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Women in Tramways in World War One

A noteworthy feature of civilian life in World War One was the much greater employment of women in occupations previously regarded as a male preserve, for example in many sectors of the manufacturing industry. In 1919 the Municipal Tramways Association (MTA, a precursor of today's CPT) submitted a report to the War Cabinet Committee on Women in Industry covering the employment of Women in in Traffic Departments.

Access to the MTA records held at the National Tramway Museum at Crich has enabled this report to be examined, as reproduced overleaf. It was attached to the Municipal Tramways Association (Incorporated) Minute Book no 4, the relevant minute being that for a meeting of the Executive Committee of the MTA on 28 February 1919.

Somewhat earlier, the Annual Report of the Executive Council of the MTA read at their Annual General Meeting at Blackpool on 21st September 1917 included the statement that –

"THE NUMBER OF WOMEN EMPLOYED ON TRAMWAY UNDERTAKINGS HAS BEEN GREATLY AUGMENTED DURING THE YEAR, AND AT THE PRESENT TIME WOMEN ARE ENGAGED AS DRIVERS, CONDUCTORS AND



Above: Mrs Elizabeth Seal, who worked as a tram conductress for London United Tramways between 1915 and 1919 (Courtesy Bryan Woodruff)

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*CLEANERS, INSPECTORS, TIMEKEEPERS,
STOREKEEPERS, LABOURERS IN THE REPAIR
SHOPS, AND ON THE PERMANENT WAY
GANGS, ETC. THEY ARE ALSO LARGELY
EMPLOYED IN FILLING VACANCIES ON THE
GENERAL OFFICE STAFFS AND AS CASH
CLERKS."*

By 1919 it had become the sensible practice for the MTA to send out occasional questionnaires to each municipal tramway operator asking them to complete a "return" to indicate how, in practical terms, current specified difficulties, common to all tramways, were resolved. The detailed results of those surveys were then collated and the conclusions were circulated amongst the membership. This was to the potential benefit of all of the tramway operators.

It was usual for one of the Municipal tramway managers (and his office staff of course!) to complete each project. Recourse to the employment of women by the tramway industry during the First World War had been necessary in order to keep the tramway services operating and all of the essential factories working. The WAR CABINET COMMITTEE ON WOMEN IN INDUSTRY, a government enquiry chaired by Lord Atkin, was set up in August 1917 and in 1918 the Municipal Tramways Association was asked to give evidence.

J.M. McElroy, (General Manager of Manchester Corporation Tramways 1900 - 1922) was accordingly delegated by the MTA to undertake this official survey and on 18th December 1918 he wrote to George W Holford, General Manager of Salford Corporation Tramways, at the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square, London, quoting that-

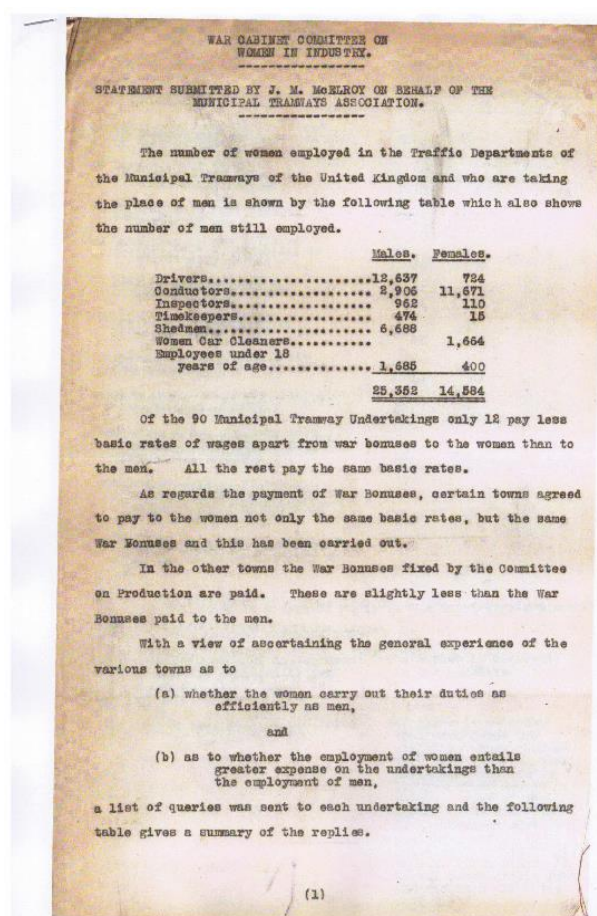
"[The Committee] pressed me very strongly to urge our Executive Council to send in a written statement of the Association's views for the help of the Committee. [They] pointed out that nearly all industries employing women had assisted the Committee by giving evidence and in view of the fact that we offered in the first instance to give evidence and the Tramways and Light Railways Association and the National Transport Workers' Federation have already given evidence, I am strongly of the opinion that we should be acting wisely if we carry out the wishes of the Secretary of the Committee".

Accordingly the questionnaire to the Municipal tramway industry was circulated by McElroy to all of the members of the Association in 1918 (prior to demobilization of the majority of the male tramway staff which began in earnest in 1919).

The survey brought to light evidence that certain problems had been encountered during the three or four years of employment of women in the tramway industry. Consequently it was decided that the McElroy report should be prefaced by a covering statement. To allow the complete story to be recorded the strong comments given in the returns are shown here in full.

The tone of the comments reflects the attitudes at the time, and the report is reproduced here in that context. For example, few allowances were made of the needs for women workers in the industry (such as appropriate toilet facilities), which may account for some of the problems mentioned.

Roger Benton



A REPORT BY THE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS ASSOCIATION IN 1919 ON THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN TRAFFIC DEPARTMENTS DURING THE WAR

"The Executive Council of the Municipal Tramways Association desire me to state that whilst they submit this evidence regarding women employed in the tramway industry, they wish it to be clearly understood that all concerned in the control and management of the undertakings fully appreciate the services rendered by the women during the period of the war. Without the services of women, tramway undertakings would have been compelled (a) to run a greatly reduced mileage – and this in the munition areas would have had a serious effect on the output of munitions – or (b) to keep a larger number of men in their employ, thus reducing the number available for military service."

7th JANUARY 1919

STATEMENT SUBMITTED BY J.M. McELROY ON BEHALF OF THE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS ASSOCIATION.

The number of women employed in the Traffic Departments of the Municipal Tramways of the United Kingdom who are taking the place of men is shown by the following table which also shows the number of men still employed.

	Males	Females
Drivers.....	12,637	724
Conductors.....	2,906	11,671
Inspectors.....	962	110
Timekeepers.....	474	15
Shedmen.....	6,688	-
Women Car Cleaners....	-	1,664
Employees under 18yrs	1,685	400
	<u>25,352</u>	<u>14,584</u>

Of the 90 Municipal Tramway Undertakings only 12 pay less basic rates of wages apart from war bonuses to the women than to the men. All the rest pay the same basic rates. As regards the payment of War Bonuses, certain towns agreed to pay the women not only the same basic rates, but the same War Bonuses and this has been carried out. In the other towns the War Bonuses fixed by the Committee on Production are paid. These are slightly less than the War Bonuses paid to the men.

With a view to ascertaining the general experience of the various towns as to

- a) Whether the women carry out their duties as efficiently as men, and
- b) As to whether the employment of women entails greater expense on the undertakings than the employment of men,

A list of queries was sent to each undertaking and the following table gives a summary of the replies.

No. who replied

QUERY

[Numbers below denote 'yes' (Y), 'no' (N) and 'qualified or incomplete replies' (Q)*]

Do women carry out their duties as efficiently as men? Y 9 N 73 Q 3

Do they collect fares as efficiently as men? Y 21 N 60 Q 4

Do they have more "shorts" in cash than men? Y 72 N 10 Q 3

Do they make up way bills as efficiently as men? Y 22 N 59 Q 4

Do they make reports as efficiently? Y 11 N 72 Q 2

Are they as courteous to passengers? Y 34 N 47 Q 4

Are they as punctual in their attendance? Y 15 N 68 Q 2

Do they carry out their general instructions as well? Y 13 N 70 Q 2

Were later recruits inferior to first women employed? Y 64 N 17 Q 4

Is it more expensive to employ women than men? Y 72 N 11 Q 2

Are women car cleaners as efficient as men? Y 17 N 27 Q 7

**In order to fit within the two-column layout of this journal, the format in which response numbers are shown has been changed slightly from the original*

The following is a typical reply to the queries from one of the largest tramway undertakings:-

Generally speaking, do the women conductors employed by you carry out their duties as efficiently as men?

