke (Ed), "Situational Crime Prevention", Harrow & Heston, New York, 1992, pp.10-21

(CCTV, concierges, park attendants, etc) and natural surveillance (neighbourhood watch, street lighting, defensible space, etc).

Surveillance by employees is in addition to their primary function, at least as traditionally perceived from both an economic and a functional perspective. But for those dealing with the public we know this surveillance role is highly influential on crime and criminality. Indeed there are many research studies that have been conducted in Canada, the USA and the UK, which provide the empirical evidence of this with regard to shop assistants, hotel doormen, park keepers, car park attendants, guards on trains and bus conductors. It is indeed ironic that with regard to the latter this includes a Home Office study published over twenty-five years ago, the insights of which seems to have been lost on those currently setting transport policy, within the United Kingdom — or has it?[7]

Whilst the detail of the research may well have been long forgotten there is evidence that the conclusions are re-asserting themselves in another context – namely, the so called 'mixed economy' for visible policing, for which we in West Yorkshire Police first coined the phrase 'plural policing'. This contemporary phenomenon, which continues to be heavily promoted by the current Government, has been most thoroughly analysed by a team from the Centre for Criminal Justice Studies at Leeds University led by Professor Adam Crawford.[8] Plural policing reflects the increasing presence of a multitude of new players, ranging from the uniformed Traffic Officers of the Highways Agency (HATO) to the Neighbourhood

---

7 P. Mayhew, R. V. Clarke. J. N. Burrows, J. M. Hough & S. W. C. Winchester "Crime in Public View", Home Office Research Study No:49, HMSO, London, 1979

8 A Crawford, S. Lister, S. Blackburn & J. Burnett, "Plural Policing: The mixed economy of visible patrols in England & Wales", Nuffield Foundation/Policy Press, Bristol, 2005

and Street Wardens employed by some Local Authorities. But by far the most visible new presence has been the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO), who can now be found in most police force areas across England & Wales.

In West Yorkshire we have more PCSOs per capita than any other police area, in part because we have developed the role in collaboration with partners in the five metropolitan districts which together make up West Yorkshire and county-wide bodies such as the Passenger Transport Executive (PTE). Thus we have a group of PCSOs who are jointly funded with the PTE, to specifically work across the bus network patrolling bus stations and travelling between them on the various operating companies buses, buses that are almost exclusively single manned. This is but a new take on the old concept of surveillance by employees, which has worked well for us, but it does not provide a universal presence on all buses. It has provided a reasonable and proportionate level of reassurance to the travelling public, at least prior to the events of 7 July 2005 in London, which is why our partners in the PTE have been willing to invest in it in the way they have.

The bomb attacks across the transport network in London, on 7 and 21 July 2005, included two attacks on buses. The links between the 7 July attackers and West Yorkshire are well known, and whilst it seems that the original plan did not include a bus bombing, when the primary target was denied to one of the attackers, he re-tasked himself onto a bus with devastating consequences. Why did he attack a bus? Most likely because it was a readily available substitute target, where he perceived there was little risk of challenge or discovery prior to detonation of his bomb.

We know that PIRA (Provisional Irish Republican Army) in its

bombing campaigns in London during the 1970's through to the 1990's eschewed the targeting of buses, although there were 'own goals' where "volunteers" conveying bombs to their intended targets blew themselves up by mistake whilst travelling by bus. Why was this? We have it on impeccable authority, from a leading defector from the IRA, that it was in part due to the surveillance by employee that resulted from the presence of a conductor on virtually every bus.[9]

In Israel the bus network has long been the subject of suicide bomb attacks by Palestinian groups of the Islamic Resistance Movement, more commonly referred to in the west as Hamas. In response the Israeli authorities have deployed bus queue attendants who constantly monitor and assess those waiting for buses at the interchanges and depots. Whilst not completely preventing attacks upon buses, they are credited with reducing the number of successful attacks. Their very presence discourages targeting of buses in the first place, and in the case of those determined to press home an attack, their presence helped raise the alarm before the would be bomber could board the intended target.

