

# The Roads & Road Transport History Association

## Contents

The 1968 Transport Act and its aftermath (Robert McCloy)	Page 1
Municipal Pride (Roger Atkinson)	Page 7
The Changing Face of British Cement Manufacture, and producer transport (Glen McBirnie)	Page 10
The 'Widnes' List: a Tale of abortive research (John Howie)	Page 12
Wales on Wheels 2015	Page 14
Book Reviews	Page 17
AGM report	Page 18
Sharing Our Interests	Page 19

# JOURNAL

No. 80

May 2015

[www.rrtha.org.uk](http://www.rrtha.org.uk)

## The 1968 Transport Act and its aftermath

*Our chairman Robert McCloy presented his thoughts on the role of city regions at the March AGM, as illustrated through the intentions of the Transport Act 1968 and subsequent changes.*

### **Matters on the move in the 1960s**

There is currently much talk about the establishment of 'City Regions'. For some it is a knee-jerk reaction to events in Scotland: a realization that as greater devolution occurs outside England, some such similar change must occur in other regions, some with considerably larger populations. However, its genesis is surely to be found elsewhere. Resisting the temptation to forage in the undergrowth of ancient Greece or even further down in time, the focus of this piece is relatively more recent: to the late 1960s. It was a moment when attention was increasingly focusing upon a re-ordering of local government, not only in the United Kingdom, but also on the continent, for example, in Italy. The spur was population migration and mobility which had outgrown structures long in place.

### ***Urgent transport can't wait for local government reform***

In the UK a Labour government was in office with Barbara Castle its feisty transport minister. A Royal Commission had been appointed to recast local government in England and some argued that a reorganization of transport should wait upon the Royal Commission. Not so, contended Barbara Castle: the transport needs and confusion of the conurbations was such that there could be no further delay. In any case, what was now proposed – the establishment of Passenger Transport Authorities [PTAs] in the great centres of population, or city regions- could be adjusted to conform to any new local government structures. **Central to the proposal was the notion that transport was the crucial element in a quest for wider economic well-being which included housing and spatial planning.** Moreover, public road transport was in decline and congestion threatened traffic and economic paralysis.

## **Roads and Road Transport History Association Limited**

### **Chairman:**

**Dr Robert McCloy**

**32 Marina Villas, Swansea, SA1 1FZ**

**[robert.mccloy36@sky.com](mailto:robert.mccloy36@sky.com)**

*to whom general correspondence may be addressed*

### **Journal Editor:**

**Peter White**

**13 Lingwood Gardens, Isleworth, TW7 5LY**

**[whitep1@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:whitep1@westminster.ac.uk)**

*to whom all items for publication should be addressed*

### **Company Secretary and Association Secretary:**

**Philip Kirk**

**The Kithead Trust, De Salis Drive,**

**Hampton Lovett, Droitwich Spa, WR9 0QE**

**[philip@kitheadtrust.org.uk](mailto:philip@kitheadtrust.org.uk)**

### **Membership Secretary:**

**Mrs Pat Campany**

**30 Rectory Lane, Ashted, Surrey, KT21 2BB**

**[patriciacampany@btinternet.com](mailto:patriciacampany@btinternet.com)**

*to whom all membership enquiries should be addressed*

### **Events Organiser:**

**John Ashley**

**6 Cefn Glas, Tycnoch, Swansea, SA2 9GW**

**[john@globespinner.net](mailto:john@globespinner.net)**

### **Research Co-ordinator:**

**Tony Newman**

**16 Hill View, Bryn Y Baal, Mold, CH7 6SL**

**[toekneenewman@googlemail.com](mailto:toekneenewman@googlemail.com)**

### **Academic Advisor:**

**Professor John Armstrong**

**42 Inglis Road, Ealing, London W3 3RL**

**[john@johnarmstrong.eu](mailto:john@johnarmstrong.eu)**

**Roads and Road Transport History Association  
Limited, a company limited by guarantee,  
registered number 5300873**

**Directors: John Ashley, Robert McCloy,  
Michael Phillips**

**Registered Office: De Salis Drive,  
Hampton Lovett, Droitwich Spa,  
WR9 0QE**

**ISSN : 2044-7442**

### *The proposed solution*

Better use of the railway in the conurbations was a vital ingredient and there had to be localized governance to effect a rational integration of the modes of public passenger transport. As noted by Barbara Castle in the Second Reading of the legislation:

*'...a basic principle of my policy [is] that local people should be responsible for transport policy in their own communities. Any objective person reading these parts of the Bill must be struck by the revolutionary degree of devolution of powers for transport and traffic which they represent...But integration [of bus and rail services] must go further than that. In my view, there is absolutely no hope of coping with the traffic explosion in our cities unless those who plan them, who build the highways and the housing estates and site the factories and the overspill developments -- and who manage the traffic -- are also responsible for public transport.'*<sup>1</sup>

The original Passenger Transport Authorities comprised representatives appointed by local authorities wholly or partly within the areas designated, together with up to one-seventh of the total nominated by the Secretary of State, but who were mainly local people and not subject to the Secretary of State's control or instructions. The PTAs would be that instrument and would determine overall policy, including fares, services, and subsidy, and be able to precept upon its constituent rating authorities.<sup>2</sup> It would own the municipal transport operations and be able to purchase local commercial operations, and commission rail services from British Railways. Day-to-day business, however, would be the responsibility of professional managers constituting the Passenger Transport Executive. The Secretary of State [for Transport, in England, and for Scotland and Wales] would designate the areas affected after consultation.

### *The establishment of the first PTAs*

Duly, after local negotiation, the Secretary of State for Transport designated PTAs in four areas within England. The 'vesting dates', on which the

---

<sup>1</sup> Hansard, Transport Bill, Second Reading, column 1294.

<sup>2</sup> Transport Act, 1968, Part ii.

PTEs took over the constituent local authority transport undertakings, were:

- South East Lancashire and North East Cheshire [SELNEC] - 1 October 1969
- West Midlands - 1 November 1969
- Merseyside - 1 December 1969
- Tyneside - 1 January 1970

Subsequently the Secretary of State for Scotland designated one for Greater Glasgow [June 1, 1973]. The Secretary of State for Wales failed to designate any for Wales. As in the case of an earlier initiative embracing the possibility of an area scheme for transport under the Transport Act of 1947, local government in south Wales, a possible area for a passenger transport authority, offered spirited opposition.<sup>3</sup>

#### *The proposed reform of local government*

Local government re-organization, when later enacted, produced Metropolitan Counties substantially corresponding to the designated areas. The Royal Commission's report [Redcliffe-Maud], however, had advocated the establishment of fifty-eight unitary authorities for England based on the rationale that town and country were largely interdependent, that each should be responsible for physical environmental services, namely, planning and transport, with boundaries reflecting geographical population and movement, transport infra-structure and travel patterns; personal services, namely, education, social services, health and housing; with populations in the range 250,000 to one million. For three conurbations there would be a two tier arrangement: metropolitan authorities, for Merseyside, SELNEC, and the West Midlands, with responsibility for planning, transport and general housing policy, and district authorities with responsibility for education and

---

<sup>3</sup> Newport County Borough Council endorsed a joint report of the town clerk, treasurer and transport manager vigorously opposing the possibility of a PTA for south Wales. Earlier, Cardiff City Council had sought to forestall the imposition of an area scheme for south Wales, under the Transport Act, 1947, by proposing an arrangement involving Cardiff and contiguous Monmouthshire parish councils.

personal social services, and other local functions. Astride this structure there would be eight provinces responsible for strategic development plans. However, the Redcliffe-Maud proposals, though surely plausible, were not to be implemented: a casualty of an election, entrenched interests, opportunistic politics, and public conservatism.