The answer is decidedly in the negative.

(a) Do they collect the fares as efficiently?

No. There is no doubt that more fares are missed by women conductors than by men. They are peculiarly lax in looking after excess fares. Many of them appear to be satisfied if a passenger pays for a ticket, and it is quite easy for passengers who are so inclined, to travel considerably past the distance they have paid for.

Can you furnish figures in support of your answer as regards fare collection? If so, please do so.

I am afraid I cannot put a figure on this. Our inspection staff has been very much reduced during the war, and, on account of the way the cars have been crowded, and the slowness of the women in collecting the fares, the inspectors have been engaged more on assisting the conductors than inspecting duties. The number of fares which have been collected by inspectors on cars, however, shows conclusively that women miss more fares than men.

(b) Do they have more "Shorts" in cash?

I should say that the cash shorts have been increased by 50% in number by the employment of women, and it is also a fact that the shorts are higher in amount. Where men were short 1d. or similar small sums on the day's work, the shorts are far higher sums. With reference to ticket shorts, I should say that these are doubled. The women do not exercise the same care in looking after the tickets, and, although our cars are provided with lockers, it is quite a common thing for the ticket box to be put in the locker, and the door of the locker open, thus tempting children to abstract the tickets.

(c) Do they make up their waybills as efficiently?

They do not. They are not so careful in making the figures legible, and thus extra work is entailed in the Cash Offices and Head Office.

(d) Do they make out their reports as efficiently?

Speaking generally, I should say that they do not, but, where a report is made out regarding anything that takes place on the car, we hold the driver and the conductor equally responsible for reporting such occurrences, and, as the majority of the women have male drivers, they have the benefit of the instruction and guidance they get from the men in making up the reports, and the men are careful not to sign a report unless they are satisfied that it is correct. We had more unreported accidents with women.

(e) Are they as courteous to passengers?

There is no question that we have far more complaints of rudeness by female than by male conductors. They are, naturally, more argumentative. When women were first employed on the cars, the public were exceedingly tolerant, and I am satisfied that many cases of discourtesy were passed over, simply because the travelling public did not like the idea of reporting a woman who was probably doing her best, and engaged on war work. The rudeness, however, became so frequent that reports increased in number. My experience is that, when men had trouble with passengers and were rude, they were usually satisfied if they used an offensive expression once. The women, however, seem to be more highly strung, and, when they have trouble with the passengers, they cannot keep silent as long as the passenger is present.

(f) Are they as punctual in attendance?

No. There are far more late reports by women than we had when men were employed, and I am of opinion that we had more regular attendance when wages were lower. As the remuneration increased, the necessity for continuous attendance at work was not felt by the women to the same extent, and they were inclined to neglect their work for light excuses. Women are, by nature, subject to ailments from which men are fortunately free and they are,

therefore, unable to stand the continuous strain of tramway work. Missed reliefs, on the road, are more frequent with women. While we were, naturally, sympathetic in giving employment to married women whose husbands were serving in the forces, I regret to say that they were not satisfactory. In many cases, the family income was greater than when the husband was at home, and the incentive to regular attendance was absent. When the husband came home on leave, they had to be relieved from work. Not only their own illness, but any illness in the family, kept them from duty.

(g) Do they carry out their general instructions as well?

Generally speaking generally, they do not. The sense of discipline is not developed in women to the same extent as men. They do not realise the necessity for discipline in a large concern, and, in many cases, important notices issued to depots, and put up in a special frame placed on the office counter, were not seen by the women, because they did not take the trouble to read them. It is difficult to get a woman to admit she has been at fault.

(i) Have you found that after the first women you employed, those which came into your service later are inferior from the employer's point of view?

There can be no question that the first women employed on tramways were much superior to those who came later. These women came forward in the early days of the war, principally from patriotic reasons, and with a desire to do what they could to release men for the more important work of the firing line. Latterly I fear the women looked on tramway work simply as a good job, where the remuneration was steady, and the occupation of a healthy character.

(h) If so, how do you account for it?

This has been answered in the previous question.

(i) Are there any other points of comparison between the way women and men conductors do their work to which you would like to call attention?

We found them very careless in handling property, and also in taking care of articles found on cars. We

had great trouble with articles lost by passengers being subsequently lost or mislaid by conductresses. It was difficult to keep them from gossiping with passengers, and they were frequently to be found on the front platform when they should have been on the rear. They also made a habit of asking fares from passengers joining the cars, often at places on the system where it was positively dangerous, and, when the request was ignored, they became Impertinent. Another trouble was the habit of some of the girls going about in uniform when off duty, and larking with soldiers and sailors on the streets.

(1) Does the employment of women conductors entail greater expense on your undertaking than the employment of men? If so, please give particulars of such increased expense under the following heads.

(a) Owing to the comparatively short time many of the women remain in the service.

There is no doubt that women entailed greater expense, as they were, to a large extent "birds of Passage". I daresay we have as large a percentage of women who have remained with us for a considerable period as any tramway concern in the country. We first employed women on our cars in April 1915, and we have, at the present time, 226 women who are entitled to wear a badge indicating three years' continuous service on the cars. Many, however, were country girls, whose people had small crofts, and they had to give up their situations, and go home and assist at various times on the land. Others would give up their situations simply to get a long holiday; indeed, any trifling excuse was good enough for some of them. As a consequence we had to be continually training women, and, as we pay them full wages during the period of training, this necessarily entailed very considerable expense. Since April 1915, when we started the first woman conductor, 4,821 have received training, and we have now 1,863 women on our cars.

(b) Extra number employed owing to unpunctuality and time lost through sickness and other causes.

Our "Spare List" had to be increased by 50% on this account.

(c) Extra cost of uniform clothing.

I cannot say that there has been much extra expense in this connection. The clothing for the women was not more expensive than that of the men but we found them more severe on the uniform. When an outfit was out for a season – that is, for one summer or one winter – and handed in for overhaul, we found that the garments of the women were more worn than those of the men and required extra cost in repairs.

(d) Any other causes of increased expense?

We had heavy expenditure in repairs through women neglecting to attend to trolleys at curves, junctions and depots. Under this heading alone, our costs must have been increased by thousands of pounds. I have already referred to the question of unreported accidents. These are always expensive. Platform accidents also increased. Women did not exercise the same care in looking into the safety of passengers entering and leaving cars.

(J) Do the women car cleaners employed by you carry out their duties as efficiently as men?

No. The women do not clean cars so efficiently as men; in fact, we have had to reduce the standard in this respect, and cars are now accepted as clean which, in pre-war times, would have been handed back to the cleaners to finish.

(K) Does the employment of women car cleaners entail greater expense on your undertaking than the employment of men? If so, please give particulars.

It is difficult to say that the women cleaners caused greater expense. The wages in this department were not as high as those of the men, but we had to keep a larger spare list, on account of the uncertainty of women reporting for duty. On the whole, however, I do not know that our expenses in this connection have been very substantially increased by the employment of women, but as already stated, the work is not done so efficiently. In this connection, I might say that we employ somewhere about 450 women cleaners. They were first employed about three years ago, and since then about 1,000 have either resigned or been dismissed from the service. This means that the staff has been turned over three times in three years.

**NOTE BY THE GENERAL MANAGER
OF THE UNDERTAKING WHICH GAVE
THE ABOVE REPLIES –**

“In justice to the women, I think it only fair to call attention to the fact that conditions on tramcars, during the last three and a half years, have been abnormal, and have been increasingly difficult. We had, first of all, to make a slight increase in the working hours, viz: - from 51 to 54 hours per week. Then the conditions of the track and rolling stock has not been so satisfactory as tramway authorities would like to see them, and, through the shortage of rolling stock, there has been greater pressure on the cars in operation. The coal shortage has necessitated a further reduction in the service recently, making the work still more trying. The number of passengers carried per car mile has increased considerably.

I think it merely justice to the women to direct attention to this, and while I willingly acknowledge the great help they have given – we could not have “carried on” without them, I regret I cannot find one point in which they are superior to men for tramway Work”.