It is, of course, impossible to definitively determine whether, if there were still conductors on all buses, there would have been no attacks on buses in July 2005 – but it is at the very least arguable that it may well have been so. Even a terrorist who has determined to detonate himself with his bomb is concerned to achieve the greatest possible effect in doing so. If unable to achieve that by boarding a bus then it will most likely only displace the attack to an easier target. But given the shock to the confidence of the travelling public that

9 Sean O'Callaghan, former head of the PIRA Southern Command and An Garda Siochana agent provided this explanation at a Policy Exchange event on 18 July 2005. See the *Guardian*, 19 July 2005

these events have administered, there must also be a very real argument based on the re-assurance and confidence value they can bring, to re-introduce an additional layer of security such as that a conductor provides.

So where does this leave the case for the 'clippie'? For me whether one is concerned with what the Irish call 'decent honest crime' (my favourite oxymoron) or with countering terrorism the case stacks up. The criminological evidence showed us a long time ago that incivilities, vandalism and other crime are reduced by the presence of an authority figure, such as a bus conductor. Recognition of this fact seems to be re-emerging by the deployment of new substitutes in the form of the PCSO's now working on the buses in West Yorkshire. With regard to terrorism there is no empirical evidence but there is anecdotal evidence and practical experience to indicate that there are benefits to be gained from the deployment of appropriate authority figures: benefits both in terms of reducing the vulnerability to attack and promoting confidence in the continued use of the buses. I am not an economist or a transport professional, and I do recognise other mechanisms that facilitate surveillance by employees are in use on the buses, such as CCTV. Nevertheless, I do not believe they provide the 'real time' benefits provided by the Mark 1 human eyeball actually deployed in situ with the potential and the capacity for immediate action.

The Aesthetic of the Routemaster

Kate Bernard

To her fans, the Routemaster is a curvaceous dame in a red dress; a little past her prime, maybe, but as Michael Caine's *Alfie* would no doubt say (nonchalantly hopping aboard in his mohair suit), she's in lovely condition. She calms the virgin traveller and the ruffled city man with the briefcase who leaps aboard at the lights with her subtly swaying gait and soft tones. "Don't worry," she seems to say to her passengers in a low voice, moving off smoothly with a cheerful ding ding: "you're in expert hands." Maybe the Routemaster is actually just a bus after all, but it's tempting to imagine that something which arouses such great passion in us might itself have a soul – to fancy it's not just an engine throbbing away under the old girl's bonnet, but her heart.

The Routemaster (or RM) was the last open platform bus to be built in London and, as much as the Houses of Parliament and the black cab, has become part of London's very fabric. So much so that it is actually rather difficult to visualise an area of London - take Parliament Square or Piccadilly Circus - without a Routemaster or

two sailing into view. Our capital's favourite bus has become a national treasure without anyone being able to say quite when such a metamorphosis took place.

It must have helped that there were once so many of these old red buses tootling around town. 2875 Routemasters were built between 1954 and 1968 (I am reliably informed by Travis Elborough, author of *The Bus We Loved*, without doubt the most amusing and stimulating text on the matter). It first arrived on the streets of London — Golders Green to be precise, heading for Crystal Palace via St John's Wood, Marble Arch, Victoria, Vauxhall, etc — in 1956. It was a time of Teddy Boys, circular skirts and national strife. Part of the immediate charm of the London bus is its colour. The Fifties is a decade that has since been regarded as a poor, grey and depressing one. Here was a bus, bright, jolly and rounded on the outside and hugely welcoming inside: unusually, for the era, it had a heating system as well as comforting colours and tartan upholstery.