*Above: The Manchester Corporation fleet formed the largest element of SELNEC's bus operations. The 'Mancunian' design, unique to the city, was used to extend double-deck one-person operation, is seen here in June 1968 (Peter White)*

#### *The Conservative government's reform of local government*

On the fall of the Labour government the successor Conservative administration significantly revised the plans, retaining in its Local Government Act 1972 a two tier arrangement for England, largely discounting the fundamental rationale of Redcliffe-Maud with its emphasis upon town and country interdependence, and put in place a pragmatic settlement largely free of any overt new rationale, the subject of much confusion and misunderstanding and of subsequent necessary but dilatory attempts at further reform. Reform in Wales followed a parallel process of discussion, settling initially upon a two-tier system which was then replaced by a unitary system, itself shortly to be re-organised by amalgamation.

### *The limited powers of the Metropolitan Counties*

The new metropolitan county councils, which the legislation specified for the conurbations, became the passenger transport authorities. This resulted in expansion of the areas of coverage of existing PTAs – for example, Merseyside to cover Southport and St Helens, West Midlands to cover Coventry, and Tyneside to cover Sunderland (becoming 'Tyne & Wear' in the process. Two new PTAs were created as the result of the new metropolitan counties of West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire being created. SELNEC was logically renamed Greater Manchester (also incorporating Wigan). However, whilst the new metropolitan counties assumed responsibility for strategic town and country planning, main roads, emergency services, civil protection, and waste disposal, they were not responsible for housing, a critical justification for the PTAs in the first place. Nor indeed were they responsible for education and social services, major consumers of transport, and local planning. These latter major and strategic functions remained with the second tier of local government, the likes of the cities of Birmingham, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield, which also had important transport roles as highway authorities and in regulation of taxis. The metropolitan counties were thus seriously compromised from their very beginning. The broader vision – that transport was the means by which a wider purpose of social well-being was to be accomplished – was surely lost.

### *The questionable focus of the PTAs and PTEs*

The main focus was the operation of buses inherited from the constituent lower tier municipalities, related infrastructure, and the promotion of a new generation of trams. In the case of the West Midlands, a major preoccupation was the purchase of 'Midland Red's' bus operation within the metropolitan county. As noted by the Passenger Transport Executive Group [PTEG], in recounting its early history:

*'The PTEs at once faced a massive task of bringing together disparate and, in some cases, physically isolated municipal bus fleets to form a single cohesive unit. Remaining bus operators then had to be considered and decisions made to bring them into an*

*overall centrally-planned and integrated scheme. Rail services also had to be considered in this scheme and many other issues concerning fares, ticketing, corporate identity, control and organization all demanded simultaneous and immediate attention...'*<sup>4</sup>



*Expansion of the area covered by Merseyside in 1974 brought in the previously separate Southport Corporation fleet. Seen here is a Leyland Panther in Broad Street in June 1968 (Peter White)*

In retrospect, this was surely a major distraction leading to the eventual dismemberment of a significant commercial enterprise which had provided a comprehensive public service and had successfully pioneered the design and production of bespoke vehicles of advanced design. The combining of municipal fleets and the absorption of commercial operations had little beneficial effect upon the wider community. Services continued to decline.

However, progress was observed in rail schemes, both in enhancement of existing BR services, and introduction of new light rail systems. In Merseyside, plans for the Loop and Link tunneled extensions of the existing electrified network in central Liverpool were put into effect. In Tyne & Wear, planning of the Metro system led to introduction within the lifetime of the metropolitan county, and likewise the Manchester Metrolink and the Sheffield Supertram came into being in the early 1990s.

---

<sup>4</sup> '25 Years of the Passenger Transport Authorities and Executives', Introduction, Mark Dowd, Chairman Association of Metropolitan Authorities, and David Howard, Retiring Chairman, PTEG, p5.

### *The dissolution of the Metropolitan Counties*

Truth to tell, the metropolitan counties failed to excite the popular imagination and the cluster of functions they discharged, in overall terms, lacked the strategic 'clout' necessary to make them indispensable. A later generation of political commentators would suppose that this was attributable, in part, to the fact that they were not headed by an elected mayor who had hitherto ran for office on a public manifesto. Their dissolution, enacted in 1985,<sup>5</sup> along with that of GLC, at the hands of a conservative government though controversial at the time, provoked no lasting period of mourning. Abolition was effective from 1 April 1986. A notable impact was the removal of substantial funding to bus services where generous support had been provided, e.g. in South Yorkshire. This resulted in large fares increases, prior to the changes which followed bus deregulation from 26 October 1986.

Notwithstanding, the 'limited' function PTAs and PTEs, albeit reconstituted, remained in being. A crucial re-casting of function, however, occurred when the PTAs had to sell their bus operations and were no longer able to determine fares and service patterns either through operating buses directly or through agreements with bus operators in their areas of coverage. They became responsible for provision of tendered services to complement the commercially-registered networks provided by bus operators.<sup>6</sup>

### *The establishment of Combined Authorities*

A Labour government, with transport within a Department for the Environment, sought unsuccessfully a further reform: the establishment of regional councils. Thereafter, however, the Conservatives in office initiated a reform with a pragmatic stamp: the establishment of Combined Authorities.<sup>7</sup> Under the Local Transport Act of 2008 the PTAs were renamed Integrated Transport Authorities from February 2009 and were given strengthened

powers, notably in highway planning albeit they were still obliged to raise income by negotiation with constituent councils rather than by imposing a levy.

A Combined Authority<sup>8</sup> is a legally-recognised entity able to assume the role of an Integrated Transport Authority and Economic Property Board and exercise the powers of its constituent councils that relate to economic development and regeneration and any functions that are available to an Integrated Transport Authority. They can now be created voluntarily where they considered that it was likely to improve transport, economic development and regeneration, pooling appropriate resources and receiving certain delegated functions from the government.

Duly five Combined Authorities have been established: Sheffield City Region [April 1, 2014], North East [April 15, 2014], Greater Manchester [April 1, 2011], Liverpool City Region [April 1, 2014] and West Yorkshire [April 1, 2014]. Discussions are in train in respect of Birmingham and adjacent areas, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Northamptonshire. However, it is in Greater Manchester and the north which promises most development, including a new strategy developed jointly by the government and a partnership of local authorities.<sup>9</sup> The Coalition government has subsequently announced that Greater Manchester will be able to keep 100% of any new business rates to plough back into council services as part of the initiative to improve transport, including a bus franchising regime in Greater Manchester similar to London's. Overall, however, the initiative is being promoted with a comprehensive rationale that includes health and science in northern cities. The deal is conditional upon formal assent in a referendum to the election of a mayor.

---

<sup>8</sup> Local Transport Act, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> The Transport for the North partnership consists of the five northern city regions together with Hull and the Humber, its vision being 'to maximise the economic, social, and environmental performance of the north of England by ensuring that it has the most effective forms of connectivity within and between its constituent parts, and extending out into national and international networks and markets.'

---

<sup>5</sup> Local Government Act, 1985

<sup>6</sup> Transport Act, 1985.

<sup>7</sup> Local Democracy, Economic Development and construction Act, 2009.