FEEDBACK

SUTTON & CO

Following the correspondence in Journal 76, Dave Bubier has added the following comments:-

As intimated as long ago as *Newsletter* 50 (p22), history has not dealt kindly with the erstwhile parcel carriage business of Sutton & Co. Whereas contemporaries names such as ‘Pickfords’ and ‘Carter Paterson’ passed into common parlance, that of Suttons was so far forgotten as to miss inclusion in the ‘*Companion to British Road Haulage History*’. The fact was that it was they who had devised the ‘smalls’ parcel traffic system in the 1860s, developing a sophisticated network of agents with carriage between rail-heads involving multiple companies. Local deliveries were sub-contracted to existing ‘carriers’, as we understand the term, and carmen as well as latterly to the railway company vehicles that primarily handled advance luggage and the larger items of goods. It was a large and exceedingly prosperous business in its hey-day and Thomas Watson of the owning family became a very wealthy man – as per the reference above.

The re-entry of Royal Mail to the parcels business in the 1890s (*Journal* 69, p13) saw some abstraction from the business of companies such as Suttons whilst the railways ‘Grouping’ (1922) saw them more easily able to develop their own integrated parcels network, leading ultimately to the demise of Suttons. Rail parcel traffic flourished right through nationalisation but, even before privatisation brought about an inevitable end, was being seen as secondary business. Thus the total switch to road that we see today, which can see online orders being placed, picked, trunked from one end of the country to the other and courier delivered to your door, all well within 24-hours.

Association News

...reporting from Oxford

Keeping the Show on the Road

The Management Committee met on April 24, at Cowley House, Oxford, courtesy of Philip Kirk. The committee was pleased to note that Pat Company, having assumed responsibility as Membership Secretary, had already been very successful in recruiting new members and chasing up late payers to the extent that it would now be necessary to increase the order for the print run of the Journal! With regret they learnt that John Ashley and John Howie would be standing down, respectively, as Events Organiser and Company Secretary at the year's end. Royston Fisher had agreed to remain Treasurer whilst the quest continued for his replacement. That quest has now been successful and Maria Stanley, who read law at Cardiff, has very kindly agreed to take on the task.

Wales on Wheels

The Committee congratulated John Ashley on this year's very successful Wales on Wheels event, a full report of which is included in this Journal.

Whither the route and whence we came

The Committee gave further consideration to the draft discussion paper on the Association's development, a summary of which is now included in this edition. It had been considered that it was appropriate to explore ways in which the Association might work more effectively with other organisations, and, in this connection, the attention of members is also drawn to the paper relating to the conference held at the Acton depot of the London Transport Museum (available on request from the editor at address/e-mail as shown on page 2). The Committee welcomed preliminary reports on possible collaboration with the Omnibus Society and the Coventry Transport Museum. The views of members, needless to say, would be welcome relating to the development paper and to any possible collaboration with organisations sharing, to some extent, interests akin to our own.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The Committee, in reviewing arrangements for the Autumn Conference, confirms that it will take place in Coventry on October 4th, John Minnis, of English Heritage, being the Conference's keynote speaker. However, to minimise expense and inconvenience to members, the event will now be limited to a single day, incorporating luncheon, at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum. Additionally, there will be an opportunity for members, in an open forum, to report on their current researches. Should you be willing to make such a presentation, would you please let us know. A booking form appears at the back of this issue.

Preliminary consideration was given to next year's programme [2015], partly to accommodate the wishes of members who need to plan ahead.

The Spring AGM and Conference will take place in the refurbished Coventry Transport Museum on Saturday, March 21st 2015, when the theme will be 'Transport and the City Region, in History and in Prospect'.

In the Summer, on a date to be negotiated, there will be a special one day conference in Oxford, in celebration of Professor John Hibbs' 90th anniversary, on the theme of 'Regulation and Deregulation in Transport'.

The Autumn Conference would take place in the Coventry Transport Museum on Saturday, October 3rd 2015, on the theme of 'Maps in the History of Transport'.

Until next time. As ever, should you suppose that, as far as you are concerned, the bus has taken the wrong turning, please ring the bell! The Committee resolved that their next meeting would be held on Wednesday, November 5th, 2014, when they would be pleased to consider your comments.

Robert McCloy, chairman and clerk pro tem.

R&RTHA Development: A Discussion Paper

Introduction

This paper is prompted by an informal discussion involving Roger Atkinson, David Harman and the Chairman, briefly reported to the committee who agreed that, day to day conduct having been broadly stabilised, it was now appropriate to take stock and plan for the Association's future development.

In overall terms, the Association's original purposes remain valid but there is a need to clarify these, and make sure that these are shared by the committee and general membership.

Successes

Many initiatives have been taken which are judged to have been worthwhile, notably the publication of 'The Companion', events such as 'Wales on Wheels', the Members' inventory of interests, the schedule of transport archives, the website's development, the re-establishment of the quarterly publication of the Journal and a regular pattern of meetings, however, some weaknesses remain.

The first relates to effective follow-up, for example, communicating with members no longer attending meetings or renewing membership, taking steps to implement ideas well received at meetings, and responding to enquiries. The second relates to marketing and publicity.

Suggestions

Specific initiatives have already been advanced: the production of a regular column, in the Journal and on the Website, featuring topics of current importance, alongside light-hearted observations. Roger Atkinson has already taken on this task. The second was an occasional column focussing upon aids to study for the transport historian. David Harman volunteered to take on this task (his first contribution appears in this issue). Pat Company, the newly appointed Membership Secretary, has contacted: first, former members who had not renewed their membership, soliciting reasons, and encouraging their re-joining; and secondly, those

continuing members who had not recently been involved in the Association's activities, encouraging them to suggest developments that might make the Association more attractive to them. The Committee has also given preliminary consideration to adopting a shorter and possibly less ponderous title.

Corporate Members

Clarification is needed about the role of Corporate Members setting out the benefits that might be expected from corporate membership, for the member and Association. The Association's active promotion of the activities of corporate members, taking positive steps to involve them in the Association's work and alerting them to relevant Association activities were cited. Detailing examples of possible collaborative working between the Association and corporate members might be necessary.

A starting point

The objective/ vision/aims were cast, by Graham Boyes, former Chairman, in the following terms in 'The Companion', and it is doubtful that they could be better expressed or that it would be timely at the moment of publication to amend them:-

The Roads and Road Transport History Conference, as it was originally called, was formally established in 1992, following an exploratory meeting in Coventry in 1991. Those who were seriously interested and actively involved in researching and writing about the history of roads and road transport at that time were often working in isolation from each other, or in small groups, as minorities within societies that were more concerned with the current scene, with vehicles or with railway history. The conference was therefore intended to fill the need for an umbrella organisation that would provide a forum for them to meet and communicate with each other for exchange of information and ideas. The overall aim was to broaden an individual's understanding of the subject and to stimulate new research and writing across the entire field.

[For the writer, the publication of the Companions epitomised what the founding members hoped what would be achieved.]

Thus, in essence, the Association was for the serious road transport historian, characterised as often isolated, as far as this field was concerned, providing a specialist focus, stimulus and means of communication.

Consonant with the above objectives, we could include: the promotion of research having identified gaps in our knowledge, highlighting developments of potential historical significance, fostering archives and developing further comprehensive bibliographies, collaborating more overtly with corporate members and establishing the Association as a clearing house for organizations with kindred objectives. Whilst providing a specialist base for the serious road and transport historian was a central consideration, it is palpably clear that there are many institutions that share, in part at least, contingent concerns. It would be rational to seek collaboration rather than participate in wasteful competition, albeit recognising that scholarship will often flourish in a flexible and unregimented society.

Recommendations

It was recommended that more attention be given to promotion:

[i] The Association's objectives, programmes, publications, and invitations to join, should be advertised on websites, in journals and newsletters, on notice boards, and at transport events.

In addition to the Association's own facilities, possible initiatives include taking advantage of journals offering free space, establishing in relevant locations permanent notices, routinely updated, with a supply of take-away brochures.. As a first step, schedules should be made of such outlets with estimates of any costs of their use.

[ii] Special promotions be identified aimed at particular groups,

e.g., students enrolling or completing transport qualifications, offering free initial membership, copies of Journals or other surplus stock; or to specific local history societies in whose areas a road transport theme might be known to the Association or individual members.

[iii] Writing to individual members.

