

TED MILES REFLECTS

WALTON DEPOT IN ITS PRIME YEAR 1952 (Spring)

Walton had an allocation of 4 double deckers, namely;
4051 ONO 72, 4143 SHK 525, 4151 TNO 676, 4157 TNO 682.

All were received new at Clacton depot and subbed to Walton on permanent allocation. When maintenance was needed on any of these 3945 MPU 6 was always the first reserve for Walton, and if this was not available then it was 4048 ONO 69. Also in the summer months Bedford OB 4069 ONO 90 was the coach allocated for afternoon and evening tours. The driver for this work was Mr. Webber from Thorpe le Soken, who in the winter months went back to normal bus work at Clacton.

In 1952, 10 drivers and 10 conductors were on the payroll. The Inspector in charge was Stan Holder who came from Grays on 1st October upon the closure of the depot. He lived in the company bungalow at the rear of the depot.

How do I know all this? At the time I lived at Kirby le Soken and my neighbour was Bob Slogrove who was conductor at Walton. As a result I had a licence to 'live in' the depot as my mother often put it.

Prior to Stan Holders arrival, overtime had been scarce at Walton, however he obtained agreement with Clacton whereby Walton crews could work overtime at Clacton, thereby enhancing their earnings.

Walton depot operated Routes;
107 Walton - Clacton
105 Walton - Colchester
111 Walton - Harwich (summer months only)

A duty consisted of;
6.55am ~~sign on~~
7.05am Depot - Naze 5 mins stand
7.15am Naze - Clacton
7.55am Clacton depot to refuel
8.10am Depot - CN bus stn.
8.15am Clacton - Naze
8.58am Naze - Clacton via Lower Kirby
9.45am Clacton - Walton depot
Leave on 105 stand, show Colchester 10.25am Meal break
11.05am Walton - Colchester
11.45am Clacton - Walton
12.25pm Walton - Colchester
1.30pm Colchester - Walton
Arrive Walton 2.30pm, hand over car, show 107 Clacton
2.50pm Walton - Naze 5 mins stand
3.00pm Naze - Depot (show Clacton) hand over car
3.05pm Office pay in
3.15pm Finish

This gives an idea of a duty which was normally 8 hours, 6 day week. Anything over 48 hours became overtime. Meal breaks taken at Walton did not count as pay hours, however duties that involved a break at Clacton meant the crew were paid right through. Also there was an early duty which involved a meal break at Colchester depot.

How were the buses cleaned? At Walton there was a cleaner who swept the buses out as they came in at the end of the day. He also cleaned the windows inside and out. When this was done he became the 'Night Watchman' which meant 'head down'!!! Oh, for this arrangement in 1996 and we would not have had the sorry stories of the open-toppers and AJN 825.

Route Observations.

The 107 was a goldmine even in the winter. The 105 had its moments particularly in the summer months when heavy duplication on Sundays was commonplace. Stan Holder was an excellent crowd handler and always got a crew from somewhere (and a bus) to get people home. He was particularly generous with time on 'o' time dockets, which meant crews cooperated.

At weekends in the summer months the doors along the side of the depot would be drawn back and many various Tilling Group vehicles would be parked at the depot for the day, but if the company had not informed Stan Holder a vehicle was coming to Walton he would not allow it to park there and had to go elsewhere. He was ruthless on this point.

In 1953 Bristol KSW 4204 WNO 482 was allocated. One with the staggered seating and then Lodekkas appeared. However I am looking too far forward in my diaries now as these periods are worthy of a further article.

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