Additionally, it confirmed arrangements with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority giving it greater autonomy over skills, apprenticeship and transport. However, it failed to get the same powers as Greater Manchester in the absence of agreeing to have an elected mayor.<sup>10</sup>

#### *The re-emergence of regional structures*

In contemplating the current emergence of city regions it must surely be appropriate to reflect upon the PTAs and PTEs, yet with us but transfigured, and the rise and fall of the metropolitan counties. Matters are proceeding with pace with broad agreement reached concerning a Greater Manchester with an elected mayor and extensive devolved powers much going beyond Barbara Castle's blueprint. The successful expansion of Metrolink [the tram system] and its beneficial impact upon the region and the fact that the ten local authorities have sunk their differences and collaborated in this venture, has been a vital spur.

#### *A lesson to be heeded*

In retrospect, the separation of vehicle ownership and their immediate operation from the task of identifying public transport needs and commissioning services would seem to have been largely beneficial. As in the cases of the London Passenger Transport Board in 1933 and the PTAs in 1968, where this divide did not exist, the preoccupations of the engineer may often have displaced the passenger/ customer from their preeminence. Once the division had been made, in London and the PTAs, the temptation was possibly removed and the focus upon the strategic priority was more easily fulfilled. The significant splitting of functions was, however, part of a programme designed to curb cost and make the market more competitive. The model chosen was essentially that found in the United States. An alternative, the German *Verkehrsverbund*, might have had greater utility where the fundamental starting point was that in a given area the passenger would be given an integrated offer with one ticket for all modes involving a multiplicity of operators, although it is also worth noting that the Travelcard concept was pioneered by PTEs in the 1970s (notably

West Midlands), some years before the concept was applied in London from the early 1980s.

#### *The separation of strategy from management*

Another factor was also in the 1968 exercise: overall management was increasingly no longer the preserve of either engineers or transport managers. Whilst this may well be the source of regret and even anger on the part of enthusiasts and the displaced – and, in no way, disparages the achievements of these professionals operating in an earlier world – the wider task, the development of prosperous communities - needs the harnessing of Olympian skills and vision. Needless to say, it is not to be presumed that these are necessarily to be found in the ranks of accountants, or even elected mayors....

#### *The restoration of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms*

In all this, it is, of course, possible to spot a reversion to the restoration of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. The traces of earlier jurisdictions are still evident and it is possible to recognize in some of the newer authorities echoes of the past, for example, the North East with Northumbria; Greater Manchester and Transport for the North, with The Council of the North or even the Archbishopric of York; and the West Midlands with Mercia. Such reversions might, of course, owe something to the distinctive genetic population pools in particular areas that remain significant in spite of industrial revolution and much else.<sup>11</sup>

**Robert McCloy**

---

<sup>10</sup> Budget announcement, March 18, 2015.

---

<sup>11</sup> The Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics, reported in 'the Times', March 19, 2015.

# Municipal Pride

*As a counterpoint to Bob McCloy's paper on the 1968 Act and its aftermath, Roger Atkinson offers some thoughts: "Bob's address stirred several supportive and informative contributions from the audience; he had clearly broached a topic within living memory. There was one solitary voice which dissented – mine! I did not disagree with the 'holistic' aspiration, but very strongly gave no approval to large regional bodies. For the last two years and more, I have been writing a book entitled Blackout, Austerity and Pride – Life in the 1940s. The book has had a long gestation, but ought finally to appear about May 2015. It has a chapter on 'Municipal Pride' which sets out my case. If your Editor will permit, I offer that chapter here:*

Municipal pride did have a place in my life and is of enough contrast with the present day to be worth not merely recall, but definite emphasis. A sense of not just local pride, but actual respect for one's local authority was engendered in the 1940s through several influences. People travelled far less widely; branches of families were more likely to live in the same area. Public utilities were mainly locally controlled – council houses, parks, markets, gas, water, electricity, buses or trams, refuse collection and sewage were the principal ones. Two big exceptions, nationally organised, were the postal services and telephones, both of which were controlled by the General Post Office. And the railways had been 'grouped' since 1923 into the 'big four': LMSR, LNER, GWR and SR. Other exceptions were main roads, the police and schooling, which were controlled at county or county borough level.

Since the 1890s, local administration in England and Wales outside London had depended on a structure with which everyone was familiar by the 1940s; it had been in force for over 50 years. One's address lay in a long-established county, many of which had ardently loyal inhabitants, Yorkshiremen, Lancastrians, Devonians immediately come to mind. But many army regiments were similarly county-based, for example the Leicestershire Regiment, the Gloucestershires, the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers. In Scotland the system was broadly similar. In Ireland, in the 1890s, the entire country was under British rule and the Local Government (Ireland) Act of 1898 established another county-based system throughout the

island until the break-away in 1919 of what formally became the Irish Free State in 1922.

But before we turn to the factors which have diminished municipal pride since the 1940s, we need to look at the period when, I would suggest, it was at its apex, the 1890s through to 1914. Consider two examples, one very large, London, and one seemingly insignificant, Todmorden.

## *The London case*

London had, and still does have, two different administrations, the City of London Corporation controlling the City and, in the 1940s, the London County Council responsible for the rest. "The rest" was smaller than Greater London is today. Large tracts of what we now think of as London lay in the counties of Essex, Middlesex, Surrey and Kent. The City of London Corporation continues to this day. The LCC has gone through various reorganisations and has been transformed into the huge area of the Greater London Authority.

The City of London Corporation is of very ancient origins, but deserves mention in this Municipal Pride section because it is the owner and provider of several remarkable parks, forests or sites of common land widely enjoyed and prized by Londoners, but that lie far outside the City of London itself. These include, Epping Forest in Essex, Burnham Beeches in Buckinghamshire and, in London, Hampstead Heath.

These superb areas were being recognised as such before the end of the nineteenth century. The Great Western Railway put on a service of horse buses from Slough Station to Burnham Beeches in the summer of 1889; these continued in subsequent summers. The railway company's motor buses, running from Slough to Beaconsfield via Burnham, replaced the horse bus service in 1904 (a service of 13 journeys each way on Whit Monday 1904 was unable to cope with the demand). Epping Forest was the destination of several summer Sunday bus services put on by the London General Omnibus Co. Ltd. even before 1914.

The London County Council had been set up in 1888. It manifested from a very early date many socialist tendencies; indeed, it was an example of their being successfully put into practice in several fields. Some things started to go wrong

later on, but in the period 1890-1914, I would suggest that the LCC was a model authority of which Londoners had every right to be proud. It sought rapidly to acquire the numerous company-owned horse tramways in the London area and to electrify them. It then provided good, cheap services and punctiliously adequate terms of employment for the tramwaymen. The absorption of the LCC Tramways by the all-embracing London Passenger Transport Board (incorporating the underground, trams and buses) in July 1933 was not universally popular. However, despite the loss of its tramways, the LCC remained in the 1940s and 1950s a respected provider of services of many kinds – the use that I made of its excellent evening classes is referred to later in this book.

### *Todmorden*

By contrast, Todmorden, a small Yorkshire municipality on the Lancashire border, did not build a tramway system, but it did start motor bus services in 1907. After the 'big four' railway companies had acquired powers in 1928 to run bus services (as the railways were facing strong competition from the rapidly developing motor bus), they took an interest in four municipal operations. Todmorden was one of these. The London, Midland & Scottish Railway took a 50% holding in the Todmorden Corporation undertaking and, in 1929, the Todmorden Joint Omnibus Committee was formed. By the 1940s, the TJOC buses, in a distinctive dark green livery, provided services which its citizens could, and did with pride, acknowledge as 'theirs', to Hebden Bridge, Bacup, Burnley, Keighley and on Saturdays, to Rochdale. I cite Todmorden's bus undertaking as a typical example of a locally provided service in which not only the local people took pride, but also its management and some of the staff did so. They could identify themselves as a part of this entity and worked hard to maintain public esteem.

