

## **01843 to 01865 (The Journey Up)**

by **Toby Holmewood**

They kiss each other's cheeks!  
Wearing jim-jams in the street!  
Back there they'd  
'uddle ya in a van straight-  
make ya wear *their* jack-  
et for a working month!  
It was iperbowl in the book –  
*Now* it's '*hi-purrrr-burlee*'.  
Very elaborate!  
(I guess that *ball*'s  
Just a skool-  
Disco – could be wrong  
You-Decide-fa-ya-self.)

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## **A Brookes Bus Life**

by **Mike Newell**

The bus speeds along the road  
A hill – it slows down  
Passengers leap on and off  
Others sit silently, looking  
The bus is packed with late night clubbers  
The bus is empty – Sunday morning!  
Fast, slow, start, stop, full, empty.  
A Brookes Bus life.

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## **A world mundane with grand tradition**

She's walking this city in spires, her route  
Dissected by ancient stone walls, outstretched  
Arms embracing those free of cares within.  
And brushed along, little worn shoes treading  
Town's cobbles, the curiosity she dared invent  
Peers through college gates and finds within  
An intellectual rite of passage, the journey  
Of dons across pristine lawns to spread thought.

by **Chris Dalton**

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**Bus Stop**

**BUS**

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**STOP**

**It didn't**

by **REF**

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**Don't sit next to me!**

She was on the bus today  
the woman with the loud posh voice.  
Don't you think the  
city centre's a disgrace –  
workmen everywhere  
practically a no-go area.  
And look at that –  
as we neared the business school –  
no aesthetic values

anywhere;  
take that woman at the Tate  
the one whose dirty knickers  
won the Turner prize –  
at which point  
I'm almost sure  
an old man upped and died.

by **Gillian Rathbone**

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### **Evening walk**

In a foreign land I had a dream:  
I zigzagged down New College Lane  
In radical coat and brown DMs  
Toothbrush in my 501s.

Past long walls hiding centuries' learning  
To Queen's Lane and the trafficking High  
I sauntered slow, my insides skipping  
Towards another's room.

I woke, years away, weeping,  
Aching for this Oxford journey  
Lit up in my mind  
Like a first love.

by **Ailsa Holland**

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### **Gentlemen and ladies**

Gentlemen and ladies, students, babies,  
Girls and guys, hushed voices and loud cries.

Intellectuals and comedians, wise men and bohemians,  
Discuss and ponder while dreamers look yonder.

Musicians muse and old friends swap news,  
Lovers smile,  
The bus completes another mile

by **Sharmila Goodhur**

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**Haiku U2 or Bike U?**

When winter ice cuts  
I take the bus but my bike  
Is more exciting

by **Phil Whitehead**

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**Hedena's Dun**

Sunday: the chance to see what lies beyond the London Road.  
Slip back a century or two among the stone  
abodes, the ringing sunshine through the streets,  
gates swung ajar; a woman greets you as you pass.  
Then, the sudden sight of quarry-chiselled meadows or,  
around a hedgerow, plunging fields,  
light ruffling the grass against its grain.

\*Hedena's Dun was the original name for Headington

by **Gillian Pink**

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**Here comes the bus**

Here comes the bus  
Which never leads me astray  
Takes my time in its hands  
And rewards me  
With the latest music.

And how it rocks me!  
And how I long to arrive!  
This journey will be so moving  
And all my senses alive.

by **Anon**

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**I love local radio on buses on clever days: note**

**Note**

You may wonder why this poem has a very small font. On the web, it is very difficult with long line lengths to be true to the way that the poet intended. If

you are interested you might like to read what Chris Jennings has to say on the subject on PageToscreen.

