

# Journal of the Road Transport History Association

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## Cascading Public Service Vehicles

David Stewart-David

Cascading is the business practice of switching a vehicle from its originally designated purpose to another function as part of the practice of depreciation. Cascading is applied to many kinds of passenger vehicle including airliners, trains and some kinds of merchant ship. A typical bus in Britain is designed for a working life of 15 years, but in every decade since 1945 there have been some vehicle batches which have lasted for 20 years in the same kind of service, and conversely there have been designs which have had a notoriously short life, such as Guy Wulfrunians and Daimler Roadliners. Many of these vehicles were used for less than seven years

and then scrapped, forcing the operators to acquire more reliable old vehicles cascaded from other operators. Premature scrapping of buses was usually a reflection of their unreliability, although premature obsolescence was in some cases a factor, for example in the short lives of half cab saloons in the 1950s.

Coaches, as opposed to buses, have often been designed for a shorter life in front line service, and have then been cascaded to work where comfort and style are of less importance. An example of cascading was the 'demotion' of the Bristol RE coaches which United Automobile Services bought for their London service, some of which ended their days in service as buses on rural routes in Northumberland. Cascading is often used within a company, or a group of companies, but it is also used when buses are sold second hand. Coaches are often unsuitable for stage carriage services, and so they have been cascaded to companies such as construction firms, for use as staff buses. The demand for such vehicles has fallen since the 1980s, and coaches are now unsuitable for local bus services.

The practice of cascading has often been a matter of routine company policy especially when there is a marked seasonal peak requiring additional vehicles. In seaside resorts like Morecambe and Scarborough old double deckers have been extensively used on promenade services, sometimes after conversion to open top use.

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## Road Transport History Association

*Honorary President:*

Dr Robert McCloy

*Chairman:*

Roderic Ashley

[roderic.ashley@gmail.com](mailto:roderic.ashley@gmail.com)

*Journal Editor:*

Peter White

13 Lingwood Gardens, Isleworth, TW7  
5LY

[peterwhite@googlemail.com](mailto:peterwhite@googlemail.com)

*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:*

Annette Gravell

49 Heol Goffa, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire,  
SA15 3LT

[amgrav@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:amgrav@tiscali.co.uk)

*Events Organiser:*

John Ashley

6 Cefn Glas, Tycoch, Swansea, SA2 9GW

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

*Promotions Officer:*

Amy Graham

[213bus@gmail.com](mailto:213bus@gmail.com)

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The Editor is always interested in hearing from members and non-members who would like to write an original piece about transport history and/or research for inclusion in this journal or online.



Above: A Western Scottish Bristol LS coach working as a contractor's staff bus during the construction of Barnsley Hospital in 1972. (David Stewart-David)

### Reasons for cascading

A study of the history of bus fleets <sup>(1)</sup> shows that cascading has been encouraged when there is a dearth of new vehicles from vehicle builders, or more routinely, when the bus operator lacks capital to buy new vehicles. Conversely a glut of modern vehicles for sale at bargain prices has from time to time encouraged large fleet operators to buy cascaded second-hand buses, often for their less demanding work, such as school services. Gluts of relatively new buses have occurred in the 1960s, when London Transport had an excess of double-deckers; in the 1970s when modern London Transport 'Fleetlines' were available at a time when new bus deliveries were problematic <sup>(2)</sup>, and from 1986, when government policy led to mid-life Greater Manchester PTE double deckers being sold in large numbers.

Many independent operators of PSVs in Britain, as well as some large fleet operators in developing countries, have habitually used buses cascaded from major operators. In Britain cascaded buses have been widely used for services such as those to collieries.



*Above: A Derwent Coaches ex Leicester Corporation PD2 arrives at Westoe Colliery in 1970. It will take miners to Esh Winning and other pit settlements where the collieries had closed. (David Stewart-David)*

What users of second hand PSVs had in common was a shortage of capital but a plentiful supply of relatively cheap labour to do maintenance work and refurbishment. Other operators have used cascaded vehicles for their less prestigious services, such as works journeys or quiet rural routes, as was the practice of OK Motor Services. This operator used newly bought vehicles for its 'main line' from Bishop Auckland to Newcastle, and for some coaching work, but employed cascaded vehicles for less prestigious jobs. Since the 1990s this practice has spread to major groups, which have cascaded London buses from their fleets in the capital to operators in the provinces, resulting in banished London articulated 'Citaro' vehicles being used on Go North East's route 58, to the obvious displeasure of passengers. Often such cascading necessitates changes such as the removal of centre doors and

a change of design of destination indicators, but the resulting vehicles have sufficient residual life to make such changes worthwhile.

