The Roads & Road Transport History Association

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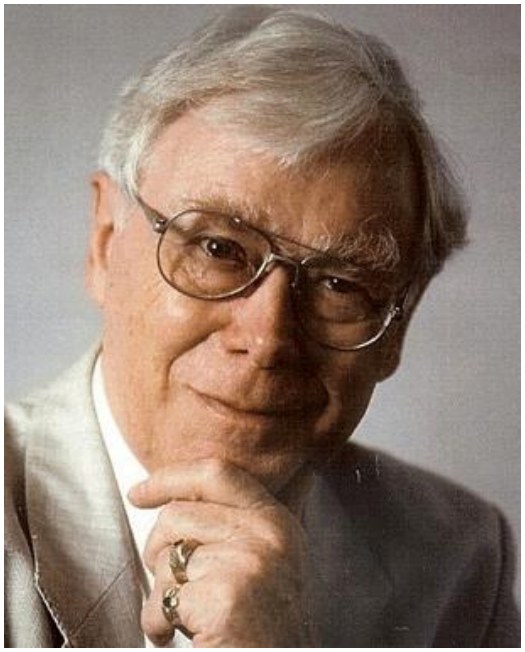
John Hibbs remembered



Following the brief obituary published shortly after his death in our previous issue, it seemed appropriate to remember him through the recollections of members of the R&RTHA committee who knew him personally, several of which appear below. His role as co-founder of this Association, together with Theo Barker of LSE, is of course of particular importance to us. Formal obituaries by Michael Goldstein appeared in Coach & Bus Week on 9 December 2014, and in Bus & Coach Professional on 12 December 2014. Recollections of John from other members of the Association would also be appreciated, for publication in our next issue.

John Hibbs had long been a familiar figure in the world of transport but I had not met him, until when in retirement I resolved to embark upon some 'serious' study in his field. I arranged to meet him and he could not have been more welcoming, not least when I challenged him for his unqualified faith in deregulation. My own experience as an education director and local government chief executive had produced greater ambivalence about the market economy.

Notwithstanding, he immediately and very generously encouraged me in my labours. But there came a moment of 'pay back': wasn't it high time that I took a proper interest in the Road and Road Transport History Association? This was initially resisted, for I had endured more than enough of committees!

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Roads & Road Transport History Association

FOUNDER PRESIDENT:
The late Professor John Hibbs OBE

CHAIRMAN:
Dr Robert McCloy
32 Marina Villas, Swansea SA1 1FZ
robert.mccloy36@sky.com
to whom general correspondence may be addressed

TREASURER:
Royston Fisher
209, Llantarnam Road, Cwmbran, NP44 3BG
royston130@talktalk.net

EVENTS ORGANISER:
John Ashley
6, Cefn Glas, Tycoch, Swansea SA2 9GW
John@GlobeSpinner.net

JOURNAL EDITOR:
Peter White
13 Lingwood Gardens, Isleworth, TW7 5LY
whitep1@westminster.ac.uk
to whom all articles, illustrations and letters for publication should be addressed

MEMBERSHIP SECRETRARY
Mrs Pat Campany
30 Rectory Lane
Ashtead
Surrey KT21 2BB
patriciacampany@btinternet,com
to whom membership enquiries should be addressed

RESEARCH CO-ORDINATOR:
Tony Newman
16 Hill View, Bryn Y Baal, Mold CH7 6SL
toekneenewman@googlemail.com

ACADEMIC ADVISOR:
Professor John Armstrong
42 Inglis Road, Ealing, London W3 3RL
john@johnarmstrong.eu

Roads & Road Transport History Association
A Company Limited by Guarantee № 5300873. Registered Office:-
100, Sandwell Street, Walsall, WS1 3EB
Company Secretary: - J Howie
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John Hibbs remembered

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Reflecting upon his contribution, he not only gave the serious study of transport a standing hitherto lacking, but was instrumental in changing the law relating to public transport. However, possibly a contribution of no less importance was the impact he made upon generations of students some of whom were subsequently to occupy the commanding heights of the transport industry, and possibly all of whom gained considerably from his wide-ranging knowledge and sympathetic ear. That the Association he established to sustain his cherished field of study should continue to flourish would be a fitting memorial.

Robert McCloy

My earliest recollection of John was of meeting him in April 1955 when we strolled around Cambridge city centre one Saturday afternoon chatting about the current transport scene. This was before his Corona Coaches time, before his involvement with railway costing at British Railways, and before the work on public transport economics that gained him his PhD. Our conversation that day was less about the job he had been doing at Premier Travel and more about the need he saw for academic research into the bus industry, and in particular into the constraints of the road service licensing system. Here was a man ready to take our insights beyond the status quo. I may not have fully recognised that at the time, but over the years that were to follow, and through getting to know him better, I came to realise his intellect.

John was of course a champion of bus service deregulation, and that Saturday afternoon in Cambridge was recalled for me in 1993, when it was still a hot topic at an industry conference I attended. Instead of the more usual after dinner speeches Andrew Braddock and Tony Depledge had devised a version of the BAFTA Awards. I was called forward to receive one

for 'having known Professor John Hibbs since 1955'. I was quite proud of that!

John was a founder and later President of this Association, with a vision of bringing together the various societies involved in road transport historical research, still to be properly realised. From being myself one of those earliest members I was privileged to sit with John on the editorial board of the *Companion to Road Passenger Transport History*.

Ken Swallow

I first met John Hibbs in 1968 when he invited me to join the new BA Business Studies (Transport) course at the then City of London College. John taught transport history on the course, but really came into his own with the specialist module on transport regulation, which enabled him to enlighten us with his knowledge and opinions of bus service regulation under the Road Traffic Act 1930. Under his tuition we became familiar with the work on Chester (Public Control of Road Passenger Transport, 1936); Gilbert Ponsonby, John's mentor at LSE and author of works such as Transport Policy: Co-ordination Through Competition (1969); and Alan Walters on free-market transport economics.

My first piece of transport research benefited from John's supervision. This was an undergraduate dissertation comparing road service licensing with air service licensing, introduced thirty years later. I think we may both have been surprised to find exactly the same principles and even identical wording in the 1960 air service licensing legislation.

John's heart lay in the private sector and market freedom, with an early attachment to Premier Travel and several years as co-owner of Corona Coaches in East Anglia. But, despite his antipathy to monolithic and monopolistic public sector bodies, it was to the recently-nationalised Ribble Motor Services in Preston that I was sent for my six month sandwich course industrial placement in 1970. I suspect John may have been secretly pleased to receive an irate letter from what was then a very traditional company complaining of my excessively critical attitude to them.

I owe John a debt of gratitude for introducing me to transport at an intellectual level; and for influencing my subsequent career spanning the public and private sectors, academia and industry. We remained in occasional contact while John was at Birmingham Polytechnic, then met again regularly at editorial group meetings for the R&RTHA's Companion to Road Passenger Transport History. John chaired the group from its establishment in 2002 until 2006, staying on as a group member until publication of this monumental labour-of-love in 2013. He was delighted to be still in sufficiently robust health to attend the editorial group's post-publication celebratory lunch at Jury's Inn, Birmingham in 2014.

The breadth of John's knowledge is evidenced by his *History of British Bus Services* and works on transport management and operation. The depth of his political enthusiasm for the free market is clear from his Adam Smith Institute and Institute of Economic Affairs publications on transport regulation; as well as the legacy his influence had on bus deregulation under the Transport Act 1985.

To all who knew and were privileged to have been taught by and worked alongside John, he was an intelligent, amiable and enthusiastic person, whose influence will endure.

Martin Higginson

My first contact with John Hibbs must have been in the mid-1960s, mainly in connection with a shared interest in bus industry history, in particular in my home county of Lincolnshire. He later contributed a very useful article to the 'Lincolnshire Transport Review' (which I had set up with Alan Tye in 1963), based on his experience when working for the Eastern Region of British Railways on the alternative considered by BRB of providing a limited-stop bus replacement for the 'East

Lincs' line (Grimsby – Boston - Peterborough) under the powers of the 1962 Transport Act, which would have been far more effective than the fragmented local replacements provided when the line closed in 1970. I can also recall visiting him at home in Saffron Walden around 1969, when he was teaching at the City of London College, as mentioned by Martin Higginson above.