Research suggests that 'word of mouth' recruitment is generally more effective than published advertisement. Three initiatives were suggested: inviting them to approach a local history society with an offer to give a talk, say, on the transport history of the area, with the possibility of collaborating in a joint study; asking them to recruit a single new member each year, with the inducement of free initial membership and gifts of Journals etc.; and inviting members to contribute articles and to make presentations on the basis of the inventory of members' interests. Again, a targeted approach is suggested.

[iv] Contacting universities and colleges offering transport courses,

on a selective basis, offering collaboration, in promoting events or in undertaking research, in the interest of spreading costs and effort. As a follow-up, contact with continuing and lapsed members should be made, as indicated above. Additionally, contributors to the 'Companion' who are not members should be especially thanked for their contribution and given free initial membership. Subject to data protection safeguards, the inventory of member interests should be published and regularly updated in the Journal and Web Site.

Periodic enquiry should be made of individual members concerning their research progress with, as appropriate, specific invitations to speak at the Association's conferences and/or to submit articles for the Journal and Web Site.

The journals of corporate members should be systematically scanned for items of interest to the Association, with a view to possible collaboration and publicity in the Association's Journal and Web Site, which should have regular 'News of Our Corporate Members' columns. The reports of the Association's Research Co-ordinator should not only be fully published in the Journal and on the Web Site, but sent to our corporate members.

It is stressed that the above are suggestions. Members are invited to comment and revise.

Robert McCloy, Chairman,
March 24th, 2014

213 Bus: The Heritage of Everyday Life - Amy Graham

London bus service 213 runs between Kingston, Fairfield Bus Station and Sutton, Bushy Road. The route was the focus of a research project carried out by Amy Graham, Kingston Heritage Service employee and MA student at Kingston University over seven months in 2013. Research included reading about the route history and bus types, visiting transport museums and bus garages, and sitting for many hours on the bus.

The 213 began as the 113 on 7th September 1921, when an hourly bus ran from Kingston, Horsefair to the Fox, Lower Kingswood via Sutton. According to the *Surrey Comet*, the new route 'found considerable favour'. Since that time Bs, Ss, Ts, LTs, Qs, RFs, RTs, RMs, DMSs, Ms, NVs, EVLs, PVLs and DOEs have ran the route (or near enough), at one time or another extending out to the BAE works at Ham, or Wimbledon Station at the opposite end, with the N213 going out to Croydon. A history of the route was compiled from research undertaken by London Transport Museum volunteers on garage allocation, from 'Red-RFs' website, and the article written by Robbins and Stannard in the *London Bus Magazine*, winter 1972/73.

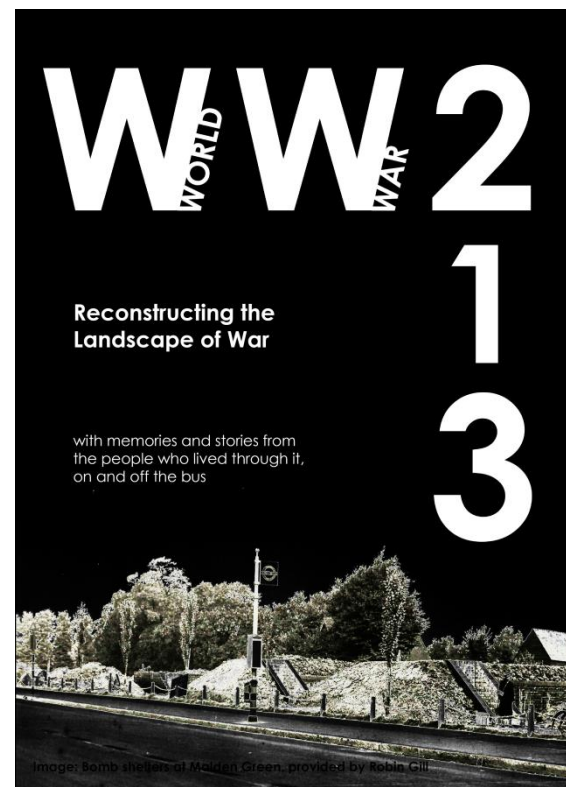
Most of the research for the project was undertaken when on the 213, to and from work or university. A notebook was used to write down observations of passenger behaviour and conversations, or interesting sights outside the window, or notes on literature which spanned from bus design guidelines to social theory of everyday life, and the concept of 'mobility' – the movement of an individual through space but also through social and economic structures. The bus as a place of transformation - where you can meet and be influenced by strangers, where you can go from A to B, as essential democratic space in an unequal world - was a focus of the project.

The concept of 'heritage' (defined as that which we value from the past, in the present) was used to understand the significance of bus travel, as something performed by people of the past and today in much the same way. The project

culminated in the author riding the bus dressed in a cardboard bus costume (!).



Bus stop flag at the Sutton terminus



Proposed bus trail 'World War 213': combining research about the physical landscape during war with memories of the route and wartime bus travel.

Communities and individuals were contacted primarily by email and through a public blog documenting the project. Contributions from other 213 users were encouraged and highly valued. Two particularly provocative examples:

'It was my mode of transport in 1956 to Cheam Village to see my fiancée, having had to sell my 1938 Austin 12 to buy the engagement ring!'

'In 1945 my 4 year old Labrador dog Bobby got run over and killed by a 213 bus in New Malden High Street... I heard later that the bus driver and the conductor were so upset they offered to buy us another dog out of their wages.'

Observations on the bus were used as a catalyst for further reflection and contemplation. Alternatively, they were merely entertaining asides in an otherwise boring journey, possibly to keep awake on the warm summer days stuck in traffic. If something seemed particularly significant, it became the topic of a blog post, for example: 'Time on the 213' (June 23rd, 2013) from which this extract is taken:

'... As we boarded, the man handed something to the driver. It was his wife's bus pass, 'She's dead now'. But the driver didn't initially understand 'Who is she?', and the man had to repeat a few times that his wife was dead, in front of the whole bus... That bus pass belonged to a real person, it had its own history, it held significance and by returning it, the man was letting all of that go, and it became just a piece of plastic again...

...Bus travel (and travel generally) makes you think differently about time. Whether it is the stillness of waiting at the stop, which can drag if you are in a hurry, the slow crawl through congested traffic, the speed of late night bus travel, the staccato of stop-start, the sound of the bell and doors opening-closing. Or the view out, the mish-mash of old and new buildings, the tree that you have seen grow from a sapling, a bus pass that is used for 20 years and then just becomes nothing overnight.'

Photography was used to document the route, information was compiled from bus stop flags (the 213 connects you to 36 other routes) and the collection of physical things like timetables added a material richness to the project.



Proposed bus trail '213 route in literature': the route illustrated by excerpts from novels written and set locally, such as H G Wells's Ann Veronica.

Various futures proposals include a published collection of local histories based on each bus stop, bus route apps on various topics (e.g. World War Two landscape; the route in literature) and an exhibition at a local venue.

Please visit www.213bus.wordpress.com for full information, and email 213bus@gmail.com with any contributions

**Contributions
for *Journal 78*
(November) to eth
editor by 25 October
please.**

Report from the Research Co-ordinator to the July 2014 Management Committee Meeting

1. The Contents List of our Newsletters and Journals now covers issues 1 to 76, together with a corresponding list of Book Reviews and Book Notices. *

2. My personal catalogue of Company Registration Files at The National Archives relating to Road Transport with an emphasis on Passenger Transport is regularly updated and available to any member on request. This collection includes files from High Court proceedings, where these are relevant. The list currently covers about 1700 companies and differentiates between the 600 for which the Company Registration File is known to have been destroyed and the 1100 which have survived. *

3. The British Newspaper Library at Colindale closed to readers in November 2013. From 5th April 2014, The Newsroom' at St Pancras opened, offering access to microfilm and digital newspaper collections as well as broadcast news, multimedia and archived websites. It is in the room formerly occupied by BIPC2, on Floor 2. Microfilm copies of the 15 most highly used newspaper titles are available on open-access shelves and the new facility includes 40 digital microfilm readers, offering users a much-improved experience in comparison with Colindale. Print newspapers are currently being moved and titles for which no print or digital copy exists will become available for ordering again in autumn 2014. Periodical collections can be ordered into any of the St Pancras Reading Rooms, with most titles delivered within 48 hours and high-use items available within 70 minutes. The Website 'The British Newspaper Archive' offers regularly updated information on which newspapers have been digitised and how to access them. A new individual subscription for 30-days unlimited online access to the archive for £9.95 has been introduced.