### **Meeting urgent needs**

A different kind of employment of cascaded vehicles still occurs occur when a PSV operator suddenly finds itself in urgent need of a batch of buses. This may happen unexpectedly because a fire or flood at a depot – leading to 'distress' purchases in more than one meaning of the term. Today's large group operators such as Stagecoach and Arriva can cope with such dramatic events by transferring vehicles from reserve fleets in many parts of the country, but smaller operators may have to borrow or buy vehicles to keep services running.

Sometimes a vehicle shortage is caused not by external disaster, but by a sudden change of operator policy. The writer observed an example of self-inflicted bus shortage in Hull during the period 1960-63. In 1960 an initial decision taken to replace those trolleybuses that worked along Hessle Road, soon gave way to a policy of ceasing all trolleybus operation in the city. This meant that at least fifty motor buses were required in addition to those needed to replace a dozen wartime Austerity double-decker buses. The elderly trolleybuses that ran along Hessle Road had given way to a batch of new Leyland Atlanteans, but this was not possible for the subsequent replacements. Kingston upon Hull Corporation had a shortage of capital for a large fleet of new buses, but it had plenty of conductors, and ample engineering staff who were used to heavy maintenance tasks. Consequently, the decision was taken to buy elderly motor buses from other corporation operators. There were a total 77 of these second hand double decker buses that came from Newcastle, St Helens, Nottingham and Leicester. All were front engine half cab vehicles of proven reliability, and many stayed in routine service in Hull until they were 20 years old <sup>(3)</sup>.

Other purchasing decisions which saw vehicles cascaded were those taken by 'own account' operators such as Wimpeys the contractors, a firm that used second hand coaches to take employees to remote building sites, and the employment of elderly buses for such diverse activities as fruit picking, glider towing, and use as domestic caravans. In these cases, the obsolescence of the vehicle mattered less than its ability to operate reliably.

Underlying the discussion relating to trade-off is the assumption that new vehicles will be more reliable and less costly to maintain than old ones, but this has often proved to be a mistaken idea, as Geoffrey Hilditch has shown <sup>(4)</sup>.

So far, we have considered the operators' decisions in the way vehicles have been used. Very often there has been a trade-off between the capital cost of a vehicle and the problems associated with elderly vehicles, including passenger and road crew reactions. In Malta until 2011, capital was a problem but maintenance (and vehicle crewing) were not great difficulties, especially as ease of passenger access was not a priority. In London in the 1970s the problem was exactly the reverse. Capital was available from the public purse, but maintenance was costly and often not available at operating depots. The 'assembly line' maintenance practised at Aldenham with RTs was totally ill suited to Daimler Fleetlines. This type had been operated reliably by many operators, but the Fleetline like the contemporary AEC Merlin and Swift saloons, proved disastrously unreliable in the hands of London Transport.

Moreover, the trade unions in London were slow to accept one man (sic) operation, so one of the cost advantages of the Fleetline was often not achieved. The consequence was that London Transport offered very large numbers of Fleetlines and Merlins for sale when they were well short of their planned "book life".

This was not the first time that London Transport had created a "spate" of buses mid-way through their intended life in service. In the late 1950s it became evident that LT had ordered far more double-deck buses than it needed, thanks to its failure to predict market trends. It then sold several hundred Leyland PD2 buses (designated RTL) as second hand "runners" i.e. vehicles suitable for further PSV use, which were bought as bargains in large batches by overseas operators such as Cape Electric Tramways, and in small numbers by British independents. These buses often lasted longer in service as second hand vehicles than they did with London Transport, as was true of the 1970s DMS class Fleetline.