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### **I love local radio on buses on clever days**

The rain sham upon the windows of the bus perch as foreground to the wind  
grey that blocks

the local radio station  
transmission of some shill lame Sting / Stipe wannabe act drowning on his own  
self professed  
recreation of someone elses miserable times transmuted by the power of delirium,  
invoked by the power of  
hysteria

The wind smudges the signal like an eraser, an adults filter, subtracting  
whole choruses from

the playlist of the sloth  
Tidies the dirty foxes, nature in mysterious ways, this is a beautiful three and a  
half minutes.

by **Andrew Luke**

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### **Journey**

I got on the bus today and  
made a fuss about my ticket  
just to make the people laugh

then I sat beside a man who smelt  
of tar and wet clothes but before I did  
a woman took my hand and said

I see you're happy; why?  
I said; I've only just survived  
- like the rest of us.

by **Linda Hunter**

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### **Last bus**

The last bus jumps off like a planet  
packed with under-assorted people  
who take advantage of it anyhow.  
Most of us are the better for wear;  
a few are transcendental; and one or two  
chancers are busy changing their lives.  
If you are not talking you can watch  
the bodies anticipate shedding clothes,  
evacuating wastes, and lastly  
lying down somewhere in the dark.  
There are no good places to die but  
this is surely one of them.

by **Rip Bulkeley**

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### **Magical Oxford**

Buses can be so much fun  
Here comes Stagecoach jump on one  
Get your ticket find a seat.  
Who knows who you'll meet.

From the Cowley, Iffley road  
Swiftly over the Magdalen Bridge  
Cruising past the Botanic Gardens  
Witnessing the ancient towers.

Here we are here we go  
Feel the magic of the old.  
Have a lovely, lovely day  
as you now go on your way.

by **Timon. B. Singh**

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### **Meeting Confucius**

because the sound will not let me leave  
I find a bench to sit amongst it, mesmerised,  
when an old man, shuffling between son and wife,  
stops, caught by the bells, the spell

*bluebells*  
*light up winter grass*

*take my seat*, I say  
and we both, compelled somehow to do so,  
bow to one another

*river runs*  
*to quiet sea*

by **Jane Spiro**

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### **Native**

Nomads, we came here  
thirsty for knowledge.  
Remember those nights  
shooting pool in the Elm Tree?  
Heppy – *Mr Graham* –  
behind his bar, dreaming  
of Caribbean nights; 52s  
rumbling by to unknown places,  
Cowley, Blackbird Leys.  
You moved on. I stayed, walked  
up and down this road  
ten thousand times.  
Now my feet carry its smell.  
They call it *home*.

by **Alan Buckley**

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### **Night Running through Oxford**

I run when the moon's a fingernail  
laughing at the sky.  
I glide through cloisters  
where stunted faces goggle disapproval,  
past cardboard men who spit at me,  
smelling of chicken wings.

Forgetting pavements,  
I slide into the silence  
of Barracks Lane  
where frost sprays the tin-foil path;

paws hiss on frozen grass  
and my fox's tail salutes the moon.

by **Yvonne Lyon**

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**Ode to Brookes Bus route U1 from High St to Gipsy Lane**

No need for bikes or parking fuss  
Socratic transport, Minerva's bus  
You rush me reading learned themes,  
From grove to grove of academe

by **Francis King**

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**On the bus**

On the bus I shall go  
Where I stop only I will know  
I like to watch the wheels turn  
And smell the rubber burn  
I get in a happy state  
When the bus is very late  
As the class will be done  
So I can go and have some fun  
If the lecturers make a fuss  
I can just blame it on the bus

by **David Werrett**

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**Oxford**

Hung heads loll easy in cold  
February chill, ill sniffles call  
"Hark" to first lectures of the day.  
Bustle bodies cut air in musty  
Morning calls, carousels round spires  
Round cold learning fires – fraught  
Desires to learn, to have been  
And be someone  
Here

by **Samuel Mahoney**

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**Oxford Journey(1)**

This is the way into Oxford,  
Plugged into the songs in my pocket.  
In my head I sing along to the second violin,  
Sound cloistered between the ears.

I am travelling into a private city,  
Built of shortcuts and anecdotes,  
Not watching the route known by heart,  
Not listening to the chatter  
or the wheels hiss on wet tarmac.

by **Katherine Firth**

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**Oxford Journey(2)**

How can we ever “arrive” in a city  
where the world’s traffic never ends?