The design of the Routemaster is the foundation on which its status as a cultural icon - and it really deserves this overused term - is built. The exceptional quality of the bus's body, balance, engine and general performance have been bolstered by extraordinary longevity. The cleverness of its construction - superior suspension and completely interchangeable panels that impress the most unemotional traveller - gave it a pleasing flexibility. But it is the look and feel of the thing that says most about the Routemaster, and for that we must thank Douglas Scott, a product designer who had previously displayed a smart, practical style for his redesign of the Aga in the 1930s (anyone who owns a classic pre-1978 model has a Scott in their kitchen) and his K8 telephone box. Instructed to supply plans for a vehicle that should be, according to Albert

Durrant (London Transport's chief officer and the driving force behind the Routemaster), 'an attractive piece of street furniture' - shame on the 'designers' of all later London buses! - Scott 'stole' the shape out of the basic box shape, making curves as he went, until he delivered the friendly looking Routemaster. Windows opened just enough and didn't rattle, while seats and bulbs of the kind that could be replaced in minutes were installed as standard.

Decoration of the interior was no less carefully considered. The tubular steel rails and seat backs; the colour of the lining panels was burgundy rexine, a leathercloth-type material that was only painted after around five years of use. Then there were the grey-green window frames, fancifully referred to as Chinese green. But it was the pale nicotine yellow ceilings, which on the smoky upper deck acted as camoflage, and Scott's dirt-hiding moquette upholstery that ensured the Routemaster kept its looks. Passengers too, got off lightly; no stockings would be snagged, no trousers worn thin by the hard-wearing upholstery, which had been thoughtfully edged in smooth leather so that it was possible to gracefully slide along your seat when getting in and out of it.

Smoking a cigarette on the upper deck of a Routemaster (before it was banned in 1991) was one of the great pre-nanny state joys. Is it my imagination or was the upper deck back seat the very last place we were allowed to smoke on the bus? It is certainly the most attractive perch on the Routemaster; slightly smaller than usual it doubles as the perfect love seat, apparently designed for courting couples, and a commanding spot where the lone traveller is inviolate. Hop on the 14 in the Fulham Road in time for lunch in Soho with your lover/newspaper and a cigarette and you might have been lucky enough to find the 'rumble' seat free.

But smoking on the Routemaster ran a poor second to simply being on board. With the right conductor, your bus ride became a theatrical experience, an interaction between as many human beings from different walks of life as wanted to take part. Few of the original conductors remain today. These men - as they usually were, though there were and still are some brilliantly jolly conductresses as well - were often extreme characters. Like London cabbies they fell into one of two categories: chummy and garrulous or wildly unhelpful and monosyllabic. The talkative ones usually acted as informal guides, helping to give the tourist a flavour of (as well as directions around) the city. The job, performing among strangers, the jaunty captain of a ship of fools, seemed to lend itself to revue-style comedy. It was always amusing, or at the very least comforting to hear the hammier music hall turns punctuate the route with some helpful reminder of where we were. "Green Park, Green Park! The Ritz for those as can afford it, a walk in the park for those as can't! Or: "She wants to go to the World's End, ladies and gentlemen! Why should a nice girl like you want to visit the end of the world?"

It was the rib tickling theatrical possibilities of bus-conducting which must have suggested itself to the makers of that dreadful but popular television sitcom, *On the Buses*, the 1971 film version of which outsold *Diamonds Are Forever* to become (amazingly enough) the nation's highest ever box office earner. As Travis Elborough points out, there are fewer Routemasters with starring roles in British films than we imagine; both *On the Buses* and the Cliff Richard vehicle, *Summer Holiday* (1962) are made with RTs, the Routemaster's predecessor. But it is the Routemaster that forms the backdrop, the scarlet punctuation mark in almost every film made in

London between 1960 and 2000; that's 40 years of solid character acting. In films as diverse as *Dead of Night* - "Room for one more inside," cries the spooky conductor conveying his passengers to their doom - and *Notting Hill*, where Hugh Grant, on leaving the Ritz leaps onto a number 12 (though what a number 12 is doing outside the Ritz on Piccadilly instead of Oxford Street is anyone's guess, the film already being somewhat far-fetched). Some of us are waiting for the Routemaster to be 'the bus with a mind of its own', a Stephen King double decker that takes no passengers, as it were.

