On the road with No.13
In an interview with John Sherwin, Bob Jackson talks about how the restoration of HOR 413L has progressed since January 2006

Seen for the first time since 2001 when it appeared at the Southsea Spectacular, 13 was a welcome visitor to the ranks of preserved buses at Stokes Bay this year, as seen on page 11. Behind the scenes, Bob Jackson has been giving attention to the Leyland National, which like sister vehicle ‘Sylvia’, was one of the first batch owned by Provincial in 1972.

For five years, the bus was owned jointly by Simon Nicholas and Bob. In January 2006, Bob took over sole responsibility and ownership.

In the records, he has discovered that 13 received a MOT in June 2001 just a few days before her last appearance at Southsea. Looking further back, it shows that the bus was brought out of retirement by the bus company for use in the Fleet Review in 1998. In an arrangement for the use of the ex-Provincial bus for this event, the engine was exchanged for one from an ex-London Transport National.

From May 2002, No 13 was off the road and not used because of some problems like the failing heaters and a corroded battery crate, which is positioned below the bus where it can be attacked by all kinds of bad weather conditions! Shortage of time meant that Bob has tended to concentrate more upon his other National, RUF 37R during the previous four years. However, as work was being carried out elsewhere on 37 since January, Bob has spent time fitting a new battery crate to 13. To his amazement, after very little
attention for four years, HOR 413L passed its MOT first time on 14 August 2006. Bob claims to have prepared very little for the test apart from cleaning out the windscreen washers and sweeping the rubbish from inside and driven to Guildford for the test!

Like all contemporary Nationals, 13 consumes a lot of diesel at a rate of 8 miles per gallon. Bob knows it is an expensive hobby, but he is happy to restore his bus to its former glory. The next jobs on his list are seat replacements and new window pans which are usual for this type of vehicle which attracts rust around the windows – a particular design fault of the Nationals. Bob’s ambition is to repaint 13 into the livery of white upper panels with dual-purpose NBC light green body with a dark green skirt. There is no date in mind for this transformation, but, when pushed, Bob says: “I don’t want to leave it too long!”

For the record, HOR 413L was withdrawn eventually in 1996. It was withdrawn in February 1995 and officially recorded as ‘awaiting disposal’ in the company files. However, a decision was made to put the bus through the MOT and re-instate it into public service at the end of April 1995 for a few more months.

Bob Jackson in conversation with John Sherwin
In this feature, John Kirby takes us back thirty-seven years to a time when he was much younger and the unusual Provincial buses were fascinating.

At the age of nine, I lived in Leigh Park, Havant and I enjoyed watching the red and green buses go by. This was 1968 and I could not have predicted that my interest in Portsmouth Corporation and Southdown buses would become a lifelong hobby which has included driving several of those buses as an enthusiast.

As a family, we often visited Portsmouth in the car and the City Centre was a hotbed for fascinating buses, which helped to make the endless visits to different shops more bearable! On a couple of occasions, we drove past the Dockyard gates and this gave me some real neck ache! I always had the right hand position of three children in the back of the car, so that I could furiously jot down bus numbers of the buses going by! At the Dockyard, I could see the green Provincial buses across the water and I wanted desperately to get over there.

In 1969, I was frustrated by shopping one Saturday and following a dare with my sister, I left the family group and walked the ten miles home to Leigh Park in three hours! Subsequently, I was left sitting on the railings outside the Landport Drapery Bazaar in Arundel Street jotting down my numbers!

We moved to Southsea that year and I was allowed to visit Gosport on my own. A round trip via Fareham followed and various other local trips on my own. Following are some of those jottings from the trips which I hope you enjoy.
Our thanks go to John for sending us these interesting observations which confirm some unusual combinations of single and double decker Provincial buses operating in the Gosport & Fareham area, as well as the movement of ‘Hants & Dorset’ buses which served the peninsula. If you have any notebooks from the past, please let us reproduce them as they have a historic interest for many of our readers. Our archivist will be pleased to receive copies as well. Ed
The Lost Tramways of Provincial: Tynemouth and Dundee

From his detailed research, Stewart Brett has uncovered some interesting facts about the aspects of Provincial elsewhere in the country. His basic notes have been collated into a feature by Richard Arthur

In Provincial Press No 12, an extract from ‘The Times’ appeared alluding to the registration of the Provincial Tramways Company and the subsidiary tramway companies that were acquired amongst these were the companies in Tynemouth and Dundee, absorbed by Provincial in 1872

Tynemouth

The Tynemouth Company was a little older than Provincial itself and was formed on 9 April 1872 as the Tynemouth (Borough) Tramways Company Limited with a registered office at 22 Abingdon Street, Westminster. The Company was promoted by seven gentlemen already promoting other tramways that would become related to the Provincial Tramways Company. The shareholders included John Derrick Ayers who registered the Provincial Tramways Company on 10 July 1872 and Henry Richard Smith who was one of the original promoters of the Plymouth, Stonehouse and Devonport Tramways Company and the Cardiff Tramways Company. Other promoters included Charles Grabhorn and George Lucas who also promoted the Cardiff Street Tramways Company, Herman Gustav Erichsen, Louis Floersheim and James Scott Walker. The latter of these gentlemen was the secretary to the British and Foreign Tramways. From the evidence, it appears that the Tynemouth Company had two secretaries in its brief existence. The first one is believed to be a gentleman called W. Curtes Sampon after whom James Scott Walker was appointed to the position. Interestingly, Joseph Barber Glenn was never appointed as the secretary as he had been with other Provincial subsidiaries.

Each of the aforementioned promoters held 25 shares in the Company. On 10 July 1872, all of the promoters sold their shares to the Provincial Tramways Company. The Tynemouth Company never gained an act to operate a tramway in the borough of Tynemouth despite lasting for three years. On 5 May 1875, one of the original shareholders, George Lucas, petitioned for the winding up and dissolution of the Tynemouth Company and it was dissolved on 31 January 1876.

Dundee

In 1872, an Act of Parliament was passed sanctioning the construction of a tramway in the town of Dundee. This scheme was promoted by Ashurst, Morris and Company, solicitors of the British & Foreign Tramways and the Provincial Tramways Company. Ashurst, Morris and Company also promoted other tramways in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen where they were granted Acts of Parliament to do so. Shortly after the Parliamentary Act was passed with regard to Dundee, the promoters transferred the Act to the Provincial Tramways Company giving Provincial the right to operate the tramway.
The scheme to construct the tramway and operate a company was not addressed until 1877 when it became apparent that time was running out. The Dundee Police Commissioners also required the tramway to be built using some of the Tramway Act of 1872. In 1877, the Dundee Tramway and Omnibus Company was formed by Ashurst, Morris and Company and offered to lease the line. However, they were refused and the lease was awarded to the Dundee & District Tramways Company. To allow services to commence five tramcars had to be hired from other undertakings. Two tramcars came from the Edinburgh Street Tramways and were numbered 1A and 2A, whilst the remaining three (numbered 3A, 4A and 5A) were hired from Glasgow Tramway and Omnibus Company. Interestingly, these two companies were also promoted by Ashurst, Morris and Company. Also of interest to us is that the Company secretary for the Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee companies was Joseph Barber Glenn who was secretary to the Provincial Tramways Company as well. The Dundee Company only had a brief life though being dissolved in November 1881.

Stewart Brett