Faces of all shades and forms frame  
their hopes in the same bus windows  
where I sat, uncertain and newly a student.

Now is their travel my history:  
their excited eyes watching the moving streets  
where my younger years still walk

by **Edwina Towson**

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**Oxford Journey**

I’m on my way  
to town today  
on an Oxford bus.

I meet with my mates  
in the park  
We stay there till it’s getting dark.

Now I'm cold and covered in mud  
I stroll back to the bus stop  
It's warm and dry back on the bus  
Returning from my Oxford journey.

by **Macauley Hatley** (aged 8)

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### **Oxford Journeys(1)**

Clankity clank, bumpity bump  
Over the bridge, down with a thump.  
Whistling winds, a gleaming sun  
This journey for me, is nearly done.

Honkity honk, beepity beep  
cars rush past, and lorries and jeeps.  
A disco of lights, red, amber and green  
More beautiful than any I've seen.

Brakes screech, doors open wide.  
Cold out there, maybe I'll stay inside.

by **Kylie Hatley**

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### **Oxford Journeys(2)**

I'm on my way to find a bus  
I met up with my friends on the bus  
We went to Carterton town  
to get Chinese  
We went the park to eat our food  
Then we were thirsty  
We got some coke  
Back on the bus it was dark  
Up in the sky I saw stars  
Like little lights all dotted around.

by **Billy Hatley** (aged 6)

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### **Oxford Journeys(3)**

If you want to keep dry,  
But you don't want to fly.

If you want to go far,  
You may not wish to use a car.

You might want to stay afloat,  
But not want to use a boat.

To travel with a minimum of fuss,  
You could jump on a big red bus.

by **Lauren Povey**

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### **Oxford Journeys**

Heart Broken  
I board the bus,  
My tears the only token,  
My last memory of us

I remember our picnic  
At South Park,  
Punting on the Thames,  
The Radcliffe Tower in the dark

Stuck in a traffic jam,  
Laughing at life

But here our journey ends  
A slight movement of the hand,  
And there I go  
Gone for good

by **Laura Ketley**

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### **Pedestrian**

If I'd had the money,  
I wouldn't have seen that hummingbird  
On the way to work that morning when

I couldn't afford the bus.

by **Emma Harvey**

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### **Planes, Trains, Swimming Machines**

What sort of fish likes patterns?

I saw two planes this morning,  
flying unnecessarily close  
together, threatening to collide.  
These giant metal birds  
roared louder than any pterodactyl  
I'd ever heard, echoing  
off the streets of my city of learning.  
Soon enough, though, they  
flew away into the grey nothingness  
of a skyline without a sunset.

by **Kristin Maffei**

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### **Rainy Thursday**

(with apologies to William Blake)

'Twas on a rainy Thursday, their windows all unclean,  
The buses running two and two, some red, some blue, some green.  
Grey-faced commuters stood around, with feet as cold as snow,  
Till down the mighty Banbury Road they like Thames waters flow.

Oh, what a multitude they seemed, these flowers of Oxford town!  
Amid the night and smog they gleamed with radiance all their own.  
Between them stretched gigantic gaps, since buses run in bands.  
Thousands of tired travellers wringing their innocent hands.

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the traffic's song,  
Or like harmonious thunderings those dreaming spires among.  
So though all seats are occupied, and waiting times obscene,  
Don't make a fuss, please take the bus, and help keep Oxford green.

by **Merryn Williams**

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### **Reflections during a bus journey up the Cowley Road**

You don't need to travel to see the world,  
Just take a ride on your local bus.  
Close your eyes and enjoy the sounds  
Of the whole world visiting us!

by **Pauline Hambrook**

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### **Start Stop**

Roped to a tree,  
drenched purple and yellow petals  
against the stripped-pale trunk,  
memorial flowers in foil  
outside Ruskin's cathedral  
to the steady creeping  
progress of life.