In 1962 pop artist Allen Jones was already working on a series of bus paintings, the same year the Routemasters were rolling out of production at the rate of eight a week. In 1964 Corgi made their first diecast model of a Routemaster, the first concrete sign that the bus was popularly considered a design classic. By 1966 the Routemaster had another starring role, alongside Beefeaters, the Royal family and King's Road poseurs: it was advertising Swinging London. And Chanel's London Red nail varnish can only have been inspired by the Routemaster.

If those in pursuit of liberty (or at least the feeling of liberty when taking themselves down the King's Road wearing their best togs to buy even better ones) weren't able to roll along on a spanking new scooter or an open-topped sports car for the rest of the world to admire, the Routemaster could take them. Travelling thus it was possible to be as smooth as those who didn't need public transport. You could run for the bus and leap on athletically, maybe swinging yourself around the pole as you went. And you could leap off in the same way; stepping off backwards was a smart move, especially when the bus was slowing down at a big corner, making young men seem graceful but thrill-seeking chaps about town.

By the Eighties, it was perfectly acceptable for smart people, people who could afford taxis and cars with drivers to take the bus into town, whether they needed to or not. Francis Bacon might have made millions from his paintings during his life, but that didn't stop him being a regular on the number 14, which stopped near his Reece Mews studio and deposited him in Soho and vice versa (it should be remembered that the first sighting of a famous person on a bus was probably George Nathaniel Curzon, who like so many grandees is supposed to have asked the conductor to take him to his home at 1 Carlton House Terrace). I can't imagine Francis Bacon or anyone else with style allowing himself to be imprisoned on a hissing "Bendy" bus (having of course planned in advance to have the exact £1.20 fare on his person and having bought a ticket from the machine before boarding), to be thrown around like washing in the dryer. It's just not cool. Which is an important point, because it seems that the people who make decisions about transport in London are trying to suggest today that the Routemaster is uncool, is somehow small-minded, little Britain.

Back in the land of pop culture, it's the Nineties. New York was fun while it lasted but let's face it, the music has gone downhill since Blondie and it's all about money and unwieldy mobile telephones. Over here, meanwhile, Oasis and Blur are vying for the top spot in the charts, Kate Moss is already making her mark. Damien Hirst has produced a sculpture from a tiger shark in formaldehyde; Alexander McQueen is arguably the best fashion designer in the world; the working classes are mixing with the upper classes again as they did in the Sixties. The Union Jack is fluttering with ironic pride. It's all about Cool Britannia. London's burning and the Routemaster is still there, still looking good and feeling great. The tourists love it, but

they love it because it is an integral part of our city, because we use it as a matter of course. In 1999, Catherine McDermott even included the Routemaster in her *Design Museum Book of 20th Century Design*.

Fast forward to 2005. We've all heard the bad news about the Routemaster and for the first time ever the vast majority of Londoners are no longer able to take their bus for granted. People are starting to have conversations on the bus about the bus and what might happen to it, and to them, when it goes. One thing's for sure, if the Routemaster is to be snuffed out, the romance of bus travel is drawing to a halt. Who in their right minds could find a Bendy bus a thing of beauty or romance? Who'd even toy with romance on the modern bus? How can you flirt under strip lights in an interior that owes more to a post-modern children's playroom than a mode of transport - all those stupid, ugly shapes, materials and colours? Is Transport for London seriously asking us to believe that this is cool, is egalitarian, is anything to like or be proud of? They ask a great deal.

Losing the Routemaster (at the time of writing only three services remain, all to be binned by Christmas) will be like losing a part of London, an old lover who still inspires enormous affection. For the moment you can still see her – in the form of the 13 - turning out of Baker Street, battling her way down Oxford Street. There she waits, chugging patiently while bigger, fatter, more ugly but undeniably younger buses get in her way and make unseemly noise and bustle and fuss. These bendy buses and hissing buses aren't even her progeny. Have you looked at their faces? If they have faces at all, they have no expression whatsoever.