*Above:* A London Transport AEC Merlin saloon in use on “Red Arrow” route from Waterloo to Victoria. This particular vehicle entered service in August 1969. Although it was not sold until 1982, it was operated for less than seven years. <sup>(5)</sup> (David Stewart-David)

### **The role of dealers**

The business of cascading buses and coaches often involved dealers in public service vehicles. For many years such dealing was centred near Barnsley, where many companies were bus breakers. Breakers often cascaded components such as engines and gearboxes, as well as dealing in scrap. In 1972 this established trade was revolutionised by Ensign Bus of Purfleet in Essex. This family-run company suddenly transmogrified itself from being a small operator to being a dealer in Fleetlines, for it was prepared to buy a single batch of more than 2000 of these DMS class vehicles from London Transport. The buses bought ranged in condition from wrecks that could only be cannibalised for parts to good quality runners that needed no more than a deep clean and a coat of paint to be a thoroughly

satisfactory mid-life bus. At the time British Leyland were having trouble delivering new buses, so many of the Fleetlines were bought by major operators such as Cumberland Motor Services (part of National Bus Group) and China Motor Bus in Hong Kong. The writer travelled on ex-London ‘Fleetlines’ on busy routes in Hong Kong in 1995, by which time the buses were about twenty years old.

### **Changes since 1960**

The business of cascading buses has changed significantly since 1960. Then the market for cascaded buses included showmen with mobile fairs and circuses, many building contractors and other firms with large numbers of employees working in remote locations, and a substantial number of independent small and medium size

enterprises running bus services, particularly in rural areas. Now there are far fewer showmen to buy buses. Workers buses, whether run by PSV operators or on 'own account' are rarely needed because companies that have a need to employ thousands of major employees have often disappeared, and workers going to remote locations do so by car. Contrary to the expectations of those who advocated PSV deregulation, small and medium size operators, whether long established or post deregulation "Pop-ups" have largely disappeared from the scene. Operators like "The Delaine" are now a rarity. Yet cascading as a business operation has not disappeared. Most of the major groups operate franchised services to Transport for London requirements. TfL have stringent quality specifications which effectively require the use of new or nearly new vehicles. After some years of use in Central London many ex-London buses have been cascaded to provincial operations within the same group.

Cascading from the capital is not the only approach to older vehicles that is widely used. It is evident that many operators cascade vehicles over ten years old to operate peak time services that are not required during the rest of the day. My first journey on an East Yorkshire Motor Services bus was on a Guy Arab with Beverley Bar body, that in 1960 worked a contract to take children to a special school, and then operated a shuttle service from halls of residence to Hull University. In much the same way, nearly sixty years later, Go North East use elderly Dennis Tridents to operate the dedicated shuttle service from Newcastle to the DFDS ferry terminal in North Shields.

The business of cascading buses in Britain leaves some unanswered questions. The first is the impact of changing power technology on vehicle use. Already the low-emission bus zone in Brixton has required operators to use buses with

Euro6 diesel engines in this suburb – will this be the start of a trend in which smelly diesels are banished to the provinces? Related to this is the impact of legislation. Modern PSVs have to be compliant with the demands of Disability Discrimination Act, which has stopped the use of high floor coaches on local bus services. Future legislation may even preclude the use of diesel engined vehicles. In the near future there will be question of what will happen to the thousand 'New Routemaster' buses that was Boris Johnson's legacy as Mayor of London?

## References

- 1) Data on bus fleets has been obtained from the Bus Handbook series published by British Bus Publishing, Wellington, Salop, and from reports in "Buses" (monthly).
- 2) London's problems with rear-engined buses are explored by Gavin Booth in "Bus Blunders" Ian Allan, Hersham, 2009 pp 89-96
- 3) The details of Kingston upon Hull Corporation Transport's replacement of trolleybuses are shown in "Hull" by John Banks, Venture Publications 2003
- 4) Geoffrey Hilditch, General Manager of several major bus operators, gives his views in "Steel Wheels and Rubber Tyres Volume 3" Venture Publications 2016
- 5) The service life of many London Transport buses is given in exquisite detail on the web site "Ian's Bus Stop" [www.countrybus.org](http://www.countrybus.org)

## John Dickson-Simpson

We regret to report the death on 29<sup>th</sup> April of long-standing member John Dickson-Simpson, at the age of 85. He worked for Leyland for many years, and also as a transport journalist, notably in running Transport Press Services, which provided a digest of road transport news for 44 years from 1966. He contributed a substantial paper on 'Commercial Vehicle Engineering's British History' at the Association's meeting in March 2014, subsequently published in our November issue of that year.