His approach to the bus industry and the need for greater flexibility in regulation and operation was perhaps influenced most strongly by his experience of rural operations, and in this connection I invited him to be one of the speakers at the first seminar on rural public transport that we held at the Polytechnic of Central London in 1972 (along with Gilbert Ponsonby in the audience). We subsequently kept in touch, meeting up at academic conferences and seminars from time to time, the last occasion on which we met probably being at an IEA seminar several years ago, looking back at the first twenty years or so of bus deregulation. An interesting disclosure on that occasion was that it had been suggested that he be appointed as a Traffic Commissioner around the time of deregulation, but was already too close to the retirement age for that post. One can only speculate on the outcome that might have been produced…

Although sharing a common interest in bus industry history, and agreeing with John on some aspects of the rigidity of the regulation introduced under the 1930 Act, it would not be true to say that I shared John's views on the free market as such. He was perfectly well aware of this, but it did not prevent us regularly exchanging Christmas cards.

The implementation of deregulation in 1986 did not perhaps produce the immediate outcomes that John might have hoped for, the main impacts being in reduction in cost levels rather than innovation in service quality or pricing. However, the industry then moved toward a more mature approach, putting much greater emphasis on service quality and innovations in marketing, producing some examples of more positive outcomes in terms of ridership. The effects of deregulation provided a great deal of scope for academic debate, especially in terms of quantitative analysis. This aspect was perhaps less in the style John's work, but he continued to put forward his views on matters of principle related to deregulation, notably through writing and editing 'The dangers of bus re-regulation' (IEA, 2005).

Peter White

"Omnibus Conductors"

One hundred and forty years ago Londoners could subscribe to a weekly penny journal called The Leisure Hour, *which printed articles upon all manner of topics from around the globe. The 6th March 1875 edition included this item.*

The omnibus is everybody's coach and pair, ready to take anybody anywhere at all times of the day, and far into the night as well. It is an immense convenience, as we all know, and we hail it as a friend in times of emergency, in spite of its close quarters and its occasional stifling and stuffy flavour. But though so many people ride in it, few, probably, are aware of the careful provisions that are made for their comfort and convenience; and it may, therefore, interest our readers to know what these are, and what are the precise relations that exist between them and the conductor, who is the ruling spirit of the "Buss," and to whose guardianship they are consigned. It is not to be imagined that we are guilty of any breach of trust in setting down the following items of information, since we merely condense them from the manual of printed regulations circulating among the hired servants of the London General Omnibus Company.

In the first place, then, it is the conductor's business, before starting on his daily route, to see that his vehicle is clean and neat both within and without – that the box and roof cushions are in good order and in their places, and that good aprons are provided for covering

the legs and feet of the outside passengers. With regard to the inside, he is to see that the proper cushions are in place, and free from dirt or dust; that the mat for the floor is clean and rightly laid down; that the sides, roof and windows are clean; that the advertisement bills are neatly arranged and fastened up; that the fares are painted correctly on the door, and that the number of the omnibus corresponding with the plate outside is visible inside. He must also provide himself with small change; and he is bound before darkness comes on to have his lamp burning in its proper place.

The vehicle being ready to start, the conductor, being responsible for its daily course, must see that it starts punctually at the appointed time, not only in the morning, but at every starting-point and period throughout the day; and at the termination of the day's run must accompany it to the yard, and on the following morning must report in writing to the foreman any casualty, the finding of any property, or other circumstances that may have occurred.

The proper place for the conductor is on the footboard, where he should stand with his back to the omnibus, on the look-out for passengers. He should not stand on the step, but on starting may stand on the ground to assist passengers entering. When hailed he should direct the driver to pull up to the kerb on the near side of the road if the person hailing him is on that side, otherwise the driver must be directed to pull up as conveniently as he can for the passenger by avoiding the mud and wet. When more persons hail than there is room for, those who come first are to have the preference. The conductor must not signal the driver to proceed before the passenger is seated, or has firm hold of the handrail; and he must not slam the door or strike the panel as a signal, but call out or whistle to the driver. He must pay instant attention to any passenger desiring to be set down, and must direct the driver to pull up at the kerb if possible, so that the passenger may not have to alight in the road. He must endeavour to prevent persons from alighting while the omnibus is in motion, and if anyone insists on so doing, he should warn him to alight with his face towards the omnibus. He should descend from his footboard to assist any passenger alighting, and he is bound to treat both passengers and the public generally with civility and respect, answering any inquiry they may make, and in case he is unable to give the information required, referring them to any person or place where they can obtain it. He is not to enter into discussions with the public, and should even yield to any unjust requirement rather than give rise to altercation; and he is liable to instant dismissal for striking or verbally abusing a passenger. On the other hand, he can deal with a brawling passenger who is annoying others by calling in the aid of the police – a measure to which, however, he is warned not to have recourse, save in extreme cases, and when all his powers of persuasion have failed.

Passengers in dirty habiliments, or otherwise offensive, are not admitted to the inside; they may, however, mount to the outside if there is no one there to object; and the conductor is to see that they do not soil thee cushions or aprons so as to render them disagreeable to other persons coming after them. Persons in a state of intoxication must not be allowed to use the omnibus at all. Further, the conductor must not take more passengers than the prescribed number, and must permit no one to ride on the step; and if any person insists on so doing, he must stop the omnibus and not allow it to proceed until such person has alighted – and he may call the police to assist in the removal of such offender if there be occasion.

Dogs must not be allowed to ride, unless they are in the charge of ladies who carry them, and even then they can only be admitted after the conductor has learned by enquiry that none of the passengers object. Parcels and packages that might inconvenience passengers are not allowed to be carried inside.

The conductor must not leave his omnibus during its journey, except to escort a female passenger to or from the pavement, or to perform some act contingent upon the service, and in any case he must return to it as quickly as possible; and he is strictly forbidden to enter

a public-house, or to drink or smoke on his journey. He is forbidden to ride inside his omnibus on any part of his route, or to enter into conversation with his passengers unless addressed by them, in which case he is to answer with respect and civility, and abstain from any approach to familiarity. Should an accident happen resulting in personal injury, or any other casualty, he must render all the aid in his power to extricate the driver from the difficulty, or relieve or assist any person endangered or injured. In case of injury to person or property, he should secure the names and addresses of any disinterested witnesses, that their evidence may be obtained in case of need, and must report the particulars of the affair to the foreman. If he find any property left in his omnibus, he is bound to deposit it at the nearest police-station, according to law.

From one rather pregnant regulation, which gives us a somewhat higher idea of the conductor's responsibility than we have been accustomed to entertain, we learn that he is forbidden on pain of instant dismissal, to pay any fees, gratuities or moneys of any kind to drivers, timekeepers, horsekeepers or any other person whatsoever, whether in the service of the Company or otherwise. He must not pay the driver the amount of his wages until the end of the day, he must not advance him any sum on account during the day, but he must pay in to the company's account the whole amount of the fares taken throughout the day, without any deduction whatever, except the wages of the driver and himself, and the amount of the turnpike tolls; any deviation from this regulation will constitute a fraud, and be treated as such according to law. Some black sheep must be expected among so large a body of men, and the opportunities for dishonesty are great, notwithstanding all contrivances to check the takings.

It must often have occurred to those in the habit of using omnibuses that the absence of the conductor in his place in the morning would be a rather awkward thing. By the regulations of the Company, however, it never can happen that the omnibus conductor is wanting. The service is maintained in efficiency by a system of supernumeraries, some of whom are always in attendance at the starting-points, to supply the place of any regular conductor who should fail to arrive, either from sickness or any other cause. In fact, all the conductors have entered on their office in the first instance as supernumeraries, and they are not received into this class unless they have first obtained a badge and licence from the metropolitan police, and are able to write a clear and legible hand.

All the above regulations appear to us excellent. That they work well is evident from the generally civil and considerate conduct of the London omnibus conductors, and which for our part, we are glad to take this opportunity of acknowledging. Time was when no such acknowledgment was due, but the competitors for public patronage have long since found out that it does not pay to abuse and inconvenience a customer – and that it does pay to be courteous and obliging.