### *Legislative changes*

We turn now to the decline of municipal pride. Under the system of local government that prevailed from the 1890s, within the counties, some larger towns and cities had county borough status and were independent of the county councils. Other large towns were boroughs, and the remaining area of the county was divided into Urban Districts or Rural Districts. This

meant that there were nearly 1,400 local authorities in England and Wales outside London in 1972, when the Local Government Bill, which initiated the present local government structure, was before parliament. The new structure, which took effect from April 1974, reduced the number of local authorities to 422. These have since been considerably further reduced. We have been assured, on each change, that this has all been in the interest of efficiency, elimination of parochialism, great reduction in costs and that it will give us visionary councillors, cognisant of the wide perspectives of their areas.

For example, under the local government reorganisation of April 1974, the new County of West Yorkshire was created. Under that County there were five Metropolitan Districts: Bradford, Leeds, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield. Just over 50 individual local authorities, County Boroughs, Boroughs, Urban and Rural Districts were absorbed and abolished. As well as smaller authorities such as Baildon, Bingley, Ilkley, Silsden and Shipley, a town as big as Keighley became part of Bradford. Todmorden (and Hebden Bridge as well) became part of Calderdale; so did Halifax. Shelf had been in the Urban District of Queensbury and Shelf, which was now divided between Bradford and Calderdale. The loss of local identity was huge, and bitterly felt by some people; others accepted it as progress; but large numbers have merely lost all interest, ceased to vote or to have any pride in their, no longer local and accessible, government.

One still finds local pride in sports clubs, very strongly in the case of football. But in the 1940s, I would contend that the towns themselves generated pride and had individuality. Bolton, Bury and Rochdale were sharply contrasting towns in Lancashire. Perhaps I am wronging it by recalling Bury as the town where butchers selling tripe abounded. Bolton I remember from that period for Tognarelli's ice cream parlour – which I dimly recall as an upstairs establishment. Perhaps I single that feature out because Tognarelli, in the 1920s, had been a bus proprietor operating a service to Manchester. A Tognarelli ticket is illustrated here; but I stress, from the 1920s, not the 1940s.





*J.R. Tognarelli put on an express bus service Bolton–Manchester–Chadderton in 1927. He sold out in December 1929 to five parties jointly, the Corporations of Bolton, Salford, Manchester and Oldham and the Lancashire United Transport & Power Co Ltd. Mr Tognarelli had been challenging municipal might, with some success. This ticket, dated on the back “OC 11 27”, is likely to have been sold at an office, not on the bus. The two distinct clippings show that it was used both ways.*

No, to be truthful, I also remember Bolton in the 1940s for its magnificent Edwardian trams, with moustachioed drivers on open platforms, swathed in layers of coats and oilskins, standing imperiously, turning their controllers and their brakes. Rochdale conveyed to me an air of being a cut above Bury and Bolton, perhaps because it no longer had trams. Bury had large, but very uninteresting ones, running between Walmersley and Tottington. Bury’s salvation lay in the town being served also by the buses of Ramsbottom Urban District Council. Bolton, Bury and Rochdale were three different, distinct Lancashire towns; they still survive as Metropolitan Districts, but for most practical administrative purposes they are now simply subsumed into Greater Manchester. Nowadays it is difficult to even comprehend that a place as small as Ramsbottom could have been running its own local buses and providing its community with a service in which it could either take pride or know to whom to complain if it found fault.

Furthermore, it was not only the organisation of local government, which placed responsibility in the heart of the town itself – at the Town Hall – but the individuality of their principal shops that also contributed to municipal pride: Brown, Muff’s in Bradford, Beattie’s in Wolverhampton, Grays’ in Birmingham, Kendal Milne’s in Manchester are all part of my childhood or early post-war memories. Now, most of them have

been swallowed by larger groups such as Debenhams and House of Fraser. Shopping localities have not wholly disappeared, indeed Halifax has, post-war, brought back to life its magnificent Piece Hall Market.

And, virtually as I was writing this paragraph, a Stagecoach bus driver in Chester told me that he found it both financially worthwhile and an interesting monthly excursion for him to drive to Bury market, 50 miles each way, for the variety of its stalls, particularly butchers. My remark in an earlier paragraph about Bury of sixty-odd years ago was not all tripe!

Yet, sadly, we can legitimately talk nowadays of ‘clone towns’, with a High Street that could be in any town, McDonald’s, Starbucks, KFC, Primark, B&Q, PC World, BHS, Marks & Spencer, Tesco and at least half a dozen similarly familiar names; and other shops closed and empty. By the 1940s, the process of national chains had already begun, with the Maypole Dairy, Montague Burton, Woolworths, Pearks Stores, WH Smith, Salmon & Gluckstein, tobacconists, and Boots the Chemists, but there still remained some strong local individuality.

Banks and building societies were smaller or more local; banking hours, however, were limited and supremely inconvenient, 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. and there were no cash points, nor credit nor debit cards. If one had a bank account, one had to write cheques (often having to endorse them by adding one’s name and address on the back of the cheque) for most purchases priced in pounds. However, most people did not have a bank account, apart from one at the Post Office Savings Bank. Coins (in ascending value order) were the farthing, halfpenny, penny, threepenny bit, sixpence, shilling, two shillings (or florin) and half-crown (2/6d). Prices involving farthings were unusual, but had not wholly disappeared. Banknotes were 10/- and £1. White £5 notes also existed; I doubt that I even saw one before 1950.

I turn to Letchworth Garden City. I was privileged, as a teenager, to be at school there. It was, and remains, a town for connoisseurs, rightly calling itself “The First Garden City”. It was inspired by the ideas of Ebenezer Howard and the town developed from about 1908 onwards. In 1944/5 I enjoyed a wartime delight, or perhaps I should term it a privilege – the legal

requirement for 'fire watching'. St Christopher School had to provide a fire-watching team for its premises overnight each night. One male and one female member of staff would be on duty from late evening to an early hour of the morning (my recollection is imprecise), relieved then by a senior boy and senior girl. This rota duty came round four or five times, or perhaps more, per term. By 1944/5, the chance of a fire caused by an air raid, or even by V-bombs, was very slender, and I admit that about 6.0 a.m., I liked to break the law. I would tell the girl with whom I was on duty that I was going out for a bike ride, and she could look after any incendiary bombs single-handed. I left her to her studies or whatever occupation she had devised for herself to stay awake and combat boredom. (I do not think that the BBC broadcast overnight, until a farming programme came on about 6 a.m., and the children had no wireless set anywhere in the school anyway.) I found it glorious cycling through a sleeping Letchworth and up to Norton, then back again by different roads as the town was waking up. But it was not only the time of day; it was savouring the concept of the garden city that was so enthralling.

More than 65 years later, a visit to Letchworth with my daughter Catherine and her partner Rolf, re-conjured the same excitement. As soon as we got off the train, Catherine, who likes to have done her preparatory homework, showed me the Spirella corset factory and introduced me to other aspects of this well-preserved town, now passing 100 years old, that I had not unearthed, even on my early morning cycle rides. Then, Catherine, Rolf and I, on the same day, took a short bus ride to Hitchin to see the historic buildings of this neighbouring town and delighted in seeing the refurbished dark-green cabmen's shelter on the main square. At the end of the afternoon, we caught a train to Cambridge to stay there overnight. A delightful trio of towns that convincingly demonstrate that all our urban landscape is not yet complete uniformity.