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## Beeching Bus Services

Re the feature in the May issue, there was one of these replacement services that not only endured and proved highly successful but had an effect on strategic thinking as regards other transport modes for many years thereafter. Replacement for the Exeter – Okehampton – North Cornwall lines fell to a small independent operator, Jennings of Bude from 1968. Such were the impressive standards of reliability and service that thirty years on it still largely stifled demand for the restoring of passenger services on the Okehampton to Exeter line that had been retained to serve Meldon Quarry, the main ballast supplier to the rail network. Sadly, corporate takeover of the operator and consequent loss of focus on customer service eventually brought inevitable decline.

For those familiar with the whole transport infrastructure of Devon and Cornwall it is a matter of wonder that it took so long for serious consideration to be turned, in only the past few years, to restoration of a full rail services to Okehampton and creation of a major Parkway near Meldon. Improvements to the trunk A30 in

the 1990s had made this an obvious candidate, with suitable bus services from mid and north Cornwall feeding into it.

One of the major flaws in the Beeching strategy had been not to consider possible future needs and to thus 'mothball' certain key rail links with an embargo on redevelopment of sections of the track bed. Nowhere was this more evident than in the case of the Okehampton – Bere Alston section of the erstwhile L&SWR route to Plymouth. For years those who advocated a restoration were ridiculed and indeed the localised passenger potential was not great enough to justify it. Dawlish altered all that and the about face from transport planners was a joy to behold! Current proposals for this area are ambitious and described as 'far seeing' but should have been seen long ago.

**David Bubier**

*(Note: Within the Greengauge21 Interurban bus report mentioned on page 11 of the May issue, reference is made to the Bude service on page 7 and possible rail reopening to Plymouth via Okehampton on page 9. Ed)*

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## Electric milk floats: talk by Roger de Boer

The role of electric milk floats and other electric vehicles (EVs) in the West Midlands was the subject of a talk by Association member Roger F de Boer at the 28 April meeting.

He began by recalling a visit by his Dutch grandparents at Northfield in 1952 when he was six years old. After the visit he was given a Dinky Toy milk float – based on the NCB/Smiths type built from 1948. During the visit photographs were taken outside the house in the street of his family and in the background was their milkman with his TASCOS (Stirchley Co-op) Morrison electric float LVP782.

By 1971 Birmingham's electric dustcarts were finishing, and TASCOS were merging with the bigger Central Midlands Co-op.

In 1970 there were four different dairies in Northfield using electric vehicles. The Midland Counties Dairy (MCD)/Unigate at Northfield itself operated 33 rounds and one spare. All these were run by Wales & Edwards five-wheeler 'Loadmasters' – they had four wheels at the rear and one at the front, the oddballs of the fleet. Out of 45 in the class by 1975 there were 34 at Northfield. Since the depot was not a purpose-built dairy – the building was firstly a sewing-machine factory- it had little space in its forecourt. Even though the W&Es were suitable because of their turning circle there was little room and the floats had to line up on the main road and take their turn to enter the premises. Opened in 1948, the depot also ran a large fleet of small Wilsons which made things easier, but a tall milkman found his head pressed against a Wilson roof.

As oddballs the loadmasters were quickly withdrawn, some after only thirteen years' service – a short time for an electric vehicle (in

contrast, Kirby & West of Leicester built their own floats: he recalled seeing one when in their area, which from its registration was 54 years old). The replacing floats were larger four-wheel Morrisons and found manoeuvring difficult. The depot closed in October 1981, the rounds starting at Northfield then finishing at the recently-built Woodgate depot two miles away. He was away in the Netherlands on the last day but later learned there was ill-feeling at the depot's closure. Five of the milk floats were vandalised causing the last loadmaster to be pressed into service (he subsequently got one of these five-wheelers into a museum).