One word in conclusion, in reference to drivers as well as conductors, to whom the regulations upon which we have commented chiefly apply. The work of the omnibus servants is hard, and the pay not large. They deserve the sympathy of the public and the consideration of their employers. It is not for us to suggest how this consideration can be shown, but as a general principle, in all relations of capital and labour, the best and most profitable service is obtained when generous dealing softens the harsh laws of supply and demand. Let the London General Omnibus Company, on the whole an admirably administered corporation, treat their horses well, as horses ought to be treated, and also their men as men.

How far does this correspond with other sources……?

The standard text by Barker and Robbins *A History of London Transport* (Vol 1 – the Nineteenth Century, Allen & Unwin 1963) quotes Mayhew, writing in the middle of the nineteenth century, saying that omnibus drivers received either 24 shillings a week, or 21 shillings plus the fares of their box-seat passengers. However, it seems to have been

recognized from the earliest days of LGOC that conductors could pocket any fares collected which accumulated to more than the average on the route they were operating. From these extra takings the conductor was expected to tip the driver. In turn, the drivers were expected to tip the horse-keepers. This would not, therefore, support the statement in the article quoted above that the conductor would pay the driver, indicating that both were paid a fixed wage by the company, which at times was equal to or greater than the wages of skilled or semi-skilled workers.

However, another source does directly support the statement that LGOC bus conductors paid their drivers. The feature 'Reminiscences of a bus conductor' in the June/July 2005 *Omnibus Magazine* (pp 24-26) cited just this practice. It was a reprint of a paper read to the OS on 10 October 1930, in which George Hart, who had conducted for the Atlas and Waterloo Omnibus Association in the 1890s, recounted how he took the day's takings home, deducted his and the driver's pay and made up the waybill to be handed in the next morning. So it seems this was common practice in horse bus days.

It should also be borne in mind that Mayhew was writing in the middle of the nineteenth century, whereas the article was published in 1875, and Hart's recollections dated from the 1890s, so it is possible that practice changed later in the century.

Tony Newman, Andrew Waller

All Change at The Kithead Trust

There have been significant changes at The Kithead Trust, with the retirement of Peter Jaques as Trustee and Secretary last October. As many members will know, Peter has occupied these posts since the creation of the Trust 25 years ago, and Trust chairman Brian King paid tribute: "the tremendous collection we have today is largely the result of the excellent work that Peter and a small number of colleagues have put in down the years. We are delighted that Peter remains with us as volunteer emeritus".

Peter (right) hands over the reins to Philip.

Long-standing trustee and Association committee member Philip Kirk has taken over as Secretary to the Trustees, and the new post of Archivist. Philip has had a successful career in the bus industry, culminating in 20 years at City of Oxford, latterly as managing director. He is an active transport researcher and author. He took early retirement at the end of October, and has embarked on a Masters degree in Archives and Records Management. Philip also retains an interest in the bus industry as an advisor to First Group.

The Trustees consider that 25 years is a good point at which to evaluate the collection, and have asked Philip to conduct an analysis, focusing on: collections policy, management of the collection, and outreach and publicity to increase knowledge of the Trust and its holdings. Philip will be giving an update at the Association's Spring meeting.

Developments for 2015 include placing the collection catalogue online, and the publication of a quarterly newsletter. If you would like to subscribe to the newsletter, simply email hello@kitheadtrust.org.uk with "NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBE" in the subject field. Philip Kirk can be contacted at philip@kitheadtrust.org.uk.

Association News

The death of our President. Professor John Hibbs, marks a significant event in the life of the Association that he and Professor Theo Barker founded. Recollections from members are included in this edition. The Association was well represented at a very moving funeral service on November 24 at the Carrs Lane Church in Birmingham, at which Martin Higginson made an impressive and sincere statement citing John's intellectual contribution to the world of transport economics and history. A donation for Guide Dogs for the Blind, John's selected charity, on behalf of the Association, has been presented.

The Show moves on

The committee had duly met on November 5th, at the Kithead headquarters in Droitwich, following Philip Kirk's translation from the Oxford Bus Company to that of Kithead Archivist (and indeed much else!). Philip spoke of the Kithead Trust's foundation and of plans for the future.

Whither the route and whence we came

The Committee focussed upon ways in which the Association might now be developed with a view to offering guidance to the AGM in Coventry on Saturday, March 28th. The committee tried its best to concentrate upon the practical. Preparatory discussions had already taken place in south Wales and Kingston, with the Omnibus Society, and Coventry Transport Museum, and it is hoped that therefrom specific ideas will be identified for the AGM's consideration. The priority is to identify members willing to assume responsibility, however measured and limited, for running the Association. To minimise further the individual burden, it is anticipated that tasks could be shared. As agreed by the committee, each of these tasks need not be too onerous, the programme of events having been modified and our routines simplified. That said, however, it is, of course, essential for us to put on our 'thinking caps' so that we avoid any hiatus at the AGM! Your present chairman took on that task three years ago very reluctantly when it appeared that no one else was willing. We owe it to our late President to rise to this challenge.

A great accomplishment

The Association is delighted that the University of Wales Trinity Saint David has taken on the task of printing and distributing the Journal at no cost to the Association. This is very much an instance of a two-way relationship. The University, for its part, seeks to contribute to a learned journal in a discipline central to its work. Discussions are taking place to explore how the Journal might be developed realising that for many members the quarterly edition is the chief benefit of membership.

Dates for the Diary

As earlier advised, the Spring AGM and Conference will take place in the refurbished Coventry Transport Museum, which will surely be worth seeing, on Saturday March 28th, when the theme will be 'Transport and the City Region, in History and in Prospect'. Devolution is making the topic particularly pertinent and it would now be useful explore what might now be appropriate taking on board the lessons of history. The programme and booking form are also included in this edition.

The Autumn Conference will 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 would be pleased to consider your comments.*

Robert McCloy, chairman

A notice giving fuller details of the AGM on 28 March, with a booking form, is enclosed as a separate document with this issue of the Journal

Early Development of Army Motor Lorries

Roy Larkin

A look at how the British military were instrumental in early motor lorry development, and how that development was effectively halted for 18 years by circumstances surrounding the Great War. This paper is based on the author's presentation at the Association's Coventry meeting in March 2014.

Wars have a justified reputation for being the catalyst for innovative ideas and the development of new technologies at a pace seemingly impossible in civilian life. The Great War was no exception with the first use of tanks and major developments in submarines, signals, artillery, aircraft, etc. However, in one particular area, the Great War hampered, rather than aided, development. That was with the 3-ton motor lorry, which had seen rapid progress in the first decade of the century, but then very little between 1910 and 1928.

The British military had taken a keen interest in the motor lorry, or mechanical transport, in their parlance from the earliest days of the Liverpool Trials in the late 1890s (as described in John Dickson-Simpson's paper in the previous issue of this journal). This interest led to the forming of the Mechanical Transport Committee (MTC), responsible for overseeing the development of mechanical transport and organising the annual War Office Trials from 1901.

The trials set various criteria regarding what the lorry had to be capable of, including economy and load carrying ability, but left the design entirely to the maker. A substantial cash prize for the first three places and the resultant publicity that could be gained by the winners provided a competitive element that arguably drove development forward at a faster pace than would have happened otherwise.

In 1904 the army purchased its first motor lorry, a Stirling, which looked little more than a cart with the horse replaced by a petrol engine. The army's fleet of motor lorries was gradually increased, notably by Daimler-Neustadts in the early years and with an increasingly wide variety of British makes as the decade progressed. This ownership provided real practical experience, which coupled with the trials gave the military a good understanding of the advantages, and importantly, the disadvantages of the motor lorry as a viable alternative to the horse.

By 1910 the MTC had gained sufficient knowledge about what the motor lorry was capable of and, crucially, what it was not, that they were confident enough to publish their own design and specification of the motor lorry they wanted for military purposes. The emphasis of the trials changed from testing and proving the manufacturers' designs, to proving that the motor lorries built to the MTC specification performed well enough to gain accreditation and therefore acceptance for the Subsidy Scheme.

Above: A 1904 Stirling – the first motor lorry the army owned. (RLCM)

The publication of the War Office Subsidy Model Specification and the change in direction of the subsequent trials effectively stopped any future development of the 3-ton motor lorry and by 1928, advances in development were little more than the replacement of oil lamps with electric lamps, pneumatic tyres, but only on the front axle, and the

addition of a single driver's mirror mounted on the offside. It would however be quite wrong to lay the blame for eighteen years of stagnation only at the door of the War Office and to try to understand the reason, it is necessary to consider three distinct periods during those eighteen years.