The Horror of the Bendy

Kate Hoey MP

VERY FEW forms of transport are so unlikeable, so determinedly anti-human and fail in so many different ways as the bendy bus. I am setting out on that once fairly simple undertaking – a bus journey. But mine will be a journey by bendy bus, and some things which I once took for granted are now just that little bit more complicated. The stop, for instance, may well have been moved, like those at Waterloo station. These are some of the busiest bus stops in London, used by thousands of commuters a day. The old stops were right next to the station exit. But the road space round there isn't enough for bendy buses; so when the Red Arrow routes which used it went bendy, all the stops had to be shifted three hundred yards up the road, further away from the station exit. A new escalator link has been opened to serve them, at a cost of several million pounds, but it's still far less convenient than the walk of old.

Something similar has happened at the other end of the same Red Arrow routes, in London Bridge. The bendies have stayed in the

station forecourt here; the solution at London Bridge has been to banish some of the other routes which used to serve the station. Passengers on the busy route 343, for instance, used to be able to catch their bus right outside. Now they have to cross the bus station, go down a long flight of stairs, and to an isolated bus stop in a street five minutes walk away. Integrated public transport, disintegrating, just a little, before our eyes. So, anyway, I have made it to the stop. And, look, there's a bus pulling up! If it had been a Routemaster, or even a modern double-decker, I used to be able just to hop on. But now, because of the bendies, all buses in central London need tickets before boarding. And the ticket machines need the exact change. Bus conductors, even bus drivers, used to give change. But there is no arguing with a machine. It's all being done to further the half-truth that bendies are faster to board. *They are, but only because they make you pay the fare in your time, not theirs.* By the time I've found a newsagent who will change my fiver, the bus has vanished – but right behind it, here comes another one. Bunching, I know – a particular problem with bendies – but it suits me, this time. I fumble with the ticket machine, but the coins come right back out. Some machines reject them if they're too shiny. Others just seem to be permanently vandalised, whether by actual vandals or frustrated passengers, who knows?

I call out to the driver, but he doesn't hear, or doesn't care. Off goes the bus, the second one I've missed. An extended wait, now – still ticketless, hoping to appeal to the driver, unwilling to walk to the next stop in case another bus appears. It doesn't, of course. They're all on Oxford Street, too long to pass each other, stacking up like freight cars in a marshalling yard. Ten minutes, fifteen minutes, and a bus arrives, jammed to the doors. But there's no conductor or

driver to police the entrances or regulate the load. More passengers push on through the middle and rear doors – surely this must be unsafe? I squeeze in at the front, hoping to argue with the driver. He hears my story with an indifferent shrug, hands out a small slip of paper asking me to post my fare to an address in Victoria. Behind me, according to TfL's own statistics, at least 7 per cent of my fellow passengers – 11 or 12 on each fully-loaded bus – will not have approached the driver. They will neither be paying their fares, nor intending to pay, adding to the already intolerable crush. There is nothing to stop them; and, indeed, given the state of the ticket machines, there is a great deal to encourage them. On some routes in south London, the proportion of free riders is far, far higher. TfL is fond of saying that unsupervised boarding is the European way, the way of the future. But if it actually troubled to look at the continent of Europe, so rampant has fare-dodging become that it would find several major transport administrations, including Berlin's, retreating from unsupervised boarding, going back to the London style of making people get on at the front and pay the driver. In a rather typical British way, we are adopting what we believe to be a modern European trend when it is actually becoming a thing of the past.

Back on board, the passengers look a little miserable. The tradeoff for taking the bus was that your journey might have been slower, but it was more civilised. You got a seat, and you could see London passing by through the window. The bendy bus, with its impossible sightlines and packed compartments, has destroyed the old bargain. It has brought to the bus network all the discomfort of the Tube – but none of the speed. We are advancing, sluggishly, through the heavy traffic. I notice a couple of cyclists braking sharply to avoid

being swept off their bikes – the buses are too long for the driver to see a cyclist properly when he's on the outer side of our trailing end. Someone in front of me gives up her seat to stand, because she's sitting in a backward facing seat and she feels sick. The standing passengers shuffle and sway, clinging onto railings, thrown around with the motion of the bus. The saloon is filled with high-pitched beeping noises. The "air-cooling" system is not doing its job.