4. Each year, from The National Archives Annual Summary "Lists of Accessions to Record Offices", I

produce a select listing based on themes that are likely to be of interest to our members. The list of Accessions now covers the years 1994 - 2012. The Annual Summary for 2013 is expected to be available within the next three months.*

5. The Omnibus Society has seen the development of a greatly enhanced website, from which it is possible to search the content of its Library and Archive in much greater depth than previously possible. www.omnibus-society.org

6. Other work in the past quarter has included: The brief but noteworthy life of the Cardiff General Omnibus Co Ltd 1893-4; Dundee & District Tramway's Steam Omnibus in 1898; 100 years history of Johnsons Coach & Bus Travel, Henley-in-Arden; Municipalities as a licensing Authority pre 1930 Road Traffic Act.

7. If any of these topics light up an area of interest for the reader, I will be happy to supply further details.

* Copies of these lists are available to any member on request by e-mail. Hard copies are available but with an 'at cost' charge for paper and postage.

e-mail:- toekneenewman@googlemail.com

Bryngold Books, a very successful local publisher, launched Jonathan Isaac's new book *Return Ticket, the story of South Wales Transport* at the 'Wales on Wheels' event, report overleaf (photo: Royston Kneath)



WALES ON WHEELS 2014

We were promised a bigger and better event this year. We were not disappointed and we were blessed, too, by excellent weather. Though the Association's principal events occurred on Friday, the reception and dinner, and on Saturday, the vehicle display in the grounds of Swansea's National Waterfront Museum, the weekend culminated in Swansea Bus Museum's celebrations marking the 100th anniversary of South Wales Transport. The Swansea Bus Museum, the 'trading' name of the South Wales Transport Trust, is an affiliate of the Association. In practice, in the words of Miranda Berry-Brown, Events Organiser for the National Waterfront Museum, we experienced 'A Weekend of Welsh Transport'.

The Friday started with a reception in the Waterfront Museum's gallery displaying a montage of bygone scenes of local transport brilliantly organised by John Ashley, the Association's Events Organiser. Guests sipped their wine on the veranda overlooking the Marina filled with bobbing boats. Thereafter, they steadily made their way around the Marina to the Marriott Hotel, where over a congenial meal there was the opportunity to network as enthusiasts and professionals exchanged ideas. In welcoming those present, your chairman alluded to the hope that the weekend might not simply be an enjoyable occasion but be a prompt to the study of transport history provoking a better understanding of transport's future vital role.

Professor Stuart Cole, the Welsh Government's transport advisor, entertained those present with a lively account of his experiences with the media as he, too, sought to highlight transport's role; John Ashley, spoke of the transport delights awaiting us on the morrow; John Adams, on behalf of the South Wales Transport Trust, spoke of the celebratory events taking place on the following day at the Swansea Bus Museum; and finally, Professor Kelvin Donne, Dean of the Faculty of Applied Design and Engineering at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, eloquently proposed the vote of thanks. The evening over we all looked forward to the following day's events. The sun was shining, as it did for the whole weekend.

As for Saturday, the actual 'Wales on Wheels' day, John Ashley reports: Blessed again with perfect weather, we had an even bigger turnout than last year.



*A line-up of buses from the Swansea Bus Museum
(Royston Kneath)*



The statue of Dylan Thomas, in the centenary year of his birth, alongside cars on show at the event (Royston Kneath)

Swansea Bus Museum as before provided the backbone of the display, with a superb line up of vehicles civil and military on the grass outside the museum. Swansea Museum brought their bus and lorry from the Collections Centre, thankfully this time with all gears working on the journey home. The Tram Centre on Dylan Thomas Square was opened to visitors once again.

Dylan Thomas Square was filled with cars including Professor Stuart Cole's 1964 Vauxhall Viva HA, a sterling effort after speaking at the dinner the night before. Stuart came with Skewen and Pontarddulais Car Clubs – he is a member of both. These clubs were joined by the Gilbern Club, the Classic Car Group, Swansea Motor Cycle Club (including three mod scooters), Morris Minor police car, a modern rally car from University of Wales Trinity St David's, and a gorgeous but anonymous red Riley convertible. Several American cars arrived, including the Pink Cadillac – if ever there

was a gloriously pointless vehicle, this is it! 22 feet and 2.5 tonnes ...

Trinity St David's had a lively stand indoors, opposite the R&RTHA's own stand shared with the Swansea Branch of the Historical Association and ably manned by our chairman among others.

It was standing room only in the Ocean Room for the 180 people gathered to hear broadcaster Roy Noble, a Brynamman boy, recount his own memories of travel on Welsh buses. Roy's talk was so successful that the museum have booked him for a return engagement in December.

Tools for Self Reliance set up shop in the Square. TSR send-hand tools to underdeveloped countries to be refurbished and used locally for many projects. They sell excess stock in the UK to raise funds, and if this is the excess goodness knows what their main stock looks like. Not a petrol-head escaped without an absolutely essential fistful of tools.

For many people the stars of the show were Yeoman Living History, an educational and re-enactment World War One group from Ammanford. Unfortunately the modern transport for their horse-drawn ambulance broke down on the day, but they arrived with a tent, field equipment, personnel in male and female uniforms, and two magnificent horses. Their perambulations around the exhibits always drew admiring crowds, and the horses must have put on two stone each with the carrots fed to them by admiring children (and the occasional adult).

The Waterfront Museum were delighted with more than 2,500 visitors passing through their doors. WoW 2015 promises to be even more exciting, with live steam adding to the runs of the Penydarren and an ever greater variety of vehicles. I asked the Hell's Angels who turned up late in the afternoon to bring their bikes next time ... More pictures are on the Events page of the web site, www.rrtha.org.uk.

Swansea Bus Museum's celebratory event, marking the 100th year anniversary of the commencement of South Wales Transport on the Sunday, was a most congenial affair, again, in glorious sunny weather. The museum in Port Tennant occupies premises in an area surely poised for future development, to the



A striking feature was this replica of Trevithick's Penydarren locomotive (Royston Kneath)

east the new giant campus of Swansea University, to the west, towards the City centre, what will be, in effect, the new waterfront campus of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. Early in the morning visiting vintage vehicles, including a goodly number from London, started to arrive with the first contingents from First Cymru. They were accompanied as ever by the enthusiasts, family groups, albeit in considerable numbers, sensibly arriving somewhat later. Commendably, the Museum operated a free service from the nearby Park and Ride facility and also the City Centre, in addition to regular 'excursions' in open top buses to the Mumbles. Apart from the Museum's own exhibits illustrating, in part, SWT's heritage, First Cymru descended upon the site with a vast collection of vehicles demonstrating whatever else that here was an instance where the Barbie corporate livery had been abandoned, at least momentarily, such was the variety of liveries. The Museum's officers, Dave Bemmer, Alan West, and John Adams, ever omnipresent, and now new members of the Association, led a band of volunteers in showing off the exhibits and making everyone so welcome. First Cymru's Jane Davies, Human Resources Director, supervised the company's own stall within a large tent, whilst Colin Fox, their project manager, was on hand to show off the new vehicles. As promised, new vehicles in the old liveries of SWT, United Welsh and Thomas Brothers were on display. For those seeking a reminder of Swan Motors, a company earlier absorbed into United Welsh, there was within the workshop one of their splendid Daimlers undergoing restoration. All in all, a great event and a splendid finale to the weekend.

Digital Photography & the Road Transport History Researcher - *David Harman*

"You've never had it so good!" someone once said, and this certainly applies to the road transport history researcher as far as the application of modern technology is concerned. Most archives and libraries have computerised indexes; many are available online, and some have content digitalised, so it may not be necessary to leave your armchair to get basic research done. If you do have to venture out to some distant archive, other technology aids come into play. A laptop computer saves time and trouble compared with making notes with pencil and paper, especially if like me, your handwriting isn't all it could be. Modern photocopiers and scanners enable high-quality copies to be made of maps, drawings and diagrams. All in all, compared with say, 20 or 30 years ago, modern technology has made delving into the past and recording it a great deal easier.