The Pre-World War One Years

Any research and development programme requires funding which can only come from a central pot. Funding for the motor lorry had to be found from the army's budget, which in turn was part of the overall defence budget. The British military was dominated by the Royal Navy. Protecting the Empire was all important, as was maintaining the status of ruling the waves with the world's biggest and best navy. As such, the Navy received by far the lion's share of the defence budget.

At the time, Germany had ideas to challenge Britain's naval superiority. This resulted in an ever-more expensive arms race as Britain built more, ever-bigger and expensive battleships in response to Germany enlarging her fleet. Such was the cost of this expansion of the Navy that questions were asked in the House of Commons about the wisdom of bringing the country to the verge of bankruptcy for the sake of yet another battleship.

Inevitably the army budget was being squeezed, leaving precious little for development of the motor lorry, or anything else. Furthermore, Lord Haldane had been introducing the Territorial Force (TF), forerunner of the Territorial Army, with intent to reduce the size of the regular army and supplement it with a part time force available in times of need. This was inevitably leading to a reduction in the size of the supply chain required, with transport hired in when the TF undertook training periods. Justifying allocating any budget to develop the motor lorry as a new system of transport when the well proven horse system had surplus capacity would always have been difficult, if not impossible.

A Leyland 3-ton Subsidy Model

With government money in short supply, the onus would have to fall on the private sector to fund future development. Manufacturers were reluctant to allocate any funds for further developing the 3-ton lorry. The military specification lorry was bigger, heavier and more costly than civilian models of the same carrying capacity. That meant that few customers were interested in buying a lorry that was far too over-specified for their needs. Any development of the 3-ton lorry was pointless if the resultant lorry no longer met the War Office specification. The circumstances dictated that any development was minor such as improving carburettors, rear axle design, etc. and each new development had to be submitted to the MTC for approval if the lorry was still to be accepted. The military had the lorry they wanted, but at the same time managed to ensure that when war broke out in 1914, it was essentially the same lorry designed in 1910.

New technologies

New technologies were being developed at a fast pace in the early years of the 20th Century. Submarines, aircraft, small arms, artillery and signals were in the early stages of development. The Navy was building ever bigger ships and moving to oil-powered engines from steam while developing ever larger guns. The motor lorry could certainly be considered among these new technologies, except that it offered little more than to replace an already tried and tested part of the supply chain. Other new technologies were offering the possibility of adding a new dimension to how war could be waged.

Just as importantly, other countries, notably France and Germany, were rapidly developing these new ideas and it was unthinkable that Britain should be left behind, especially when the war clouds were already gathering over Europe. However enthusiastic the backers of the motor lorry were, it was always going to be very low on the list for any additional funding.

Funding for the Mechanical Transport Committee came from the army budget, and as such needed sanction from the War Office. There is a perceived argument that the War Office top brass were old fogeys, dyed-in-the-wool horse men who were unable to see beyond the horse as a means of transport. That is doing them a great disservice. It is true that they were all horse men, but so was everybody in the army. It is far from true that they were not aware of, or interested in, the potential of the motor lorry. The reality was that the motor lorry had to prove itself against the centuries of reliable service provided by the horse that was so well understood.

The only experience of the motor lorry that could be gained was through ownership and by 1914, the army owned some 200 motor lorries, of which 80 were of the 3-ton Subsidy type. These proved that the motor lorry could carry 3 times the load at a far greater speed. They also proved that a journey completed in one day might the next time take three, four or even more days depending on the nature of any breakdown.

The single most important aspect that the top brass considered was the reliability. The extra weight carried meant little as the army knew how many horses were needed for any operation and horses were not in short supply. Speed was not considered important as there was no need to travel faster than the army could march. Planning any operation using horse transport was second nature, a finely tuned system learned from centuries of experience. The motor lorry, by comparison, was a relatively unknown factor which could either greatly enhance, or destroy the supply lines.

The road haulage industry was becoming more mechanised and as such able to provide further insight into motor lorry usage. The military though were cautious, recognising that civilian work bore little, if any resemblance to military work, hence the apparent over specification of the Subsidy Model. Furthermore the state of the haulage industry seems more likely to have discouraged, rather than encouraged, faith in the motor lorry.

There is nothing written in the trade press, *Commercial Motor, Motor Traction,* to suggest that the haulage industry was in fairly dire straits, but the role of the trade press is to promote the industry. Its primary role is to sell papers and magazines and alienating its readership by denigrating their businesses is unlikely to help the publication prosper. There are, however, clues to be found in documents from 1914 that give some indication as to the state of motor transport at the time.

War Office fleet requirements

Crucial to obtaining development funding from government would have been the army's own assessment of their requirement for motor lorries. The army determined that the number of motor lorries required to mobilise in 1906 was 900. In 1911, when the second Subsidy Scheme was published the figure remained at 900. This is despite lorry development progressing in leaps and bounds since 1906 and the army having its own specification of motor lorry available. The motor lorry in 1911 was far superior in every way to that in 1906, suggesting that the army requirement should logically been higher if the War Office top brass had any real interest in the motor lorry.

The top brass were well aware of how far the motor lorry had improved but they were also acutely aware that it had never been put to the test in real war conditions. However promising the motor lorry looked, it would have been a very brave, possibly foolhardy, decision to place too much reliance on a totally untried mode of transport. The requirement

for 900 motor lorries was therefore determined with only slight regard by the ability of the motor lorry. It was the percentage of the supply chain the War Office felt confident in passing to mechanical transport, knowing there was the capability to cover it in the event of total failure of the motor lorry in the field, that determined the requirement.

In the overall scheme of the British military, 900 motor lorries is a tiny part and taking into account all the circumstances, it is difficult to image any organisation, whether government or private sector being able to justify funding of anything more than a minimal amount. Only testing mechanical transport in the heat of battle would determine whether the motor lorry justified further investment or not.

The War Years

On 4th August 1914, the British Army had 900 motor lorries available, being 200 owned and a further 700 available under the Subsidy Scheme. In reality though, far more were available as legislation allowed for the commandeering of motor lorries in times of war or national emergency. It is clear that the commandeering of motor lorries began on 5th August, Mobilisation Day. Between 9th August and 12th September, 2,400 motor lorries had embarked to France. This suggests greater confidence in the motor lorry than had previously been evident and 900 motor lorries needed less funding than 2,400, so maybe the army requirement of 900 had more to do with politics than actual need.

When 62 Coy ASC (2nd Division Ammunition Park) arrived at Avonmouth on 5th August they received 71 motor lorries. That is 10% of the total number of subsidised lorries available, and to have been collected at Avonmouth on the day of mobilisation tells us they must have belonged to owners in the Bristol area. It is impossible to believe that 10% of the country's subsidised lorries were in the Bristol area, indicating that they were the first of the commandeered lorries.
It is these lorries that give some clues as to the state of the haulage industry at the time. When 62 Coy embarked for Rouen on the 6th August, it was with only 52 lorries. On inspection, the army determined that 26% of those commandeered were unfit for use. It may be that the army had higher standards than private owners and stricter inspections, however by the time 62 Coy arrived at Amiens on 8th August a further 9 lorries had fallen by the wayside. From the original 71 lorries, 39% were unfit for use.

51 Coy ASC (6th Division Ammunition Park) embarked from Liverpool for Rouen on 16th August with 83 lorries. They arrived at Amiens on 22nd August and began local transport duties. On 26th August, 53 of the original 83 lorries were unfit for use and on 4th September the company ceased to exist due to not having enough lorries to be able to operate.

This high rate of attrition not only indicates the standard of motor lorry available from the haulage industry, but also helps justify the War Office caution as to the viability of motor lorries. Lord Kitchener in his report on the British Expeditionary Force recorded that for an ASC MT Company to be able to operate normally that it would require an additional 25% of its War Establishment as spare vehicles. The Inspector-General Communications recommended that 37% of Establishment would be required as spares, but the War Office would not countenance such a high figure and allowed only 25% spare.

73 Coy ASC (3rd Cavalry Division Supply Column), who had been questioned over they inability to provide the demanded number of lorries at railhead, recorded that there were insufficient lorries available due to the War Establishment only allowing for 25% spare.

