

RAIN MARS LORD MAYOR'S SHOW

Through the haze of a wet November day, a gilded coach heralds London's oldest spectacle - the Lord Mayor's Show. Sir Frederick Rowland, who will be the capital's first citizen for the next 12 months, drives in procession to the Law Courts, where he presents himself before the King's justices, as Lord Mayors have done since Magna Carta days. An earlier mishap along the route - when a team of horses, upset by the slippery surface, bolted into the crowd, injuring 20 - has not held up the procession, that gives rain-soaked onlookers a morning of colour and pageantry. "Transport through the Ages" is the theme and the cavalcade goes way back through the centuries to bring in everything that ever moved.

Stevenson's rocket of 1829 takes a place of honour.

And here is a salute for another "Old Faithful."

And so it goes on. Manual haulage - manual transport. Back to the days when "go-slow" was just an order to your carrier.

The models of 1949 bring us back to the export age. It's the year's grandest free show and the only pity is that tradition decrees it must be held in November. Surely mid-summer would give everyone a more sporting chance of escaping a soaking and a week of the shuffles. Perhaps Sir Frederick Rowland, sixth-hundred-and-twenty-seventh Lord Mayor of London can suggest to his Aldermen and Company Wardens an alteration in the ancient rules. For the capital's pageant of the year is a part of the British way of life and something that should be seen by all Britons - at holiday time.

Whether it's summer or winter, you can always count on one thing - - after the Lord Mayor's show there always comes another shower.