Another technology advance that I've found useful is the digital camera. Probably like many, I started at an early age with a Kodak Brownie 127 camera and 12-exposure film, before upgrading in stages to more sophisticated 35mm cameras and eventually to a single-lens reflex model. Even so, one stage of the process remained constant – taking the film into Boots or sending it to Kodak at Hemel Hempstead for developing and processing; the results materialising a week or so later, occasionally showing that the lens-cap had been left on or some other elementary blunder had been made. The digital camera has changed all that. High definition results can be achieved with even the simplest cameras; the results can be viewed immediately on the camera screen and blunders excised by retaking the shot. Reusable memory cards hold 500+ exposures. Even producing prints is optional; images can be viewed on the computer screen and imperfections corrected with Photoshop or similar.

I've begun taking a camera on visits to the National Archives and other repositories, and found it useful for recording lengthy files which can then be studied at a more leisurely pace at home. More effective use can be made of limited time,

particularly at distant archives. A camera is of course also invaluable for recording documents or artefacts that you might want to incorporate later in published form (but note there are usually copyright considerations). What follows is a brief guide to doing this based on my limited, amateur experiences. No doubt others can add to this.

Before you start: The first step is to establish what the relevant archive's photography policy is – this is usually set out somewhere on their website. Examples: The British Library: not permitted at all. At the National Archives (Kew), camera stands are provided and photography is free. No stands at the London Metropolitan Archives and a permit is required (£5 per day). No stands at the old Lewes premises of the East Sussex Record Office; permits were a steep £22 per day; policy at the new Keep site at Falmer is unclear. The Essex Record Office (Chelmsford) charge £10 per day and there are rigorous rules to adhere to (but staff are helpful). Where photography *is* allowed, there are certain restrictions which appear to be universal: flash photography is always prohibited, as is the use of tripods etc.

Camera: I have both an elderly Canon Ixus 'point & shoot' pocket camera and a Nikon single lens reflex. The Canon's screen and controls are bit small for my aging eyesight, the lens is tiny, and the battery does not last very long, but more modern models are vastly improved. The Nikon is a superb camera, but bulky to carry around. The compromise probably lies in the 'compact' type camera – these are not too bulky, have fixed lenses, and the preview screen and controls are of reasonable size.

Setting up: Camera stands as at the National Archives make life easy. The camera can be fixed in position, documents placed on the table, a check made that they are in the viewfinder, and the shutter pressed. A camera stand also means you can use a slow shutter speed, say 1/60th, which should give adequate results. Where camera stands are not provided, I use a minimum speed of 1/125th. This avoids camera shake but means ensuring that there is adequate depth of field, otherwise the edges of the image may be out of focus. For single sheets or thin files, depth of field will not matter too much. It is more of a problem with bulky files held together with treasury tags or similar. The centre of the page and the edges will be at slightly differing distances

from the lens, leading to the edges being out of focus, the degree dependent on the aperture setting. This may not matter too much when recording files just to read later, but will matter if you are photographing a document or artefact for reproduction, where a pin-sharp image is desirable. At the National Archives, staff will disassemble 'fat' files on request and rebind with longer treasury tags which allows the pages to lay flatter. This eases the problem. However, I've found that rebinding cannot always be done on demand. It is obviously not an option for bound books, ledgers etc, so care needs to be taken with speed and aperture settings to obtain optimum results. But again, experimenting with a few test shots will tell you whether everything is in focus.

Exposure: digital cameras are very tolerant, in fact, amazingly tolerant of low light so lighting is rarely an issue even in the gloomiest of archives, as the camera will adjust automatically. If photographing as a substitute for taking notes, as long as the results are legible, the quality and colour rendition of the exposure may not be of the utmost importance. However, if you are taking a shot of something for reproduction, it may be essential to get the colours etc. exactly right. Most cameras allow you to adjust the "white balance" to compensate for the many different types of artificial lighting. I find these difficult to identify and match to the camera settings, so once more, test shots are useful in order to select the best setting.

Photo file formats: Usually you have a choice of formats for storing photos on your camera, and with more sophisticated cameras, you will be able to choose different resolutions – i.e. levels of quality. The trade-off is that higher resolutions mean larger files but unless you intend to use the results for large prints or posters, bigger is not necessarily better. Common file formats are:

- (1) **JPG:** The most popular format. The data in the file is compressed and therefore takes up less space and thus, file sizes are smaller. However, JPGs are prone to occasional, unpredictable corruption. Also, if you edit a JPG, say in Photoshop and re-save, the image quality degrades slightly at each save, as the compression algorithm is re-applied.

- (2) **TIFF:** This uncompressed format is far more reliable and can survive corruption but file sizes are larger.
- (3) **RAW:** This is a raw image from the camera's image sensor. Files can be enormous but the format is very flexible and can be converted to other formats as desired.

JPGs are normally adequate (but keeping backups is important). Book and magazine publishers usually require high-resolution JPGs or TIFFs and are usually pleased to advise their requirements in advance.

Storage: Taking spare memory cards (and spare batteries or the mains charger) is a sensible precaution against running short of storage space. If you only have a few cards, you can 'unload' them to your laptop if it has a card reader slot or via a plug-in USB card reader. Digital photo files are large, so if your laptop only has a small hard disk, portable hard disks (which, again, plug in via the USB port), are a good idea and provide additional storage. These are now relatively inexpensive; John Lewis has Western Digital 2TB disks for about £89.

Miscellaneous tips:

- (1) a remote control is a worthwhile investment – you can sit down at the desk, turn the pages of the file, and press the remote to take the shot. I bought one for my Nikon on eBay for about £7; from Nikon these are ludicrously expensive. Imitations made in China were even cheaper.
- (2) I write the title of the file, etc. and date on a plain sheet of paper and photograph that first as a marker, so that any later confusion between different files is avoided.
- (3) I count the pages in the file and cross-check against the camera exposure counter to avoid missing a page.

Copyright: Most archives will have a copyright policy on photos taken of documents etc. in their care. Studying this is obviously useful if you are proposing to publish photos in books, magazines or on websites. Sometimes they require a fee, sometimes merely an acknowledgement in a set format. If there is no copyright policy or the subject is copyright-free, an acknowledgement of the source is a simple courtesy that costs nothing.

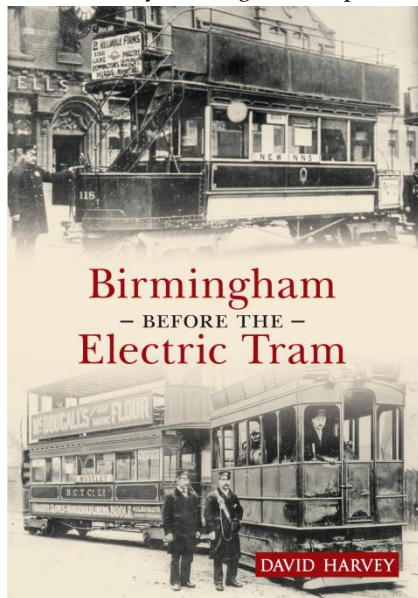
BOOK REVIEWS

Birmingham before the Electric Tram

David Harvey December 2013, 160pp paperback. ISBN 978-1-4456-1622-3. £14.99. Amberley Publishing, The Hill, Merrywalks, Stroud GL5 4EP www.amberley-books.com

Using the pictures with detailed captions format, the author gives us a fascinating glimpse into the Second City's public transport before electric trams won the day, and indeed, before Birmingham even became a City.

The introduction gives an overview of the scene, and chronicles the pre-municipal days when successive tramway companies seemed to stagger from crisis to crisis until order was finally established by Birmingham Corporation Tramways



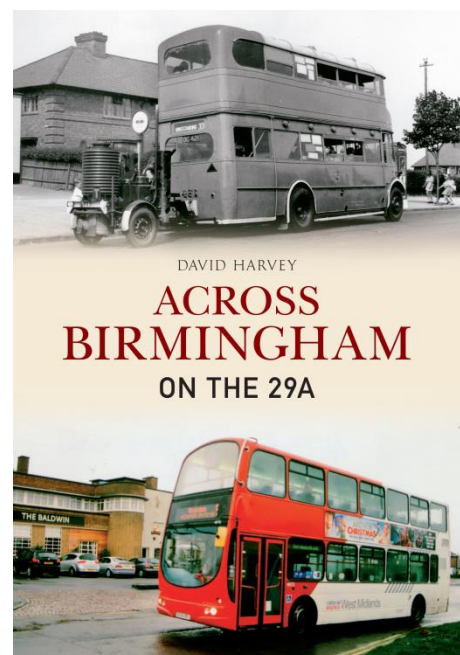
The sheer diversity of traction methods is probably unique to Birmingham, with still further diversity caused by the existence of two different track gauges for a short period. Horse power was succeeded on various routes by steam trams, cable trams and the country's longest running battery-powered accumulator trams. No wonder the management was distracted by the day to day complexities, compounded by the Corporation's refusal to allow the companies to introduce overhead electric propulsion.