It is true to say that unreliability was only part of the problem and that the unavailability of spare parts was a major contributing factor in the number of unserviceable lorries. In the first few months of the war, the lorries hardly had time to stop, let alone be serviced or maintained. It is not surprising that they suffered reliability issues, and reflects more on the advantages of the horse than disadvantages of mechanical transport. Furthermore, in the rush to get

the BEF into France, the question of providing spare parts appears to have been largely overlooked.

Road conditions

Road conditions on the Western Front were a major contributing factor to the reliability of the motor lorry. Little more than cart tracks, they quickly deteriorated under the excessive heavy traffic. Potholes exacted a heavy toll of road springs and steering joints. In order to maintain the roads on the British sector of the Western Front, 13,000 tons of roadstone were required every day. This had to be supplied from quarries in southern France and Guernsey entailing a massive and costly transport operation by sea and rail. Particularly during the winter months, the supply lines were totally reliant on horse transport as road conditions dictated that MT was banned from the roads. Even motor ambulances were at times banned for fear of making the road conditions even worse than they were. In Flanders, wooden roads, or corduroy roads as they were known, had to be built to permit any movement of traffic. Built from railway sleepers where possible they were also built from tree trunks giving a surface that quickly shook every nut and bolt loose.

Disabled lorries were the last thing needed on the heavily congested roads. Even if they didn't block the road entirely, they presented an obstacle that greatly slowed the progress of regiments marching into battle. The Royal Naval Division recorded that on 1st February 1915, when one of their omnibuses became ditched, it was simply rolled onto its side to allow troops and supply companies to pass. Several ASC companies recorded that the lorries were suffering due to the difficulty of keeping them down to the slow speeds caused by marching troops.

The only advantage that the lorry had over the horse on paper was better speed and that was effectively nullified as speed was dictated by the conditions. 73 Coy ASC who were working on the French/Belgian border failed to average more than 2 mph on a single day during 1915.

Above: A British Berna of the 1st Canadian Railway Company sharing a typical Western Front road with horse transport (RLCM)

From the earliest days on the war, the motor lorry was proving to be an expensive liability. It was expensive to purchase initially and quickly proved expensive in resources. A company operating fifty

Above: Horses and motor lorries in typically wet Western Front conditions. (RLCM)

lorries needed a sizeable area of hardstanding to park for the night. Horses at the end of the day could simply be turned out into a field, and the lighter wagons were easily returned to the roads the next day. The heavier lorries soon became bogged down unless on hardstanding, taking hundreds of man hours to return the company to the roads. Providing hardstanding required road material or wooden sleepers, both of which were in increasingly short supply as the war dragged on.

Spare parts and fuel

Spare parts were not only expensive to buy, but also required transport to France and used raw materials needed for munitions, shipbuilding, railways etc. Repairing motor vehicles was expensive in manpower, with every transport company needing its own workshops and the huge heavy repair shops employing over 1,000 men each.

Thousands of tons of petrol were required to keep the fleet working. Ten ships were employed permanently shipping petrol from Avonmouth and Portishead to Havre and Calais. Armies of workers were engaged in filling petrol cans and valuable space on supply trains was needed to get the petrol to where it was needed. The heavy oil, from which the petrol was refined, was also increasingly needed for shipping as more and more new ships were built with oil burners instead of being coal-fired. Supply lines to the front were interrupted and needed supplementing with horse transport when MT companies were idle for lack of petrol.

In almost every way possible the motor lorry was seen to be a drain on resources that horse transport was not. With the motor lorry able to achieve little more than horse transport could, it is easy to see that there was little incentive to invest in its further development. Indeed, far from looking to further invest in motor transport, top level meetings were held between the British and French war offices with the aim to completely rid the Western Front of mechanical transport by the end of 1916.

The Great War is full of contradictions and on 26th November 1917, 273 Coy ASC departed Tinques, on the Western Front for Italy. They arrived at Campo St Pierro on 15th December having covered 1,225 miles with all of the lorries arriving safely, with only a few minor breakdowns. These were the same lorries that when working in northern France were unable to stay out of workshops. The motor lorry, given the chance,

Above: Where the ground was too bad, a wooden road, known as a corduroy road was built, particularly in Flanders. They were notoriously slippery when wet and often the sleepers would sink under the weight of traffic creating an almost impossible road surface. (RLCM)

did prove itself a worthy successor to the horse; it was just never given that chance in the conditions on the Western Front. However, evidence on the Western Front gave little support for further development of the motor lorry. No matter how much the motor lorry might have been developed, it would still have been the working conditions that would have proved its downfall. Any spare money, if there had been any, would have been better spent improving conditions, but the weather, weight of traffic and enemy action combined to make improving the roads was akin to holding back the tides.

Fleet expansion

Despite its shortcomings, mechanical transport in the British army expanded at a phenomenal rate during the Great War. In August 1914, the army owned some 200 motor lorries, in November 1918 that number had grown to about 56,500 lorries, of which some 35,000 were working on the Western Front. Mechanical transport was certainly responsible for transporting huge amounts of supplies. If its success was based purely on tonnage carried and miles covered, the motor lorry was unquestionably a great success. But, to be considered an unqualified success it is necessary to consider that had mechanical transport been reliable, only 20,000 lorries instead of 35,000 would have been required.

Such impressive growth suggests that the Great War was when the motor lorry replaced the horse. However, it is has to be remembered that horse transport actually expanded at a greater rate than mechanical transport.

In 1914 there were 21 Mechanical Transport Companies with 200 lorries, and 55 horse transport companies with 27,500 horses. By the end of 1918, there were 654 mechanical transport companies and 56,500 lorries, an increase of 633 companies and 56,300 lorries. There were 715 horse transport companies with 895,770 horses, an increase of 660 companies and 868,270 horses. Roughly 2% of the horses were used by officers and the cavalry and the rest were divided equally between the ASC for transport and the artillery.

This huge expansion ensured that manufacturers were kept busy building new lorries. That left no time for the manufacturers to develop and test new ideas or improvements. Any improvements that were made were by the ASC heavy workshops who introduced their own modifications to parts that were prone to failure. These developments were however minor and cannot really be considered as more than temporary solutions. Daimler gears were hardened, Wolseley engine brackets strengthened, chassis rails reinforced in attempts to solve recurring problems. The motor lorry in 1918 was essentially the same lorry first devised in 1910.

The Post-World War One Years

It might be expected that following the end of the war, there would be an eagerness to start further developing the lorry, the design of which was now 8 years old. While the army did some development work, it was chiefly with lighter lorries and gun-tractors. The mainstay of the army's transport was largely ignored. Manufacturers struggled to find the money to remain in business and had nothing left for research and development.

Lorries were repatriated from France to Kempton Park racecourse initially, and then to Slough when the disposal dump there was opened in 1919. These were sold by auction to companies who quickly saw an opportunity to recondition them and sell them on to prospective buyers. In 1914, a 3-ton lorry would have cost £450 new and the subsidy model roughly twice that. In 1920 it was possible to buy from any number of firms a reconditioned subsidy model 3-tonner for £200. By comparison a Halley 3-tonner cost £850, without a body, in 1922.

A Leyland 3-ton Subsidy Model in 1928 showing the conversion to pneumatic tyres and electric lamps

The constant supply of lorries from Slough ensured prices remained low and it was not until 1926 when the last of the refurbished war surplus lorries had been sold, still for no more than £200. Sales of new lorries were almost non-existent and without sales the manufacturers had no profits. No profits meant there was no finance for development, and while the stock

Above: A Halley 3-ton lorry which cost £850 in 1922.

of war surplus seemed inexhaustible, little incentive to design and develop new models.

It was not until 1928 that the war surplus lorries had reached the end of their lives, and companies that had grown to depend on the motor lorry had to begin sourcing new lorries from the manufacturers. Changing legislation sped up the demise of the solid tyred subsidy model 3-tonner as a viable workhorse and manufacturers could begin to invest in the future.

It seems incredible that, at a time when development of motor vehicles, whether cars, commercials or motorcycles, was moving forward at a great pace, that the 3-ton lorry should last 18 years with little or no development. Wartime, with a justified reputation for innovation and seemingly impossible feats, in this instance did nothing for the 3-ton motor lorry except to provide thousands of them and thus the beginning of the modern road haulage industry.