by **Steven Matthews**

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### **Stowaway**

On trains why is it that I pay?  
The damn thing goes there anyway.  
Ticket-less I should be,  
to ride the rails - forever free.  
I'd travel up and down the lines,  
until I'm caught and given fines

by **Jon Mycroft**

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### **Sunspill**

when the west licked  
under the cloud low  
silver, gold leaf prising  
the sky lid so that  
the grumpy driver, the  
one-eyed dog, the early  
drunks, the Japanese

tourist, the old man  
at the front of the queue  
were each in a luminous  
pocket and the pigeons  
and pensioners, and the  
cyclists  
and Friday night out  
and the suddenly antiphonal windows  
all signalling  
something else  
something else  
something else  
and just for a moment  
everyone's shoulders  
grew wings

by **Helen Kidd**

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### **The Aspirational Bus**

Climb, climb bus.  
Jolt on up  
To the heights of Headington.  
Jolt and climb and arrive.  
Dreams materialize on the Hill.  
But will they for me?  
Are there too many jolts  
To a PhD?

by **Rosalind Duhs**

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### **The Condemned Woman**

Today is exam day, for pen to push paper.  
An extended hand halts the afternoon bus  
And I embark with eerie silence saluting me.  
I am the only passenger!  
No ringing tones, no chatty phones. Silence.  
No music from errant earplugs.  
No other traveller mounts this motor.  
Doomed in this personal privilege



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### **The Morning Rush**

Queues and hold-ups  
Drumming fingers  
Angry voices  
“Hurry up, I’m going to be late!”

Beeping horns  
Traffic jams  
Sneering tones  
“Hurry up, I’m going to be late!”

Swerving buses  
Hasty drivers  
Arguments  
“Hurry up, I’m going to be late!”

Take a moment.  
Think about it.  
What are we doing?

Gases dancing  
Fumes flowing  
Atmospheres dying  
STOP.  
Before it’s too late.

by **Anon**

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### **The busman’s holiday**

The old route from Harcourt to Headington Hill  
Has some strange appeal for my bicycle still.  
On days when my wife wants the West End for fun  
Its spokes spool the roads that my bus would’ve done.

Why keep on repeating what you’ve done for years?  
She whines in the hollows of retiring ears.  
But this is a secret I’ll keep to myself.  
The joy of a journey that’s carrying nobody else.

by **Will May**

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**The punt swings clear**

The punt swings clear of the water with a slap  
Fingers of water slipping from the prow  
1925, my grandfather, waistcoat flapping in the warm breeze  
Casts a boatbuilder's eye over his bargain.

His Oxford centred on Salter's yard  
River and canal his highways, a city of fords and wharves.  
I tread the solid ground, but the boatman rowed sure.

by **Rex Knight**

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**Top Deck**

I can see more  
than I can from a car:

fields  
billowing green

clouds oyster-white,  
a kite

wide-winged over the road  
toy cows motionless

sitting down, standing up.  
Orange leaves drop.

Blue shadows crouch under walls.  
Who watches over all this?

I would like to say God,  
being upstairs on the bus,

but I suppose it's just us.

by **John Daniel**

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**Walking to work: February 8th**

Android arteries  
Fur up with white stuff.

Human hearts expand,  
Offer to shop,  
Shovel frontages.

Under the ivy  
Wings flick brief greeting  
To the coming cold  
And turn in for a long sleep at last.

by **Caroline Jackson-Houlston**

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**We are all soldiers on this bus...**

Marching to our ordered work  
with Mickey Rat, Chairman Mao  
and Uncle Joe – “The more you spend  
the more you save!” Piled high,  
sold cheap, pips squeak,  
the canary pirouettes in the cage,  
until something living reclaims our waste –  
like the five-fingered hand and embryo fish  
all our parts come down to this:  
return to God, address unknown.

by **George Roberts**

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**not just a sharp left**

not just a sharp left  
time to dream  
to come clean  
to work it out  
to feel bereft  
    of everything  
        but now

by **Cecilia Twinch**

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