#### **Roger Atkinson**

*(as a footnote one might add that a strong sense of local identity can still be found in some cities, clearly evident in a recent visit with a student group to Nottingham, seeing both main bus operators – City Transport still largely in public ownership – the trams, and the City Council itself. Ed)*

## **The changing face of British cement manufacture, and producer transport**

*Glen McBirnie's talk to the Association in October 2012 formed the basis of an illustrated paper in issue 71 (February 2013) of this Journal, with further illustrations appearing in issue 73 (August 2013). Here he gives some further views on developments in this sector.*

As a relatively new member of this Association, with serious interests in cement transport arising from over twenty-two years' experience as a sales lorry driver employed by Rugby Cement and as author of two books on this subject, I wish to comment on recent developments in this sector. The Rugby Cement Company operated a multitude of lorry types over a period of 61 years.



*A Seddon Atkinson 8-wheel bulk cement tanker in the Castle Cement colours of red and ivory, with white (author's collection).*

Since the start of the present century, foreign ownership has expanded substantially in this sector. First to go was Blue Circle Cement, its canary yellow livery disappearing completely in favour of an all-white colour, which in time would apply to all British cement transport. LaFarge of France are responsible for all former Blue Circle cement transport, along with Redland activities. Rugby Cement, my old employer, was finally acquired by RMC Holdings after two earlier failed attempts dating from the early 1970s, due to our then chairman/managing director holding them off since they (RMC) could not match our share price. RMC's ownership saw

the total rebuild of Rugby cement works into a mammoth undertaking for the manufacture of cement, but shortly after the rebuild was completed RMC themselves were entirely bought out by Cemex of Mexico, reputed to be number three in the world of cement-making.



*A Volvo artic of Cemex with belly tank, in Rugby orange livery, with a white tank, and Cemex logo at the rear (author's collection).*

Cemex only wanted the cement manufacturing plants of RMC plus all the ready-mixer plants. RMC block paving plants plus all rubbish/salvage operations were sold off, together with quarries not required by Cemex. The scale of the new Rugby works was designed to produce cement originally produced at the works in Chinnor (Oxfordshire), Southam and Rugby itself in Warwickshire. In addition to Rugby, Cemex operates South Ferriby in North Lincs on the River Humber, together with a new facility at Tilbury on the River Thames. However, all bagged cement operations are controlled from Rugby works by Wincanton.

Tunnel Cement is the oldest of the former Castle Cement companies, who started cement production at West Thurrock in Essex in 1912. This company forged a business arrangement with AEC lorries which would last for 37 years. Ribble Cement operated their own cement works on the banks of the River Ribble in Lancashire. Ketton Cement of Rutland were for many years a subsidiary company of Thos Ward of Albion Works in Sheffield. Clyde Cement in Scotland is believed to have had a tie-up with Tunnel, but its exact form is not known: 'Caledonian Cement' was a trade name.

In the late 1970s, all of these companies lost their independent liveries, being replaced by the

parent company colours of crimson/ivory. Here again, a tie-up with Heidelberg Cement of Germany resulted in this name being carried on all Castle Cement vehicles. In recent years the Castle Cement name has disappeared completely, being bought out by Hanson Industries.

The principal types of vehicles and liveries of the main companies may be summarised as follows:

- Tunnel Cement. AEC up to 1976, Volvo afterwards. Pre-war livery grey with green, postwar grey with three red bands, later on rosy red prior to Castle Cement colours of crimson/ivory.
- Ribble Cement. ERF, Leyland, Albion, Seddon/Atkinson and Foden. Livery of grey upper surfaces, dark green lower.
- Ketton Cement. Leyland, Maudslay, Dodge, Commer and ERF, with Volvo later. Livery sand/red. Under Thos Ward green or yellow, and Castle Cement crimson/ivory.
- Clyde Cement. Bedford TM, Leyland, ERF and Volvo. Livery white with dark/light green bands, and subsequently Castel Cement colours.
- Blue Circle Cement. Foden, Leyland, Scammell, plus all British lighter vehicles. Livery yellow with blue rings, later LaFarge white.
- Rugby Cement. Thornycroft, Commer, ERF, Seddon/Atkinson, Foden, Ford ET6, Dodge A6, Bedford KM. Livery reddish orange/black lettering, then white under Cemex.

Limited supplies of clay-bearing material exist at Cemex Southam quarry in Warwickshire. Chalk slurry, essential in manufacture of cement, comes from the Kensworth Quarry in Bedfordshire by 24-hour pipeline. Sufficient supplies of both materials exist at South Ferriby as far as I know. Barrington quarry was shut down by Cemex not long after takeover, although beyond this century and possibly into the next century more than sufficient supplies of both materials, were to be seen there – its vast scale was evident to me from

a visit with the former quarry manager John Drayton.

Looking at long-term cement-making in Britain under foreign ownership it is hard to visualise what the future holds. Certainly, with reference to the Cemex operations in Warwickshire as it stands sufficient supplies of clay-bearing material are there for the taking, but I am not certain about the supplies elsewhere, as new housing estates cover much of existing sources of supply.

Glen McBirnie

---

## The 'Widnes' List: A tale of abortive research

While researching in Widnes Corporation municipal archives a fellow enthusiast came across an intriguing three page document listing basic details of 81 Ribble vehicles. With the aid of the PSV Circle Fleet History and a great deal of analysis, the late Wilf Dodds and myself, identified it as a definitive list of **all non-CK registered** vehicles operating in the Ribble fleet at the time of its compilation which had subsequently been updated by the *partial* deletion of some entries. The format is peculiar in that it is sequential registration number, irrespective of the preceding letters. The key to the compilation date are the entries for vehicles of Burford and Halley makes; the only examples ever operated, coming with the Waterloo & Crosby business in October 1928.

The variety of Local Authorities represented by the registration letters reflects the rapid growth of the company which, in itself, mirrored the major changes happening in the bus industry generally.

In 1928 Ribble was still expanding, just as it had done every year since its creation in 1919 as the following statistics published in *Motor Transport* indicate:

Year	No. of buses	Route miles
1919	5	6
1922	29	128
1923	41	177
1924	94	255
1925	120	320
1928	361	636

Ribble started in Preston in 1919 by acquiring the routes and vehicles of J Hodson. From this base it gradually introduced routes to adjacent towns and villages; first into the Chorley and Wigan areas then into East Lancashire, The Fylde and South Lancashire. By the end of 1927 the limits of operation were defined by Keswick, Skipton, Blackpool, Liverpool and Widnes. The company's strategy had been to introduce individual routes into an area and gradually consolidate by acquiring the incumbent local operators generating rapid growth as shown in the table above.

By the beginning of 1928 fourteen operators had been taken over; twelve of them being represented by vehicles in the *Widnes List*. Although many of these were of Leyland manufacture, they were not all models consistent with Ribble purchasing policy and were supplemented by other makes producing a very mixed fleet which included AEC, Daimler, Karrier; Vulcan, Guy and Thorneycroft.

Additional data were added to the list from other sources (principally PSV Circle publications) to produce the table included herein – the sequence of takeovers followed the allocation of fleet numbers. Chorley Auto Services was first, in 1925, followed by Kenyon Coleman & Robinson (KCR) Blackburn area bus operations. The following year it was the turn of Bretherton of Ormskirk, the well-established large Lancashire Industrial Motors (t/a Pendle Bus Company) and Pilot of Preston who also provided the site of the new Tithebarn Street bus station. 1927 saw over 100 vehicles added from the fleets of Collingwood Motors of Liverpool (which gave the company their first experience of long distance 'express' services), the Fylde operations of Smith (t/a Pilgrim) of Elswick, the bus activities of Webster, Wigan, and the extensive

operations of Lancashire & Westmorland Motor Services (as part of the rationalisation of BAT



Above: One of the vehicles included on the 'Widnes' list, acquired when the Lancashire & Westmorland business was amalgamated with Ribble in December 1927. RM1521 was one of a number of AEC Renowns. Being a non-standard (to Ribble) type it was sold in 1930 (Omnibus Society)

companies). A few other vehicles acquired that year came from the Belford Bus Company, Darwen. More followed in 1928 from Eccleston Motor Services and Waterloo & Crosby Motor Services. Two operators, who provided no vehicles, were both Preston based; Tra Bon (1923) and John Bull (1925).