Images identified as '(RLCM)' are from the Royal Logistic Corps Museum collection

Book Reviews

Stoneygate Tram Depot. The story of the Tram Depot and the history of the tram and bus routes that served Leicester's Stoneygate suburb. Mike Greenwood. Leicester Transport Heritage Trust, 8 Ingrams Way, Wigston, Leicester, LE18 3TU. ISBN 978-0-9569075-3-0. 66pp, illustrated. £10 + postage.

This is a very attractively-produced booklet devoted to a small but iconic tram depot on the London Road in the parish of Knighton, Leicester. This 'District Car Shed' was opened in 1904, and had a relatively short life in its original role, being leased to motor garage operators from 1922, following the provision of extra accommodation at Humberstone Gate depot. The well-known firm of H.A.Bowett and Co. Ltd. was associated with the former depot until the mid-1960s, sharing with the AFS during the war. The reviewer would have welcomed more information on this phase of the depot's life.

From 1968 to 1975 the depot served as a railway museum, and the erudite booklet produced by Professor Jack Simmons on the four locomotives exhibited is reproduced on pages 24-35. The tramway era is then returned to with Mark Pearson's article 'Stoneygate' from *Trams*, January 1966 (pp 42-53) and a pictorial survey of tram and bus operation on the relevant routes, including timetables and route maps (pp 54-66). Interesting as they are, perhaps some of the illustrations could have been reduced in size or number to allow reproduction on a larger scale of the fascinating original documentation of the depot. In conclusion, as the booklet itself comments, "The story of the tram depot between 1975 and 2009 is not all that clear", but this is followed by a through account of the Heritage Trust's hard work towards it objective for the depot.

RAS

Lavington & Devizes Motor Services. Laurie James. 2014. Amberley Press, The Hill, Merrywalks, Stroud, Gloucs. GL5 4EP. <www.amberley-books.com> 128pp, card covers, illustrated. £12.99 plus postage. ISBN 978 1 4456 3918 5 (print), £12.99 plus postage; 978 1 4456 3929 1 (ebook). £11.69.

Lavington & Devizes Motor Services responded to the 1930 Road Traffic Act by applying for 15 stage service licences and a group of 22 excursions and tours. This was no small enterprise for a concern rooted in a Wiltshire village that nestles in the shadow of Salisbury Plain.

Laurie James's book is a carefully researched, copiously illustrated and highly readable account of a rural bus company whose services crossed the territorial boundaries of three major operators. Fred Sayer, previously a bus driver with Bath Electric Tramways, founded the business in about 1915. His enterprise and engineering skills enabled him to call on wealthy local investors to help him set up on his own. Among his backers were members of the Chivers family, the well-known Devizes contractors.

Sayers maintained his good relationship with the Bath concern, but found himself competing with the

National Omnibus Company's Trowbridge operations, and with Wilts & Dorset Motor Services, which reached Devizes from the south. Each of these seemed wary of intruding too far on the other's routes. Sayers' buses ran to Bath, Chippenham, Trowbridge, Frome and Salisbury. When Wilts & Dorset pulled out of a tentative operation based on the Wylye vale village of Codford, Sayers moved into the gap, and he took over another local concern that ran between Salisbury and Hindon, a route completely detached from his original operations.

Sayers had a sizeable fleet, dominated by Commers at first. AEC soon became the favoured marque after World War I: many of the AEC chassis were second-hand and rebuilt in the workshops at Market Lavington.

In 1932 ownership of Lavington & Devizes passed to directors of the Bath Tramways Motor Company (BTMC), which thus took control of the business. As James remarks, this was something of a traumatic experience to Western National and Wilts & Dorset, but they only had themselves to blame for being indecisive when there was an earlier opportunity to acquire the business. In 1936 the BTMC and its parent, Bath Electric Tramways, came under the control of the Bristol Tramways & Carriage Company. Most of Sayers' old routes remained, but Salisbury-Hindon was transferred to Wilts & Dorset.

Laurie James concludes his well-illustrated book with an outline of how Lavington & Devizes' old routes have fared under nationalisation after World War II and in the years since Deregulation in 1986.

AHW

The Toll-houses of Staffordshire. Tim Jenkinson and Patrick Taylor. Polystar Press, 277 Cavendish Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 8BQ. ISBN 978 1 907154 07 2. Card covers, illustrated, 148pp. £9.95 plus postage.

This study of toll-houses across a county profoundly affected by the Industrial Revolution reveals the location of more than 300 such buildings on its roads and canals. Many of them, built in the 18th and 19th centuries, have either been demolished or swallowed up by industrial or housing development.

Patrick Taylor and Tim Jenkinson are experienced authors of this series of county-by-county histories of toll-houses. For Staffordshire diligent research of old maps and 19th century census returns has thrown up evidence of more than 200 of these often modest houses that have completely disappeared, as well as around 100 that still stand in one form or another. For some the best, if not the only, record appears in census returns, which name the individual toll-collectors. It is remarkable how many of these were women, either widows or the spouses of men who pursued other activities. The lost toll-houses feature in text boxes among some 90 illustrations of others that either still survive or at least did not disappear visually unrecorded.

Most of the photographs show toll-houses beside the turnpikes, but there are a couple of unusual three-storey structures alongside locks on the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, which dates from around 1772. Both are Grade II listed structures.

Like the other county histories of toll-houses the book tells the story of how turnpikes developed in the 18th century, a process that slowed down when the American War of Independence and the Napoleonic Wars had an impact on business confidence, but then picked up again in the 1820s.

The geology of Staffordshire of course affected the industries that grew up there, but it also determined the materials from which the toll-houses were built. In much of the county brick structures predominate, for the rocks in the Coal Measures around Stoke-on-Trent and west of Birmingham yield various good quality clays as well as iron ore. In north-east Staffordshire, around the southern tip of the Pennines, the limestone rocks are surrounded by millstone grit, which was extensively used for local building.

This carefully-researched work of industrial archaeology provides an intriguing insight into how transport systems developed to keep pace with the Industrial Revolution. ***AHW***

Autumn Conference 2014

On Saturday 4 October, we all assembled at the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum for the R&RTHA Autumn 2014 Conference. In a slightly different format to previous years (at least in my experience) the morning was given over to short presentations by members.

First of all, Roger de Boer talked about how he became interested in the history of buses, with a wide variety of anecdotes from his years of bus spotting, leaflet and ticket collecting, and photography.

Next up was Malcolm Dungworth (my Dad!), who gave us a brief history of his varied experiences of the transport industry – both in his family's haulage and motor coach businesses and while an employee of a number of larger companies.

Following on, John Edser returned us to the topic of public transport by questioning why so little has been achieved in the field of accessible public transport since the early twentieth century – at least until relatively recently and then only in certain local authority areas.

Finally, Tony Newman gave us a detailed insight into his use of Census returns and other readily available document archives to learn about the various people employed in the nineteenth century bus industry – work that can easily be applied to a range of other projects, such as my research into the first inhabitants of the house I'm currently renovating.

After the usual excellent buffet lunch, we were treated to two superb guest speakers.

The first speaker of the afternoon was Louise Allen, author of the Shire publication *Stagecoach Travel* who talked about the experience of travelling by stage and mail coach from the passengers' point of view – from booking tickets and boarding the stage to fellow passengers and how comfortable (or not!) the journey was, as well as from inns and the experience of eating there to perils and accidents. The first stagecoach advertisements that we know of date from 1667 and relate to the route from London to Bath, although the stagecoach trade began at least a decade earlier. The advertised route ran from the Belle Sauvage on Ludgate Hill to the White Lion in Bath, and took three days with each stage being the distance one team of horses could travel in the day.

By the 1800s, routes were much better organised and overnight stops were no longer required due to the increased supply of horses. Roads and vehicle designs had improved throughout the 18th Century leading to a peak in stagecoach travel during the early 19th Century. The routes were used by a wide variety of travellers: from governesses, merchants and sportsmen to journalists, actors, commuters and tourists – many of whom wrote about their experiences in letters, journals and published articles – many of which we can still read today. Well-off young men of the Corinthian set commonly wanted to go one step further and drive the stage – an activity that was heavily frowned upon by the coaches' owners.

As well as first-hand accounts written by travellers, we can also learn much about stagecoach travel from the books produced to advertise different routes. Yearly guides were produced for the seaside resorts – and the stagecoaches travelling to these places were the flashiest and had the most congenial atmospheres. Meanwhile a number of road books were also produced, detailing the more mundane routes and the connections required to travel from the main stagecoach destinations to other locations.