All is described in the usual David Harvey style, with frequent diversions to cover the City's

architecture and social activities. Useful maps contribute to the overall understanding of this well-researched work on a lesser known aspect of Birmingham's transport history. GJL

Across Birmingham on the 29A David Harvey December 2013, 192pp paperback. ISBN 978-1-4456-1621-6. £14.99. Amberley Publishing, The Hill, Merrywalks, Stroud GL5 4EP www.amberley-books.com

A slightly misleading title to a fascinating book where David Harvey gives us the history of bus services on two of the most important public transport corridors radiating from Birmingham City Centre – the Stratford Road and the Kingstanding Road. Why these two together in one book? Well, that's where the 29A comes in. Birmingham has traditionally had very few cross-city public transport routes by road. Rail provides two key cross-city lines, the new tram route will at least cross the City Centre, but buses have tended to keep to their own geographical segments, with two major exceptions, Services 5/6/7 linking Bearwood and Perry Common and, the subject of our book, the variously numbered routes joining Hall Green in the south to Kingstanding in the north.



Why was there such a paucity of cross-city links? Firstly, the Second City's convoluted central road network with a one-way circuit involving New Street and Corporation Street meant that buses having completed this circuit were invariably facing whence they came! Secondly, shorter routes with City Centre termini were deemed superior for operational control, particularly regulating the timetable.

The 29A, later numbered 91, at least had the benefit of getting folk from the south side to the major industrial area around Hockley, and it is probably the decline of these areas in terms of employment that eventually lead to this major cross-city route becoming two radial routes, just like all the others! David takes us through the history of the route which gives us a 1928 starting date in the days when Birmingham's major corridors were all tram-served. So our 29A started life picking up the pieces, covering developments at both south and north ends beyond the tram outer termini, and gradually assumed greater importance as the trams were withdrawn.

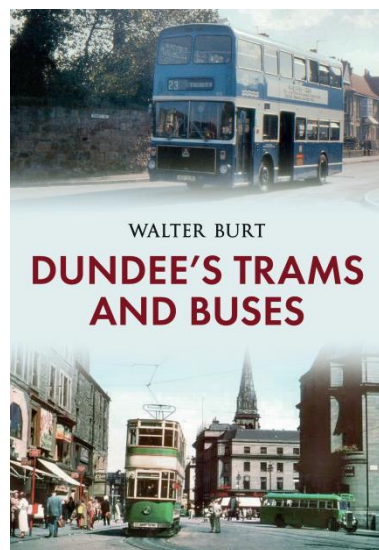
Operation was by Birmingham City Transport, and the 29A was unique for this rather parochial authority in leaving the City boundary at both ends – into Aldridge in the north, and a few yards into Solihull in the south! In 1969, West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority was formed, and cross-city operation was continued by the new authority, albeit subsequently renumbered by direction to 90 and 91, to avoid confusion to passengers on the City Centre loop. It was the coming of deregulation on 26 October 1986 that really changed things, and cross city operation on our route was discontinued by new operator, West Midlands Travel, overnight. The northern section became mainly Service 33, with the southern section renumbered again (by your reviewer, incidentally!) as Service 6 and projected well beyond the City boundary to Solihull Centre.

So, a complex history covered in David Harvey's entertaining style, with plenty of references to the great changes in the City during this period, as well as full coverage of the bus types and service numbers used over the years for the enthusiast. A very enjoyable read, with a couple of maps to help you non-Brummies!

GJL

Dundee's Trams and Buses - Water Burt

June 2014, 96pp paperback. ISBN 978-1-4456-3461-6. £14.99. Amberley Publishing, The Hill, Merrywalks, Stroud GL5 4EP. www.amberley-books.com



This is another photographic study book in a series produced by the author in recent years on passenger transport operations in the east of Scotland. Two previous works were reviewed in issues 70 and 72 of this Journal.

The local transport operations in Dundee have been overlooked for too long by publishers and this little volume gives a taste of some of the public transport provisions which have served this hilly, industrial city. The author presents four pages of introductory text, the bulk of the book then comprising photos with captions, generally two per page, which portray vehicles and street scenes capturing the city's two main local transport operators, National Express Dundee and Stagecoach, and their respective predecessors back to the Dundee and District horse tramways of 1877. The many "independent" bus and coach operators in and around the city have been almost totally ignored.

The illustrations presented are of good quality and have a good spread of historic periods for their respective subjects using a mix of black and white and colour views. None of the tram views are credited, a goodly proportion of which will be known to tram historians. In contrast, most of the bus illustrations are credited and all photos are supported by four or five lines of caption, although some captions are wanting in accuracy – Dundee had no single deck Daimler COG6s and the location of one of the tram illustrations is incorrect.

Given the lack of published studies on Dundee's transport, it is unfortunate that the introduction is incorrect or misleading. For the record, whilst the SMT company had a presence in the city to connect with country areas from 1920 as described, the Walter Alexander company was present from the late 1920s as that company spread farther north from its Stirlingshire origins. Alexander had its own Dundee depot and bus station quite separate from SMT's activities, but the two companies were not in direct competition. Whilst the local SMT operation never had double deckers, Alexander's Dundee operations had an allocation from at least 1934, probably in association with the company's purchase from Dundee Corporation of the former Broughty Ferry tram company's route beyond Barnhill. One of the book's coloured views shows an Alexander double decker following closely behind a tram, a scene which has to date from before tramway closure in October 1956. The present Seagate bus station of 1958 with adjoining garage did see the two fleets come into one central location, the garage part being abandoned following the sale of the successor Strathtay operation to Stagecoach.

In summary, a good selection of illustrations which are well presented but beware the text! **IAS**

The Buses and Coaches of Bristol and Eastern Coach Works - Nigel R.B.Furness

March 2014 The Crowood Press, The Stable Block, Crowood Lane, Ramsbury, Marlborough, SN8 2HR. 208pp, hardback, £25.00. ISBN 978-184-84797-697-0.

This book provides a very comprehensive history of the associated businesses of Bristol, and ECW, from the development of manufacturing initially for the Bristol operations, and then a wider range of operators, and formation of ECW as a Tilling Group subsidiary in 1936. Much of the period covered falls after nationalisation of Tilling, resulting in only operators within the BTC and later THC groups being supplied by these manufacturers.

Following chapters covering the earlier years and vehicle designs, a separate chapter is then devoted to each major vehicle type. Earlier front-engined models followed the typical double- and single-deck designs of the time, and the text indicates that some fairly basic technology in terms of engine mounting was adopted (notably for the K type), with effects of driver and passenger comfort. The Lodekka formed major step forward in design, both in its low-height layout and other passenger features, and the RE was probably the most successful of the first generation of rear-engined single-deckers. The role of models designed for lower-density rural operation – the SC and SU - is covered in similar detail. A concluding chapter covers preservation issues, and numerous examples of preserved vehicles appear throughout.

The quality of illustrations is very high, comprising not only photographs, but many technical drawings and cutaway diagrams (for example, of engines). A very extensive narrative text is complemented by boxes giving detailed specifications of each model as it emerged, and topics such as braking systems. Also highlighted separately are preserved vehicles, such as Richard Belton's VRT6LX in Lincs Road Car livery.

A striking feature of some of the later models was their very good fuel consumption, notably for the RE, especially in comparison with types now in operation (albeit having to meet many stricter emissions standards). Had the Leyland National not been adopted by NBC as its standard single-deck model, would the RE and its possible successors have continued to play a major role for a longer period? (indicated by the preference of Ulsterbus for this model after it ceased to be supplied to operators elsewhere).

The only aspect on which it might have been useful to know more might have been the managerial and financial performance of the businesses, albeit this is probably of much less interest to most readers than the vehicles themselves.

Given the exceptionally comprehensive text and wide-ranging high-quality illustrations, the price represents very good value. **PRW**

Red, cream and a touch of Gray: the Western Welsh story - Colin Scott.