*Above:* An example of a five-wheeler 'Roadmaster', DVP519C, seen at Patrick Motors Museum, Lifford Lane, Kings Norton, Birmingham. The 1965 chassis was one of the last floats to operate from the Northfield depot in 1981. This vehicle was built by Wales & Edwards at Shrewsbury, and was donated to the Aston Manor Transport Museum at Witton, Birmingham, on the dissolution of the Patrick's collection. The float may now be seen at Aldridge where AMTM have relocated. (Roger de Boer)

Next came TASCOS, whose dairy his family patronised. The fleet were all on Morrison chassis and had come from the depot at Stirchley some four miles distant. The Central Midland Co-op, which had grown from the Birmingham Co-op, favoured electric vehicles for doorstep delivery – the Stirchley depot's allocation rose from 24 to more than 80 electric vehicles. In terms of vehicle



types, Birmingham Co-op favoured Morrisons, and tolerated W&Es, but hated Smiths: when Halesowen Co-op was absorbed in 1968 with their 40-strong fleet of NCB/Smiths, only six floats passed into the BCS fleet.

Quinneys Dairies came near home using NCB/Smiths. The farm was at Sambourne, the other side of Redditch but as an EV he suspected the float came the sub-depot at Kings Heath, four miles from Northfield.

Finally, Birmingham Dairies (BD) whose head office was at Handsworth had rounds in Northfield, supplied from their Bournville depot. This was a converted large house in Selly Oak Road. Adjoining residents were upset by the clatter and noise in the early morning. A purpose-built depot to house the combined floats from Selly Park and Bournville was built Mary Vale Road in Bournville, some three miles distant from Northfield.



*Above:* Birmingham Dairies 845FOG, a Smiths/NCB type is seen near the writer's home (in the background) along Bristol Road South, Northfield, in 1978. It operated from their Bournville depot some three miles distant - a sister vehicle is kept at the Wythall Transport Museum, itself only five miles from Northfield (Roger de Boer)

BD had the most varied fleet when it came to types: NCB/Smiths, Morrisons and W&E. They had a workshop at West Bromwich where repairs and rebuilding occurred. As the door-to-door delivery declined as the supermarkets offered

much cheaper milk, he remembered seeing many milk floats dumped here from as far as Bennetts Dairy of Worcester.

In 1970 he noticed an interesting milk float with its curved front – it later transpired that this was a 25cwt Midland running with MCD/Unigate Wolverhampton area. He was able to photograph one of this class in 1972 outside the Wednesbury depot, which sported the dual fleetnames of MCD and Unigate. This type was built at Leamington Spa, and Roger succeeded in getting SJW266 into Coventry Museum of Transport in 1978. The fleet dwindled to three floats from 50 that were in service in 1970. The last depot was Heathtown, with 18 of the class.

He did not investigate the Coventry Co-op until quite late. Then on the news a fire at the depot was televised and his interest was aroused. Replacement floats came from far and wide, including a milk float from Baldock with Unigate. When it reached Coventry, it was rebuilt by M&M of Atherstone, Warwickshire. 'M & M' stood for Mason & Mason – two brothers who worked for the Birmingham Co-op. They would acquire second-hand vehicles, strip off the bodies and replace them with their own fibreglass cab and other parts which came in kit form. So successful was the firm they bought out Crompton of Tredegar who themselves were also assembling instead of building – and when M&M walked into their factory there was still £56,000 in the safe!

What was of interest historically was that certain areas chose a particular milk float design. Manchester Co-op had their standard on Morrison chassis – there were only 10 of these in the BCS fleet. Derby and Nottingham had different local designs, based on Morrison and Smiths chassis.



*Above: SJW266, the vehicle that Roger was instrumental in preserving (Roger de Boer)*

Bristol Unigate had a unique design on Smiths chassis, with the milk crates were positioned on the roof as well as on the deck. A batch of the standard M&M floats of Birmingham Co-op were even converted to minibuses for export to Nepal to alleviate pollution in the city of Kathmandu.