And then – a rare, but welcome, sight: a passenger in a wheelchair, waiting at the bus stop. This man – though there may be only a thousand or so like him using the network every day – is the only real reason why a bendy bus is better than a Routemaster. It will be able to transport him as easily as it transports an able-bodied passenger. Won't it? Sadly, it turns out that our bus is too jammed with people, fare-paying and otherwise, to fit the wheelchair on board. There simply isn't space for it. Although "accessible" in theory, the bendy buses are often so crowded that in practice accessibility often limited. One more problem to report today. Roadworks on part of the route mean the bus has to be diverted. But the diversion being used is not big enough for two bendies to pass – so the buses in our direction must go nearly a mile out of their way, adding an extra ten minutes to the journey.

As the ride finally ends, I claw my way through the crowd, off the bus, thankful to have arrived and marvelling at the contempt for the public, the sheer lack of thought and consideration, displayed by whoever it was who decided that a bendy was a better idea than a Routemaster. However you want to slice it – economically, environmentally, aesthetically – the real, practical advantage in bus operation belongs to the Routemaster. The only reason the bendies can possibly be preferred is because they seem more "modern," more

fashionable. But true modernity is not about materials, not about smoked glass windows and a boxy shape. True modernity is about more effectively meeting human needs. Fashions change, and will overtake the bendy bus. The Routemaster, which has so far never been overtaken, is more genuinely modern than the Mayor's white elephant will ever be. That is why my constituents love it so. What a pity they have nevver been properly consulted by Ken Livingsrone or Transport for London

Appendix

Dean Godson's *Times* article from 21 July 2005
and the response from Peter Hendy,
Director of Surface Transport, Transport for London

I want to hop on a red bus again

Dean Godson

The Routemaster bus is being run off London's streets by political correctness

Ken Livingstone's long, slow destruction of the Routemaster – London's much-loved and practical hop-on, hop-off buses – must rank as one of the greatest acts of municipal vandalism of our time. Tomorrow two more routes go: the 14 and 22, to be replaced by those new double-deckers that afford such paltry ventilation on boiling summer days.

This will leave only three runs. The 13 and 38 disappear in October. The latter, Tony Blair's old bus, which used to take him from Islington to Westminster, will be replaced by a bendy bus, Transport for London's answer to the 1960s tower block.

The 159 is the last to be decommissioned (like Turner's The Fighting Temeraire) on December 10. All that will remain, possibly, are a couple of proposed "heritage routes" for tourists: the transportational equivalent of the white man letting the once-proud Sioux Indian thread beads on a reservation.

But unlike *The Fighting Temeraire* – a wooden Nelsonian man o'war being pulled to its last berth by a modern steam tug – the Routemaster is still eminently usable. Moreover, the debate over its demise dramatically illuminates the clashing visions of the capital's civic identity. In his forthcoming history of the Routemaster, The Bus We Loved, Travis Elborough describes the dismissive view of a senior TfL official. "Any bus which is quirky and old is iconic, especially in a country which is obsessed with its history and its empire and has no real idea of its place in the modern world and its place in Europe."

Actually, the vehicle remains the embodiment of urban cool. It is the last bus built specifically for London's narrow streets, by Londoners, in London. Constructed as a piece of "street furniture", it blended perfectly with its surroundings. So emblematic is the Routemaster that it appears on the front of three leading guide books.

So what will the tourists visiting London for the 2012 Olympics find instead of the traditional London bus, as British as Big Ben? They will find the bendies, built for wider continental boulevards by Mercedes Benz in Germany. No more freedom to alight when and where you want: now we are all at the mercy of the driver.

Tourists will also discover that journeys on the new double-deckers take longer because the drivers must perform the conductor's function and take the money. The Olympic visitor could get on a new quick-to-

board bendy, but they offer a stingy 49 seats compared with the Routemaster's 72: a far worse deal for the elderly, too.