Bryngold Books, 100 Brynau wood, Cimla, Neath, SA11 3YQ. ISBN 978-1-905900-26-8. 240pp, h/b, £30.

This very comprehensive history of the Western Welsh company documents the story of Western Welsh from its origins in 1920 to its role as a major operator within the BET group, up to NBC days in 1974. A year-by-year chronology is provided, together with thematic chapters covering topics such as coach operations, and depots & workshops. The title refers both to the livery, and the major role of the Gray family in management of the company over many years. The book also explains the apparently odd title of the company (given that most operations were within the densely-populated South East of Wales, and only a limited proportion in the region west of Swansea dominated by South Wales Transport), arising from its links with the Great Western Railway. Expansion through the 1920s and 1930s, including the typical growth through purchase of independents, is comprehensively described, followed by the wartime era, and postwar growth to a passenger peak in the early 1950s. This was followed by the financial problems which arose from the growth of car ownership, and rising operating costs (notably in wages and fuel).



An illustration from the Western Welsh history: Leyland Tiger 200 (KG7048) fills up with queuing passengers at Wellington Square, Brecon. No doubt they would have been glad to climb aboard to escape the rain (original source: Omnibus Society)

The role of staff within the company is given due weight in the text, with many recollections of those working in the business. Extensive illustrations recall the liveries adopted by the company, and use of the 'double W' emblem (familiar to this reviewer from touring the network in the 1960s). A comprehensive fleet history is also given.

In describing the financial difficulties from the late 1950s onward it might have been useful to have given a little more information about the overall trading performance of the business, as well as the net deficits recorded in individual years, in order to place these in context, but this is a relatively minor point given the comprehensive coverage provided by the author. While the price of £40 may seem on the high side, the exceptionally comprehensive coverage fully justifies it.

PRW

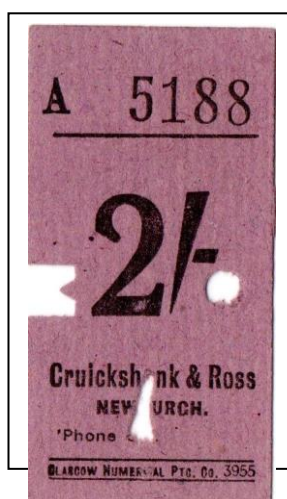
Fenland Produce Hauliers - Paul Fox

Available from the author at 'Sunnyside', Wisbech Road, Manea, PE15 0HB. 52pp, illus. £9 + £2 p&p

This is a fascinating survey of a variety of operators and vehicles by a man of the Fens, involved in haulage from his childhood. A wealth of evocative photographs (albeit some over-coloured) is supported by informative captions and interspersed with short chapters putting the operations in their context. As with many self-published books, it would have benefited from a sub-editor's overview, but it successfully presents an important section of road haulage history from the inside and this reviewer is pleased to have been reminded of his youthful sightings of London-bound traffic on Ware High Street, which in those early post-war days was the route of the A10. **RAS**

Newspapers by bus - Autumn 1947 – Roger Atkinson

In the autumn of 1947, I had the good fortune to be in the army, stationed in Aberdeen. One day early in October I took the Saturday 1-45 p.m. Cruickshank & Ross bus from Aberdeen to Newburgh (timetable and ticket illustrated below). I noted that Cruickshank & Ross apparently had the newspaper contracts at newsagents and farms all the way from Aberdeen to Newburgh, including the section between Aberdeen and Rashirieve shared with Burnett's Motors of Mintlaw and Sutherland's of Peterhead. The 1-45 journey ex-Aberdeen was frequently hurling forth papers.



Above: Cruickshank & Ross ticket (above) and timetable, (opposite) dated on the other side "1st June 1939 until further notice". During the war the last bus on Saturdays and Sundays will have been at 9-30 pm, as on Monday to Friday – a strictly applied curfew. The later timings were no doubt restored after the war.

Two points that may seem a little curious in 2014. Firstly, delivery of newspapers by bus; a practice common in those days throughout the British Isles. The newspapers were usually in bundles securely tied with string to stand being thrown from the bus, even on a wet day. The village newsagents would be keeping an eye open for the bus and would run out to pick up the bundle. Individual papers for houses or farms would be tightly rolled up. The wholesaler would have done all the parcelling up.

But sorting into order and throwing them out would be work for the conductor; the driver would simply slow down a bit.

Health and safety as the conductor stood on the open step of the bus to throw out the parcel was not a consideration; he would simply have to observe that there was no pedestrian or onlooker who might be hit by the missile; that he himself did not fall off.

Secondly, the time of day – why had the newspapers not been on the 10 a.m. bus? Simply that they would not have arrived in Aberdeen on an early enough train for the wholesaler to have collected them from the railway station, prepared the bundles and got them to Mealmarket Street in time for the 10 a.m. bus. His first concern will have been to get newspapers to shops in Aberdeen itself.

The 2/- ticket itself is of interest as it illustrates a practice that prevailed with at least two Aberdeenshire operators who were still using punch tickets, not ticket machines (Mrs Bella Scott of Rhynie being the other). A ticket issued as a Single would be punched twice on issue, a Return only once. The Return would then be cancelled by a further punching on the return journey. Thus my 2/- Return from Aberdeen to Newburgh, shows two distinctive punch marks, as I evidently did not come back with the same conductor.

Newspapers were by no means the only parcels carried on the buses. Frequent users were wayside garages that found they needed some particular spare part for a car or lorry. They would telephone a wholesale stockist in the neighbouring town. The stockist would send a lad down to the bus terminus to pay perhaps 4d or 6d to the conductor or, in the case of Cruickshank & Ross, to Mr R Murray, their parcel agent in King Street, Aberdeen (as shown on the timetable illustrated). A parcel would not be casually tossed off the bus like the newspapers. A parcel would be entered on a waybill and had to be signed for either by the recipient who was expected to meet the bus, or by the parcel agent in some villages who would either hold it for collection or might deliver it (with an eye on maintaining the goodwill of potential customers at his village shop). Perhaps readers with more profound knowledge than I have of bus parcels services might care to add further comment.

ABERDEEN and NEWBURGH.



LEAVE ABERDEEN—

Mon.									
Tues.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	
Wed.	10	1'30	—	4'30	6	7	9'30	—	
Thu.									
Fri.									
Sat.	10	1'30	1'45	4'30	6	7	9'45	10'45	
Sun.	10	—	2	—	—	7'15	8'10	10	

LEAVE NEWBURGH—

Mon.									
Tues.	a.m.	a.m.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	
Wed.	7'55	8'30	10	—	1'20	2'30	5'45	8'30	
Thu.									
Fri.									
Sat.	7'55	8'30	10	1	1'45	2'30	5'45	8'30	
Sun.	8'45	9'10	—	1	—	6'15	7'20	9	

Fares—Single, 1/3; Return, 2/-

 **Private Parties Catered for.** 

ABERDEEN and COLLIESTON.

LEAVE ABERDEEN—

Mon.				
Tues.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Wed.	...	10	*1'30	7
Thur.	*Wednesdays only, during June and Sept.			
Fri.	Daily during July and August.			
Sat.	...	10	1'45	7
Sun.	...	10	2	7'15

LEAVE COLLIESTON—

Mon.				
Tues.	a.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Wed.	...	7'40	—	5'30 *8'15
Thur.	*Wednesdays only, during June and Sept.			
Fri.	Daily during July and August.			
Sat.	...	7'40	12'40	5'30 8'15
Sun.	...	8'30	6	7'5 8'45

Fares—Single, 1/9; Return, 3/-

Parcels and Orders to be left with **R. MURRAY,**
Newsagent, 137 King Street.

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R&RTHA Coventry Conference 4 October 2014

The Autumn 2014 Conference will again be held at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, on Saturday 4 October, 11.00 - 4.00

The keynote speaker is **John Minnis, Senior Investigator at English Heritage**. John's talk will be based around his books *Carscapes: The Motor Car, Architecture, and Landscape in England* (co-author Kathryn A. Morrison) and *England's Motoring Heritage from the Air*.

The second confirmed speaker is **Louise Allen**, author of the newly published *Stagecoach Travel* (Shire). "... the experience of travelling by stage and mail coach from the passengers' point of view - from booking your ticket, boarding the stage, your fellow passengers, how comfortable (or not!) it was, the inns and the experience of eating there, and perils and accidents."

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