Ticket office clerks, on the other hand, had a reputation for providing less accurate advice about the best coaches to take, and no refunds were available for those who missed their booked coach. Nor were coaches supposed to stop for unbooked passengers or at unofficial stops – although many would if the tips provided were substantial enough – drivers and guards could make a very good extra living from the tips provided by passengers in return

for a range of services. The golden age of stage coaches lasted only about twenty years before the railways took over as the main means of transport for most of the coaches' customers. However, we have been left with a rich vein of material to study and far more is reproduced in Louise's book than she was able to show during her presentation. I can highly recommend the book, incidentally.

The afternoon was rounded off by the keynote speaker: John Minnis, Senior Investigator at English Heritage. John's talk was 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* (both of which have been reviewed previously in this journal). For the first 35 years of the motorcar, the landscape of Great Britain remained largely as it had in the previous centuries, but by the late 1920s changes began to be seen as first motorbuses and then the advent of more affordable cars led to the construction of buildings to accommodate vehicles and their occupants and to the increasing sprawl of many cities, towns and villages as ordinary people were able to live further from their workplaces and from amenities.

The early buildings that were designed to house vehicles and to provide refreshments and overnight accommodation for travellers were often very picturesque – indeed movements sprang up to dictate the ideal forms for such structures. With the advent of mass motoring came the new industry of books and magazines aimed specifically at motorists, suggesting where to go and what to look at or do once there. I was more interested in John's photographs from *Carscapes* than by the aerial panoramas (fascinating though those were) but I suspect that either would make a great present or coffee table talking point for the road transport history enthusiast.

All in all another excellent meeting, and I'm looking forward to next October already.

Gina M Dungworth

Fuller accounts have been provided by Malcolm Dungworth, Roger de Boer, and John Edser, as reproduced below. Tony Newman's note on use of census data appeared in our November issue.

Malcolm Dungworth.

I was born in Herries Drive, Longley, a leafy suburb of Sheffield, in September 1940. The Second World War had barely troubled the residents of Herries Drive until the night of the 13th of December when bombs rained down on Sheffield, forever referred to as "The Sheffield Blitz". It is now accepted that the attacks on Sheffield and other similar cities were tactics intended to bring the civilian population to submission to an invading force if and when invasion took place.

My close family, wives and children, moved out of immediate harm's way to Ashford in the Water, taking refuge with family friends, leaving the menfolk to concentrate on their work in the steel and transport industries.

My memories of this time are more than anecdotal as this time was regularly referred to in family conversations. However the next place we moved to, Bent Hills Farm Bradfield, is embedded in my memory as Hilda and Percy Badger, the owners, looked after me as if I was their own child. Eventually we moved back to Sheffield where I spent a considerable time with my father in his cars, lorries and garage based in the "grounds" of Woodhill House Grimesthorpe Road Sheffield.

Woodhill House had become the Family Home of my Great Grandfather William Smith Dack and his Wife, Caroline, and their ever- increasing family when they moved there from Suffolk in the 1870s following the agricultural depression of the time. The house and estate belonged to the Duke of Norfolk and after initially working in the steel industry William look over management of a number of properties for the Duke and also dealt with the purchase and sale of horses on behalf of the Norfolk Estates.

In addition he began to operate his own business of horse transport, trading as William Smith, ignoring the Dack part of his name. As his several sons came along they were introduced into the business and with the arrival of powered transport a Durham Churchill Charabanc was introduced to be driven by eldest son Arthur. Durham Churchill were built in Chambers Lane about half a mile from Woodhill House.

Above: The Durham Churchill charabanc, fitted with Aster engine and 4speed gearbox, used by my great uncle Arthur

His eldest daughter Elisabeth married Joseph Walter Dungworth and set up home in what was referred to as the Butlers Quarters of Woodhill House. Here my father, his two brothers and three sisters were born.

Joe Walter, as he was always referred to, initially began his working life in the cutlery industry as a Stag Horn cutter. Although well paid the occupation could lead to early death due to Silicosis arising from the dust created during the work.

Probably due to my great-grandfather's connections my grandfather secured the position of distribution manager at Brightside and Carbrook Co-operative Society Milk processing and Distribution section becoming General Manager.

His eldest son, Walter, also joined the organisation ultimately rising to General Manager of the Longley Branch.

My father, the second son, George Henry became an apprentice joiner working on numerous projects until the depression of the early 1930s found him out of work. The labour exchange offered 3 Half Crowns and the suggestion that as his father had a well paid job he seek family help. My father's reaction was to throw the half crowns back and to make the statement "you will never see me here again".

His good and life long friend "Sonny" Kitson, son of Arthur Kitson, suggested that my father should exchange his almost new Scott Motorcycle for an old motor coach (charabanc) and use his woodworking skills to convert the bodywork into a lorry. This was carried out at Woodhill House and trading, began as a Haulage Contractor (Woodhill Transport) and remained there until the business was nationalised in 1947/8. It was fortunate that the agreement was signed before the winter of 1947, probably the worst on record in the 20th century. During the winter my father contracted pneumonia and his business was cared for by my godfather Tommy Hancock who had worked with him almost all the whole of the time that Woodhill Transport had existed.

And so father, mother and small son were off to London for father to sign the papers to pass over his business to The British Transport Commission and receive in exchange not 3 half crowns but a sizable amount of money and the offer of a job with the British Road Services, which he treated with the disdain he had treated that of the Employment Exchange in 1927.

My father considered an option to purchase Talbot Transport, a small transport company which it was stated was too small be considered by the BRS, and came with restricted licences to operate, but had the advantage of freehold property producing a rental income.

Within a very short time the Nationalisation Scheme was extended to smaller companies and was not as generous as the original scheme. This time, however, my father was left with the property and two lucrative contract hire arrangements with Union Carbide which he retained for the rest of his working life.

To supplement the financial income of the business motor coaches were added to the fleet, as Talbot Coaches. The first was a secondhand Guy followed by a new Guy, two Albions, Bedfords, two Crossley and a Seddon. Membership of the PVOA (Passenger Vehicle Operators Association) led to visits to France and Switzerland where my schoolboy French and ability to convert French and Swiss francs almost instantly was appreciated by the wives of our fellow passengers.

Albion FT 37 four-wheelers and an HD 57 eight-wheeler outside 1-3 Montfort Rd, the "home" of Talbot Transport.

De-nationalisation was introduced and my father brought back his vehicles. So where was I when this was happening? Firstly, I was expected to produce an appropriate return on the investment of a private junior school education. This resulted in an '11-plus' entry to King Edward VII Grammar School in Sheffield. In addition, I continued to keep the records of fuel and oil usage required by the Ministry of Fuel and Power, a hangover from Wartime days.

I have to admit this was not the place for me as Oxford or Cambridge was expected and was not at all within my interest. However, it was brought to the attention of my father that if I could secure enough and appropriate 'O' levels, I could take the entrance interview to secure a place at Wellington House, the home of the Leyland Motors Student Engineers Training Scheme.

Wellington House was exactly the place for me. Almost all the students were older than me. At least one had seen active service in the British Army. Some came from abroad and almost all had a serious interest in motor vehicles. After an introductory period to learn the basics of fitting, turning, welding, and foundry work various sections of the business could be chosen from which to gain more serious experience.

Having passed through the three year course I had my interview with Donald Stokes as to where my final year should be. He told me I had a great future with the company, and in answer to my question "How long will this be?" the reply of "10 to 15 years" may well have been honest but was uninspiring. In September of 1960 I was appointed technical assistant to the General Manager of Leyland Motors Sheffield.

Within three months my mother told me that my father was not well enough to continue to run Talbot Transport and asked if I would leave Leyland Motors to take over the day-to- day running of the business.

This I did, but soon realised that this was not where my future lay and said to my mother and father that if they could find a buyer for Talbot Transport they should retire and I would find my own life with the many contacts I had made at Leyland.

Over the next few years the business improved. I found a nice young lady, and whilst we were on honeymoon a buyer was found for the business. Maureen and I began to look for a future that fitted our ambitions. After a few false starts I came home from work to find Maureen with the local paper carrying a large advertisement "Wanted, Leyland Trained Engineer to head up operation of large fleet of Leyland Vehicles. Please send full details, etc. This I set to and produced.