### Garages acquired in takeovers

As well as increasing the fleet and area served by Ribble many of the companies taken over provided garages, some of which were utilised for the next fifty years.

Garstang (ex Pilot)	1926
Blackburn (ex Pendle)	1926
Clitheroe (ex Pendle)	1926
Elswick (ex Pilgrim)	1927
Ambleside (Wansfell Tower)	1927
Whalley (ex Pendle)	1927
Skipton (ex Old Bill Motors)	1928
Eccleston (ex Eccleston MS)	1928

The *Widnes List* thus provides a 'snapshot' of early Ribble history. Although it does not look very official the contents could only have been produced by the company, presumably for use by officials in the various municipalities where services operated, to help them identify *bona fide* vehicles. In the case of Widnes which only had a

Sunday service in 1928, requiring a single vehicle, such detail would seem excessive! It is doubtful if a similar list existed for other acquired vehicles as these all had CK registrations and would have been 'assumed' to be the responsibility of Ribble.

Below: Another vehicle acquired from Lancashire & Westmorland was TD4760 (left) which, being almost identical to Ribble's own LSC Lions lasted until 1937.



After completing this article I revisited the original list as I had a series of doubts. Not least was my inability to reconcile it to other published information and confidently give it a precise date. The unusual 'numeric' listing also seemed strange. I think, therefore, it is an **extract from another document** compiled, and 'updated', by someone within Widnes Corporation. It is likely that the original would have been prepared by Ribble, as they were obliged to file vehicle details as part of their licence permit in many areas, but no example has turned up to date. The next quest is to see if one remains in any Council archive as this would be an invaluable source.

The moral of this exercise is that you can undertake a considerable amount of research based on a false premise as, the study of this *Widnes list* which proved not to be an authentic original document. However, a lot of the information collected will be useful in my further researches.

*Acknowledgements: PSV Circle, Ron Philips, David Grisenthwaite*

### John Howie

*The 1928 timetable for Wigan – Roby Mill service, Ribble's only operation into Widnes, is on the next page.*

# The KENNELS, 2 Johnson St. (Off Gordon St.), SOUTHPORT. HOME FOR DOGS, CATS, ETC. — EVERY CARE TAKEN. — ACCOMMODATION ALL BREEDS

## Route 21a. WIGAN, UPHOLLAND and ROBY MILL. (Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only).

	X	X	F	S	S		X	X	F	S	S
Wigan Hope Street .....dep.	8 35	12 35	2 35	5 0	8 45	Roby Mill, Star Inn .....dep.	9 8	1 8	3 8	5 38	9 18
Wigan, Union Bridge .....	8 43	12 43	2 43	5 8	8 53	Roby Mill, Fox Inn .....	9 10	1 10	3 10	5 40	9 20
Pemberton, Black Bull Inn....	8 49	12 49	2 49	5 14	8 59	Upholland College .....	9 12	1 12	3 12	5 42	9 22
Orrell Post, Stag Inn .....	8 54	12 54	2 54	5 19	9 4	Upholland Vicarage.....	9 14	1 14	3 14	5 44	9 24
Upholland, Baxter's Stores....	8 58	12 58	2 58	5 23	9 8	Upholland, Baxter's Stores....	9 16	1 16	3 16	5 46	9 26
Upholland Vicarage .....	9 0	1 0	3 0	5 25	9 10	Orrell Post, Stag Inn ..... arr.	9 20	1 20	3 20	5 50	9 30
Upholland College .....	9 2	1 2	3 2	5 27	9 12	Pemberton, Black Bull Inn....	9 26	1 26	3 26	5 56	9 36
Roby Mill, Fox Inn .....	9 4	1 4	3 4	5 29	9 14	Wigan, Union Bridge .....	9 32	1 32	3 32	6 2	9 42
Roby Mill, Star Inn ..... arr.	9 6	1 6	3 6	5 31	9 16	Wigan, Hope Street.....	9 40	1 40	3 40	6 10	9 50

Passengers are only allowed to board or leave the Company's buses in the Borough of Wigan at Hope Street Terminus; L. & Y. Railway Station, Wallgate; Canal Bridge, Wallgate; near the Saddle Inn, Newtown; Union Bridge, Newtown; Half-Way House, Pemberton, and Black Bull Inn, Pemberton.

## Route 25. ST. HELENS, Sutton Manor, Farnworth and WIDNES. (Sundays only).

	F	F	F	F	F		F	F	F	F	F
Wigan, Hope Street .....dep.	1220	2 20	4 20	6 20	8 20	Widnes, Free Library .....dep.	2 30	4 30	6 30	8 30	10 30
St. Helens, Library .....	1 25	3 25	5 25	7 25	9 25	Widnes, Highfield Road.....	2 35	4 35	6 35	8 35	10 35
Peasley Cross, Griffin Inn....	1 31	3 31	5 31	7 31	9 31	Farnworth, Black Horse .....	2 41	4 41	6 41	8 41	10 41
Marshall's Cross, Mill Lane ..	1 37	3 37	5 37	7 37	9 37	Fair View .....	2 43	4 43	6 43	8 43	10 43
Clock Face, Railway Station ..	1 41	3 41	5 41	7 41	9 41	Union Lane (for Bold) .....	2 47	4 47	6 47	8 47	10 47
Sutton Manor, Colliery .....	1 46	3 46	5 46	7 46	9 46	Sutton Manor, Colliery .....	2 50	4 50	6 50	8 50	10 50
Union Lane (for Bold) .....	1 48	3 48	5 48	7 48	9 48	Clock Face, Railway Station ..	2 55	4 55	6 55	8 55	10 55
Fair View .....	1 52	3 52	5 52	7 52	9 52	Marshall's Cross, Mill Lane ...	2 59	4 59	6 59	8 59	10 59
Farnworth, Black Horse ..... arr.	1 55	3 55	5 55	7 55	9 55	Peasley Cross, Griffin Inn .... arr.	3 5	5 5	7 5	9 5	11 5
Widnes, Highfield Road .....	2 1	4 1	6 1	8 1	10 1	St. Helens, Library .....	3 12	5 12	7 12	9 12	11 12
Widnes, Free Library .....	2 7	4 7	6 7	8 7	10 7	Wigan, Hope Street .....	4 19	6 19	8 19	10 19	12 19

X Fridays and Saturdays only.

F Sundays only

S Saturdays and Sundays only.

## Wales on Wheels 2015

Wales on Wheels 2015 is now into its third year. WoW is a joint event supported by the R&RTHA, National Waterfront Museum (part of the National Museum of Wales), Swansea Museum, and Swansea Bus Museum.

The first event in 2013 exceeded our expectations, with a fine turnout of vehicles and a programme of talks featuring Sir Peter Hendy, Transport for London Commissioner. Visiting members were treated to a visit by double-decker to Swansea Museum's Collections Centre and Swansea Bus Museum. A report of that event, and the paper by Sir Peter Hendy, appeared in issue 73 (August 2013) of this journal.