These conductor-less vehicles are far more prone to low-level vandalism and as such offer less reassurance to women. Yes, the new buses have CCTV, but it often is not working, as was shown by the double-decker blown up by Tavistock Square. Sean O'Callaghan, who participated in the Provisionals' bombing campaign in London during the Troubles, has noted that one reason why Republicans tended not to plant bombs on buses was because of nervousness of being interdicted by a conductor.

There are financial gains to be had by tossing the conductors on to the scrapheap of history. But these are outweighed by the costs of having to replace these £200,000 vehicles around every eight years compared with £50,000 to re-equip a 50-year-old Routemaster – plus the capital costs of constructing new depots to accommodate the longer bendy buses.

All this is without reckoning upon fare evasion on multidoor bendies: in some areas they constitute virtually a free service. The Treasury and the Audit Commission need to look at the exploding cost of Whitehall's subsidy to TfL, which is now close to £1 billion per annum – of which its anti-Routemaster tilt is but a part.

So how did this come to pass? After all, at the time of the first mayoral election of 2000 the three main candidates – Livingstone, Steven Norris and Susan Kramer – backed the Routemaster. They must surely have had some nose for the political marketplace. Once elected, Livingstone began a programme of buying back 49 Routemasters with low-emission Cummins engines. But he reversed course with almost Heathite alacrity. It says much about how public policy is made in this country. The destiny of London's buses was

determined not by participatory local democracy but in a relatively quiet accommodation between a politically correct technocratic elite at TfL and group rights' lobbyists. Ever sensitive to those who claim to speak for the handicapped, Livingstone was persuaded that all buses had to be made fully accessible to wheelchairs now, even though the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 insists that this only be achieved by 2017.

So for a mere 1,200 wheelchair trips on London's buses a day – out of a total of six million passengers – the remaining 140 Routemasters must go. Thus do the interests of the few prevail over the many. And many of the groups that might be expected to speak up for the vast majority of Londoners cave in to this moral tyranny. The London Transport Users Committee, the consumers' watchdog, laments the demise of the Routemaster but declares that equal access is supreme.

But there is still time – just. That is why Policy Exchange, as part of its urban programme, will look at the viability of maintaining the Routemaster or constructing one with disabled access – just as the new black cab clearly evolved from its predecessor. As the Manhattan Institute showed in New York, no great city can ignore the aesthetic consequences of policy. So bring on those gorgeous red curves again.

Transport for London

Peter Hendy
Managing Director
Surface Transport

Transport for London
Windsor House
42-50 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0TL

Phone 020 7941 3902
Fax 020 7941 4465
Email peterhendy@tfl.gov.uk

1 August 2005

Dean Godson
Policy Exchange
Clutha House
10 Storey's Gate
London SW1P 3AY

Dear Mr Godson

I Want to Hop on a Red Bus Again – The Times, 21 July 2005

I read with interest the above article published in The Times in your name. It is unfortunate that so many of the views you express are so clearly at odds with reality.

Whilst is undoubtedly true that Routemasters are an iconic design, they are also, crucially, a very old design operating in an environment very different from that which they were originally designed for.

London's population has grown enormously in recent years and will continue to do so in the immediate future. The demands on our transport network are growing and the rejuvenation of London's bus network has been a widely recognised success story in dealing with the demands of a truly 21st century city.

Visitors to London for the Olympics in 2012 will, it is true, find bendy buses and in much greater numbers, big red double deck buses. More than half of the 8000 vehicle fleet are now, and will remain, double deck with articulated buses representing a small but very valuable minority of the vehicles keeping London moving, on specially selected routes appropriate for their carrying capacity and size. There are no buses built in London anymore; to blame the Mayor, or us, for the demise of the UK bus chassis manufacturing industry is wrong. I asked the previous owners of the last remaining UK chassis manufacturer, Dennis, to design an articulated bus and they declined.

I am also concerned that you seem to assess that a low floor bus with a kneeling capability, wheelchair ramp, and stepless seating with easily reachable hand rails is "a far worse deal for the elderly". Your comparison appears to be solely drawn on the seating capacity – 49 on an articulated bus compared to 72 on a Routemaster. But more than half of those 72 seats on the RM are on the top deck, hardly a major plus if you are making a point about those with mobility difficulties. The proposition that the replacement of Routemasters is for "1200 wheelchair journeys a day" is rubbish. Accessible no-step modern vehicles offer benefits to many people; but in any case the number of wheelchair users is rising. Are you against accessible public transport?

