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With the Editor

A Trolley Bus Mystery

To many small boys it is a mystery how tramcars find the right direction when they come to points where two routes diverge. As they grow older they realise that the driver does the selecting, the tramcar following one route when he keeps the power on, and the other when he cuts it off, the effect in each case being to place the electrically operated points as required.

There is a similar problem with trolley buses, but the points here are on the overhead wires. At first the conductor of a bus had to get out and pull a handle on one of the supporting posts if the points had to be changed, and the bus had to make a second stop to await his return. Later the points were electrically operated, and the conductor only had to press a button on the post. Now the button pressing can be done by the driver in his cab as he approaches the points, and thus we have the apparent miracle of the trolleys of a bus taking the right direction on the wires apparently of their own accord.

This change is a radio development. When the driver presses a button to select his route he is really operating a radio transmitter that conveys signals to a loop aerial mounted above the points, and the current induced in this aerial operates the points through relays.

London Transport has one bus equipped with a transmitter, and a set of points in the Croydon district has been provided with the necessary receiver. The apparatus works perfectly, and all that remains to be tested is whether it will continue to be serviceable in practice over sufficiently long periods. Apparently the only replacement that should be necessary is the one valve used, which costs about 6/- and has to be renewed after about six months.

New Winter Trains

British Railways winter services, which began on 27th September, have introduced two new named trains—"The Norfolkman" between London and Norwich, and "The Tees-Tyne Pullman" between London and Newcastle. The new services include also many summer trains that are being retained and others that will run each weekday instead of at week-ends only. In addition various accelerations of trunk and local services have been made.

In spite of the fact that there are still nearly 5,000 fewer passenger coaches fit for traffic than in pre-war days, 91 new main line services are being operated. Additional suburban services are provided in the London area, and there are more trains having restaurant or sleeping cars.

This Month's Contents

	Page
Aircraft of the Future	330
by C. G. Grey	
An Unusual Tender Water Gauge	333
Modern Mobile Cranes	334
By "Kangaroo" to Australia	337
by John W. R. Taylor	
Ancient Crafts of Buckinghamshire	340
by E. Davies	
Romance of Ship Names	342
by Frank C. Bowen	
Dinky Toys and Supertoys	345
Electrolytic Tinplating by M. Lorant	348
How Does a Mechanical Stoker Work? by "Shed Superintendent"	350
Air News, 346. Books to Read, 347. Club and Branch News, 353. Competitions and Results, 364-5. Fireside Fun, 367. From Our Readers, 351. H.R.C. Pages, 358-9. New Meccano Models, 356. Among the Model-Builders, 354, Model-Building Competition, 357. On Road and Track, 336. Photography, 352. Railway Notes, 338. Stamp Pages, 361, 363.	