WoW has now settled into an opportunity for vehicle owners and supporters to share their enthusiasm with the public and each other. The 'Wheels' in WoW is broad, including horse and rail transport, two, three, four and more wheels, memorabilia, tools, and activities for children. We are bidding for glorious weather for the third year running.

Wales on Wheels 2015 is on Saturday 16 May, in and around the National Waterfront Museum and Dylan Thomas Square in Swansea Marina.

Participation and entry is free. There will be an informal dinner on Saturday evening for R&RTHA members and guests. Any members wishing to attend should contact John Ashley, Events Organiser, for up to date information. [www.rrtha.org.uk/events](http://www.rrtha.org.uk/events)

Participants confirmed so far are:

Swansea Bus Museum, Ryland Classics, Swansea Museum truck and bus, Classic Vehicle Enthusiasts Group, Swansea Motorcycle Club, Skewen and Pontarddulais Classic Car Clubs, Swansea Fire Service, Swansea Wheelwrights, Pink Cadillac, University of Wales Trinity St David's School of Applied Design (with modern racing cars), Tools for Self Reliance, Wallace and Gromit van and motorcycle with sidecar, Mametz Woods Classic Car Run 2016, Sinclair C5 with pedals for kids, Penydarren Steam Locomotive accompanied by Mr Trevithick himself

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZCfXIZGFhc>

Gilbern Club, Swansea Railway Modellers Group, Mouse Shell Mileage Marathon record holding car (see it on Top Gear - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aD4V0SeKmc>).

Photos of the 2013 event are at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/96706702@N06/>.

## Obituary: Roger Benton

We regret to record the death of Association member Roger Benton on 29 January. He was aged 74. He was best known as cinefilms archivist at the National Tramway Museum, but in recent years he had emerged as a tramway historian of note. He was a member of the Association from its earliest days, and took part in the first symposium at the NTM in 1993. More recently, the Journal has carried the fruits of his research on the employment of women on tramways in World War One, and he had carried out a major study into the finances of the Dearne District Light Railways in Yorkshire, the last local authority tramway venture of the 1920s. When published, this is likely to show considerable differences from previously-held views on this undertaking.

He was unmarried and had no living relatives, so it fell to the Tramway Museum Society to arrange his funeral on 3 March. Roger had been a local government officer, and later a driver and instructor on the Sheffield Supertram, besides working at the Museum. He was also local representative for the Light Rail Transit Association. Fittingly, the reception after the well-attended funeral service was at the Sheffield Transport Club.

Laura Waters, NTM curator, is now co-ordinating discussions on how best to continue the work begun so ably by Roger on film archives and historical records.

**Ian Yearsley**

## John Hibbs remembered

Association member Maurice Doggett was prompted by recollections of John Hibbs in issue 79 to add a few words on the same theme.

"I was living in Ipswich in early 1953, I think it was, and attended an informal meeting of the Omnibus Society in Cambridge at which John was present, together with Arthur Lainson, the managing director of Premier Travel. Although John was still in his late twenties, right from the start I was impressed with his knowledge, even though I was only beginning to understand the whys and wherefores of the road passenger transport industry.

"I didn't meet John again until the R&RTHA was formed, following which I attended meetings, initially representing the PSV Circle – I was secretary at the time – and subsequently as an individual member. Until then, I was not aware of John's progressive career, but it became clear at the various meetings in Coventry that he was a man of deep convictions and could express his knowledge and views in a clear and concise manner. I was saddened to learn of the passing of a man who could be, and is, generally missed."

A tribute book 'John Hibbs – his Journey by Bus, Coach and Train' (ISBN 978 1 907953 63 7), compiled and edited by Michael Goldstein and Cyrrhian Macrae, is obtainable from Twig Books <[www.twigbooks.com](http://www.twigbooks.com)> at £9.99 and all profits will go to one of John's charities. It is also available to download to computers, Kindle etc. at £5.00 from the same source.

---

## Research Co-ordinator's Report for 2015 AGM... and a few thoughts from Roger Atkinson

*At the time of the AGM on 28 March, the Research Co-ordinator, Tony Newman, was still recovering from a recent eye operation. Roger Atkinson stepped in at short notice to offer the Meeting something for discussion, but it was not an update on Tony's recent activities.*

Tony emphasises that he is hopeful of swift recovery and is perfectly willing to continue as the Roads & Road Transport History Association's Research Co-ordinator. Nonetheless, this is a time to take stock of the archives that the Research Co-ordinator has himself been accumulating over the lengthy period of his service. Philip Kirk, our Secretary, hopes to make a day trip to Mold in the near future to see Tony, to acquaint himself with what Tony has brought together and how R&RTHA members (and possibly others) may access it.

I must interpose at this point that a steady, but small, flow of members' enquiries or requests for help already reaches Tony each year and he hopes that he deals adequately with them. Indeed, in my personal view, it is certain that he does and, moreover, that he then includes in his periodic Research Co-ordinator Reports in *R&RTHA Journal* any wider dispersal of the information that seems desirable. May I cite an example from my own experience?

In a book that I am myself writing on life in the 1940s, which ranges far more widely than purely the road transport field, I have included a paragraph on Mrs Collins, a washerwoman in Shelf, near Halifax, whom I look back to as being, in some ways, a lady who influenced my broader education. Over a period of years, she told of various family misfortunes and how she surmounted them, the most tragic being the death, shortly after the war, of her eldest son who to her great pride had become a Hebble bus driver. On a quiet, empty, straight road, on the approach to Halifax a fire engine had got out of control and smashed into his bus, killing him.

I had realised that I ought to spend a day going to Halifax library to search through two or three years of the *Halifax Courier* to find the newspaper report which there must have been. But I did not make that effort. However, Tony's Research Co-ordinator's Report in *R&RTHA Journal No.77* (August 2014) included details of a new monthly subscription access to the British Newspaper Archive. I subscribed, and within minutes had on my computer a report of the accident in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*. It gave a date, (about which I had been very vague), it confirmed the place, about which my memory had been accurate; it told me other detail of which I had been unaware. It turned a paragraph in my intended book from one based on fallible memory of what I had been told more than 65 years ago into something, not one whit less tragic, but now firmly documented.

As I said at the outset, I am not telling you anything new in this Report, but I am trying to use it to reinforce your appreciation of the value of the huge amount of quiet work that Tony has been doing over the years.

---

## Book Reviews

**Charles Dickens's Networks. Public transport and the novel** by Johnathan H. Grossman (Oxford University Press 2012) focuses on a 'trio of road novels' by Dickens: *The Posthumous papers of the Pickwick Club* (1836-37); *Personal Adventures of Master Humphrey: the Old Curiosity Shop* (1840-41); and *Little Dorrit* (1855-57). For a reader prepared to face complex arguments presented in the current style of academic discourse this is a most rewarding work. Pages 1-218 comprise three chapters on the selected works, with an introduction and short but important Afterword. Pages 219-243 give not only references but also develop the author's arguments further. The volume is completed by an index (pp 245-256).

Pickwick's travels were set in the late 1820s, by which time John Palmer's development of the mail coach system into regular stages, technical improvements of coach suspension systems and dished iron-rimmed wheels, horse-breeding, the



turnpike system and macadamisation for road surfaces had maximised the efficiency of passenger road transport, just as the railways were beginning to develop, decades before the internal combustion engine initiated another transport revolution by a growing railway network, powered by the steam engine. Life and art came together for him in 1863, when Dickens and his mistress, Ellen Ternan, were returning from France by steamer and train, the latter crashing at Staplehurst, with potentially embarrassing consequences for the pair (Claire Tomalin's *The Invisible Woman*, 2007, is indispensable for the understanding of this critical episode in Dickens' declining years)

RAS

**W.Marshall & Sons Haulage Contractors. My family's life with tippers and demolition.** Terry Marshall (edited by Mike Forbes). Published by the author, available from Mike Forbes at The Old Marquis, 2 London Road, Wollaston, NN29 7Qp. 48pp, illustrated. £8 post free.