After some confusion about whether my application had been received, I was asked to attend an interview in the works canteen of Glebe Mines, a long established Derbyshire Fluorspar mining company, but now a subsidiary of Laporte limited, where I sat

in front of a row of assorted men who I never saw again. They went through my original letter and then asked me a number of unrelated questions. I left the room in a somewhat bemused state and was met by a large gentleman in white smock, wellies and trilby hat. This turned out to be Ken Orange, Packing and Distribution Manager, to whom I would report on a day-to-day basis.

On the appointed day I reported to work to find I hadn't been allocated an office or any secretarial staff I was taken to meet Edgar Bramwell who had run the works garage for many years. After the formal introductions Edgar asked where have you come from? When I replied 'Sheffield' his response was

"Nob'dy any good ever cum thro' t'unnel"

Well, I thought, this isn't going to be easy as obviously Edgar hadn't been made aware of my appointment or responsibilities. The next few days saw me trying to unravel the terms of my appointment, where were the 168 Leyland vehicles I was supposed to organise the maintenance of and indeed where were the rest of the other items of plant and machinery which appeared on the plant and equipment stock list I had been given.

The answer I found was that whilst the majority existed some were non-runners and others past their sell-by date.

Very soon a breakthrough occurred when one of the newer vehicles, a Commer CBEW 887 tipper truck, appeared in the yard making an appalling noise from the engine. Edgar immediately stated his displeasure saying that the Company 'shouldn't have bought the Commers'. Fortunately I had had a lot of experience with Commer two-stroke engines

I asked Edgar to take the side plate off the engine whilst I went home for the appropriate equipment. When I returned with a large torque wrench, extension, and socket a small crowd surrounded the vehicle. The large nuts on the rocker shaft of the engine were tightened. The side plate was replaced, the oil level checked and the engine started. Result: no nasty noise, and the somewhat bemused crowd dispersed.

Some days later one of the drivers of a Scammell 38 ton articulated tanker vehicle was sent to tell me he couldn't take his vehicle on his planned journey as he felt there was a fault in the braking system. Suspecting that this was another "test" I said we'd better take it out for a run. As with the Commer, I had lots of experience with Scammell lorries but very little with articulated tankers. As we walked towards the vehicle, Peter the driver was moving towards the driving side, round the other side. I said I'll do the driving. All went well and we returned to base for Peter to set off on his journey to Bristol. Some years later I met Peter in a pub in Great Longstone, and the conversation turned to our respective times at Laporte Industries. Peter confessed that our drive had been a put-up job to see if could drive the Scammell.

Not long afterwards another appointee entered the workforce, Dr David Knight**.** We were told he was an independent expert appointed to judge the performance of the operation and report back on the situation to the Board of Directors. When I came to work shortly afterwards Dr Knight asked to see me. He verbally attacked me regarding the untidiness of the garage area when he arrived at work that morning.

I replied that if he had enquired in a more sensible manner he would have found, as I had, that a young member of the garage staff who happened to be the son of the production manager, had come into the works at 3 o'clock in the morning to repair a puncture on a Chaseside loading shovel and in doing so had ensured that no production time had been lost.

Is that all you have to say, said Dr Knight. No, I replied, if we had the correct premises and planned procedures many wasted hours and in turn money could be saved. I pointed out to him that suitable empty premises existed opposite where we were standing.

After a few moments he said prepare a report with drawings and costings and have it with me ASAP. This I did. The report was produced and accepted, the garage built, with backing from Castrol Oil, who supplied the Lubrication equipment and funding to build the inspection and lubrication bays within the existing building. As all this was pre computer-based planning systems: the planning system used was Adapta-Chart, a wall mounted system which older readers may remember.

Soon new vehicles were specified and approved, such as Foden tippers, an Atkinson tractor Unit and Metalaire tanker.

My time at Laporte came to an end when a regular visitor told a friend of the work carried out. An unofficial and unorthodox interview took place, with the resulting offer which gave me an opportunity to double my salary, be supplied with a quality company car and the personal satisfaction of a leaving party attending by the many friends I had made at Laporte.

Malcolm Dungworth has worked in transport and logistics all his working life. He is a Fellow of the Charted Institute of Logistics and Transport, and a Fellow of the Institute of the Motor Industry. He has lived in the Hope Valley for 54 years, and his many interests include being Chairman of Bamford and District History Group, motor sport, vintage cars, photography, canal boating and travel (particularly by motor caravan).

John Edser

John's contribution on accessible transport comes from his involvement in the CILT Accessibility and Inclusion Forum, whose aim is to make public transport as easy as possible to use by the 10 million aged and mobility impaired in Britain - not counting the 'buggy generation' or anyone temporarily disabled.

It was also triggered by the World War 1 commemoration and the many thousands of disabilities that resulted. Hard though it may seem, it was not until the 1996 and 2010 Acts that any real changes were made.

How did people cope, did they just stay at home? Admittedly, up to 1914 most travel for the vast majority was relatively local: the market town, to work or the local shops. However, horse and motor buses had high steps and trams stopped in the middle of the road. They did have conductors who could help (if they felt like it). In country areas there was the 'country bus', which often carried much more than people and often dropped people and parcels at gates on their way.

All the front entrance single deckers up to the late 1960s had interior steps and it was not until the Leyland National of 1970 was there a flat floor with just one step to the rear part.

Double deck buses were the first real advance with their flat or sloped lower decks: the Bristol Lodekka in 1953; the AEC Bridgemaster in 1956 and then the Leyland Atlantean and Daimler Fleetline. There was, however, still the step up from the pavement.

Even today, the 'coach problem' still persists, despite a very high proportion of their target market being the older age groups.

What has the 1996 Act brought about? 'Kneeling' buses, ramps, modern LRT systems designed for ease of use, lifts and new transport interchanges with specifically helpful 'age/impaired' facilities built into them.

However, the relationship between between transport and other authorities is crucial in getting things right. In County Louth, Ireland, the hospitals, police, transport, the Local Authority, NGOs, and social services all have an input into the local transport in the context of a single National Transport Authority and its 'transport for all' policy. What does this mean? Parking enforcement at bus stops and bus lanes, and possible provision of raised kerbs where possible are examples.

Staff training in both practical (not leaving a gap between a 'kneeling' bus and raised kerb) and 'soft skills' (pro-active questions and offers of help) is vital as it can make or mar the journey.

Roger F. de Boer

Born in Birmingham in 1946, Roger recalled an interest in transport from very early age, especially in cars, buses and coaches. Annual summer holidays featured coach travel, notably a trip in 1950 with Allenways of Birmingham with a three-quarter-deck Foden, which suffered tyre failure after only half the journey had been completed, passengers being rescued by two Bedford OBs to continue their journey to Harwich.

As his father was Dutch, holidays in the Netherlands were a regular feature, which he recalled from an early age, in particular the British-built Crossleys operated by NACO and NTM on a joint service from Alkmaar to Leeuwarden – the Frisian capital, where his family had connections – which would 'bomb along' the Afsluitdijk with their supercharged engines.

Back home, his mother would often take him to her birth city of Worcester, where he was fascinated by the BMMO SOS half-cab single-deckers with their white or silver roofs. The Dutch Crossleys and Midland Red vehicles stimulated his interest in buses, together with the fleet in his home city of Birmingham whose Corporation provided a fleet summary. It was of these noteworthy that the whole registration series JOJ 1 to 999 was used for buses (similarly Glasgow FYS 1 to 999, but some were used for commercials).

His hobby developed further with collection of timetables, leaflets, tickets and photography. For a period he entered the field of bus preservation, as a member of the group owing Birmingham Crossley JOJ489 from 1969 until leaving it in 1988.

(Roger is also the author of contributions to the Companion to Road Passenger Transport History)

Above: One of the Crossleys operated in the Netherlands, with its distinctive 'scrubberboard' radiator grille. It was operated by WSM (Westland Stream Tramway Company), a daughter company of Netherlands Railways, and carried an olive green livery (Source: the late Hans Verhoeff)

One of our long-standing members has accumulated a collection of research material on the history of construction equipment and road vehicle manufacturers. In retirement, he now wishes to dispose of this to a good home. There would be no cost other than postage.

If you are interested, please register this via the Editor.

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