CCTV fitment is nearly complete across the entire London bus fleet. It is not related to the presence, or absence, of conductors. But you presume to be in possession of facts relating to CCTV from the terrorist outrage at Tavistock Square. As the Metropolitan Police have made no statement as to whether they do, or do not, hold images from the cameras on the bus involved, and neither has any statement been made as to whether the camera system was working before the explosion or indeed damaged in the blast, your assertion that "it is often not working" is completely unsubstantiated.

As for the issue of the ex IRA terrorist's opinion of the role of thebus conductor in dissuading Irish terrorism (oddly enough expressed in a seminar organised by your employers in the wake of the 7/7 bombings) I would ask just how the presence of a conductor, a person employed to collect fares, could possibly have made any contribution to preventing the dreadful actions of a suicide bomber?

You clearly do not travel by bus in London. Only one in ten passengers pay cash now, as 90% have a valid ticket before they board. Not only has this made the conductor's job redundant, but it contradicts the tired old chestnut of the 'free' bendy bus service – of course you field no evidence to back up this soundbite, simply because all of the available evidence proves it to be profoundly untrue.

You write about the demise of the Routemaster as something recent. Your research is inadequate; most of them were removed, to save cost, in the period 1982-1992, at a time when the Conservative was forcing the then London Transport to economise (and at a time when a much larger proportion of passengers paid cash, and the replacement buses really were slower). It is still more economic to run modern buses then Routemasters; your maths and knowledge are deficient; but we now have the opportunity with a progressive Mayor of putting the savings back in to the provision of more service. You also, incidentally, have no real grasp of the funding of TfL. If you can find another western world city with a lower operating subsidy than London, let us know!

Londoners want a modern, reliable public transport system and they have responded to our provision of just that by returning in their millions to the buses

with passenger numbers booming, bucking the national trend in the process. Hardly the sign of a public voting with their feet in protest.

You seem to have missed the Mayor's positive announcement of "heritage" services, so I am sure you will be delighted to hear that Londoners and visitors will have an opportunity to ride on a Routemaster for many years to come. TfL are in discussions with operators to run two 'heritage' routes in central London Travelcards and Oystercards will be valid on these services. We're happy to provide the opportunity to ride the RMs; it is interesting that we had no offers to run these services on a commercial basis.

If your body has any significant funding or influence, it should use it on issues of consequence. There is no need to research prolonging the life of Routemasters – there are several hundred in preservation and these will no doubt last forever. As your article shows, it's an object of great sentimental affection. Just don't confuse that with offering an acceptable public service.

Yours sincerely

Peter Hendy
Managing Director - Surface Transport

Foreword by Simon Jenkins
Guardian columnist, former Editor of the Evening Standard and board member of London Transport

Introduction by Dean Godson
Research Director of Policy Exchange

The Politics of the Routemaster by Andrew Gilligan
features writer at the *Evening Standard* and Defence and Diplomatic editor of the *Spectator*

Building the Son of Routemaster by Andrew Morgan
co-founder of the Routemaster Operators and Owners Association

Appraising the Routemaster by Dominic Walley
Managing Economist at the Center for Economics

The Ecology of the Routemaster by Zac Goldsmith
editor of the *Ecologist*

The Security of the Routemaster by Colin Cramphorn
Chief Constable of West Yorkshire

The Aesthetic of the Routemaster by Kate Bernard
Features Editor of *Tatler*

The Horror of the Bendy by Kate Hoey
Labour MP for Vauxhall

Cover photo: Photonews Service Ltd. Old Bailey

£10

ISBN 0-9547527-7-5

Policy Exchange
Clutha House
10 Storey's Gate
London SW1P 3AY
Tel: 020 7340 2650

www.policyexchange.org.uk