This is an interesting story of a North London-based, two-generation family haulage and demolition business, members of which have gone on to make successful managerial careers with a much larger undertaking, Keltbray. In one form or another, the business lasted for 40 years (1953-1994), coping with problems of fraternal relations, the knock-on effects of fluctuations in the national economy, and the purchase of vehicles which proved inadequate for the heavy work demanded of them.

Like others in road haulage, the author's interests include preservation and the making of detailed models, photographs of which complement those of their full-size originals. Albions and Fodens took pride of place in the small and changing fleet, and with Poclain extended-reach diggers they feature prominently in the photographs (some of which lack clarity). More than six decades of hard work culminate in the illustrations of Keltbray Scania's at work on Crossrail contracts.

RAS

**Malta's Dodge-shaped buses. Swords into Ploughshares!** Roger de Boer. ISBN 978-09541182-6-4, 56pp, illustrated. £12.50 from the

author at 1077 Bristol Road South, Northfield, B31 2QW.

Once again the indefatigable Roger de Boer has produced a fascinating book on a specialised aspect of motor transport history. Why 'Dodge-shape' rather than 'Dodge' buses? The answer lies in the listings provided by the author – whilst the majority of these locally-bodied buses were based on Dodge truck chassis, originally in military use in the war or imported post-war, a few Willys, Ford, International or Bedford chassis were also converted and fitted with the distinctive Dodge radiator.

107 vehicles in total were bodied by some 20 coachbuilders, which accounts for detailed differences in what superficially appear to be identical vehicles. A dozen or so were converted to forward-control 'Bulldog' psvs. A further visual complication was a route-specific colour scheme for the bodywork. Roger, with the help of friends and fellow-enthusiasts, has made a helpful addition to the bibliographical record of an unusual incident in bus operation.

RAS

**Chedham's Yard Guide Book.** Chedham's Yard Trust, 2 School Road, Wellesbourne, CV35 9NH. 28pp illustrated. £3.50 plus postage from the Trust (no ISBN).

Wheelwrights' and blacksmiths' workshops were an essential part of the infrastructure of horse-drawn transport. Their ubiquity has in many, perhaps most, places given way to redevelopment, the spread of housing estates and gentrification, leaving behind few obvious reminders of their existence. It is this which gives the saving of Chedham's Yard and its contents at Wellesbourne, Warwickshire, its significance. Choice by a BBC2 competition may have seemed at the time an unwise method of prioritising sites for preservation, but professional recording, the continuing work of a very hardworking team of local volunteers and the formation of the Trust, have overcome doubts and problems, not least a potentially disastrous flooding of the site in 2007. This attractive booklet records and illustrates the working history of the Chedham family, the Yard and its contents, setting them with their local, national and transport history context.

RAS

**Seddon: Oldham's finest since 1938.** Edited by Mike Forbes and Colin Chesterman. Culham, Kelsey Publishing Group, 2015. 97pp, illustrated. £7.95.

The sub-title 'Archive pictures documenting over 75 years of Seddon lorries' describes this attractive 'bookazine'. It gives the history of Seddon through its models, well-illustrated, with some catalogue facsimiles, and detailed captions. It does not continue into the 'Seddon Atkinson' era, the later part of the 75 years of the sub-title being devoted to preserved examples of the original Seddon marque.

RAS

---

## AGM report

*Note that this is a general report of the Association's Annual General Meeting and should not be taken as the formal minutes.*

Sixteen Association members gathered at the Coventry Transport Museum on 28<sup>th</sup> March for the AGM. Principal events and decisions were:

- The report of the directors was read and approved. It was noted that a loss had been recorded, largely as a result of incurring the cost of production of the Road Passenger Companion, whilst the revenue would come largely in the following year. Thanks were expressed to the editorial committee and particularly to Martin Higginson and Ken Swallow for the successful conclusion to the project.
- The passing of our founder and President, Prof. John Hibbs, was marked by a moment's silence.
- It was noted that the Journal was now in good shape thanks to the editor, Peter White. Thanks were also expressed to John Ashley regarding the refreshed website.
- In addition to the usual two business meetings in the year, two events were run – Wales on Wheels and Brooklands. Whilst worthwhile, these events had been poorly

supported and so consideration was being given to reducing back to the standard two business meetings each year.

- Membership numbers were around 100 and thanks were given to Pat Campany for bringing order to this area.
- Links with Trinity-St David's University are now firmly in place, and printing of the Journal is now done at no cost to the Association.
- Amy Graham has agreed to take on publicity and especially student recruitment for the Association.
- Consideration was given to whether the name of the Association was too cumbersome and whether it truly reflects our aims.
- To note the resignation of Andrew Waller as a director and to approve the nomination of Mike Phillips as a replacement. It was also agreed that David Holding would be the next director to be appointed, once a further vacancy arose.
- To note the resignation of John Howie as Company Secretary and to appoint Philip Kirk as both Company Secretary and Association Secretary. As a consequence, it was agreed that the registered office of the company be moved back to The Kithead Trust.

In connection with the AGM, talks were given by Mike Philips on Coast Roads and Climate Change (a full report of which will appear in our August issue), Bob McCloy on the 1968 Act and Roger Atkinson on municipal pride (as reproduced in this issue). A brief outline of developments at the Museum was also provided by staff members.

**Philip Kirk**

## Sharing our Interests

Members have expressed a wish to contact others to exchange information on particular areas of research. In order to comply with Data Protection requirements, for the interim it is proposed members wishing to contact others with a similar interest should write to the Membership Secretary who will then send this on to the relevant member/s concerned.

### Some interests listed are:-

- Engineering truck and bus; Vehicle manufacturers SE England; Bus preservation and restoration, body building history; highway design and construction, turnpike roads.
- Social history of buses/transport, passenger transport, goods and experience.
- Buses and road transport – Malta, Scotland , West Riding pre 1970, Isle of Wight, SE England, Thames Valley 14-70s, Ireland, Bedfordshire area, London area, 213 bus Kingston, 1910-70s North east, East Anglia, Wales 50s-60s.
- Commercial vehicles, war vehicles, MacBrayne 1950/60s, Leyland, Electric traction, vintage vehicles, tramways, coaches, cycling.
- History and economics of vehicles/transport, haulage companies; legislative history; bus and coach history; Political legislation; regulation; Coastal Science.
- Street furniture; signage; tickets.

If you wish to be put in touch with other members, please write or email the details as set out in the adjoining box to the Membership Secretary:

Mrs. P. Campany, 30 Rectory Lane, Ashted, Surrey, KT21 2BB  
[patriciacampany@btinternet.com](mailto:patriciacampany@btinternet.com)

Membership Number (if known)
Name
Address
Email
Phone (not obligatory)
Interests

## Endpiece



*The photo above was taken in the 1930s at the junction of the Bagshot - Ascot - Maidenhead and Reading - Winkfield - Windsor roads, both old routes skirting Windsor Forest. It shows a very comprehensive sign, with 'Winkfield' added to each face to indicate the location, whilst the 'Tattoo' temporary addition indicates the route for the Aldershot Military Tattoo held each June. Photographer unknown, from White Bus Archives, with permission. [Paul Lacey collection]*

The Journal is printed and distributed by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David as a corporate member of the Association for which the Association is especially grateful.

Copy date for the next issue (August) is 7 July