BCS made good use of their EVs – the two-ton 'Bombers' of 1933 (still around in 1969) had taken three forms: 1. as new; 2. Converted to diesel with four-cylinder Perkins engines; 3. Converted back to EVs after the 1956 Suez crisis. These chassis were Electricars, built in Birmingham. BCS kept meticulous records, and in 1975 he spent six months copying out details of no less than 1300 EVs from the 1930s.

Because Morrison were the favoured chassis for laundry and bakery work, as well as milk delivery: when the laundry and bakery closed their vehicles were converted to the dairy department.

He tended to concentrate on local (midlands area) dairies – Walsall and Tamworth Co-ops were large users of NCB/Smiths and later absorbed under the Central Midlands umbrella.

His favourite milk float type was the Midland of Leamington Spa – their design changed little from 1937 to 1958 at the end. Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and Coventry MCD were large customers – some Co-ops, such as Kidderminster, Rugby and Hinckley also had some. Ipswich Co-op had some greengrocery van versions.

There were two-ton tower wagons – one is now at the Wythall Museum, which Roger had found in the village of Stotfold five years earlier.

The vehicle which he at present possesses is a 25cwt float new to E J Piper of Dymchurch Kent, registered OKT 38. Whilst with him it had frequent breakdowns and after seven years passed to Imperial Dairies of Wolverhampton. A year later it became absorbed by MCD who rebodied it. He acquired it in the 1980s after it had served 14 years as shuttle truck with John Hills Iron Foundry of Horseley Fields, Wolverhampton.

## From Spanners to Joysticks: Update

*Readers will recall that John Ashley gave a talk on the early career of Ernie Sutton of Swansea to the April 2017 meeting in Coventry, as reported in issue 88 (May 2017). His prominent role in the early history of aviation in Swansea was noted. At the April 2018 meeting John provided an account of subsequent researches, describing Ernie's later career.*

We left Ernie Sutton - mechanic, car salesman, bankrupt, and first man to fly a heavier than air aircraft in Glamorgan – in 1919 as he was discharged from the newly formed Royal Air Force. His aviation career was charted in *Flight* magazine and his career in the motor business in the local press, which also covered his exploits as one of the earliest collectors of speeding fines.

After 1919 the trail ran cold. Did Ernie return to Swansea? There was no trace of him here or anywhere else. Then I had two breakthroughs. The *Times* archive placed him in London in the 1930s, Mayfair no less, dealing in luxury vehicles. His wartime career is so far unknown, but then came the second breakthrough.



*Above: evidence of Ernie Sutton's motor dealing activities: an advert from The Times of 4 April 1931*

Edward Harris, a Swansea solicitor and heritage enthusiast with whom I am working on this project, introduced me to Willy Beynon. Willy is a scion of a well-known South Wales family with many businesses to their credit. Willy's father, also Willy, was at school with Ernie in the 1890's.

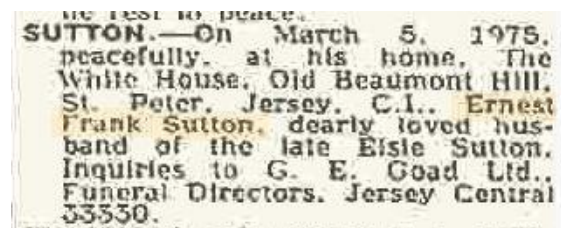
Beynon senior was 60 when Beynon junior was born, explaining the apparent generation gap in the story.



*Above: Motor trading activities continued into early days World War Two, as can be seen in this advert in The Times of 7 November 1939.*

Beynon senior was a helper at Ernie's first flights on Oxwich beach, and may appear in some photographs that have also recently emerged. In the early 1950's Beynon senior took his son to meet his old school friend at Ernie's home in St George's Hill, Surrey. Ernie had plainly made a success of his luxury car business. St George's Hill is now occupied by the likes of Tom Jones and Ringo Starr. Willy remembered a kindly white-haired gentleman and his wife Elsie. Willy was undoubtedly on his best behaviour, probably in school uniform.

Ernie Sutton died on March 1975 at his final home on Jersey. He had prospered even further, as there was a substantial cash-in-the-bank requirement for a residence permit. The Suttons did not have children, but the wills of Ernie and his wife name several nieces and nephews. I am now trying to get in touch with them at far flung parts of the world to take the story on.



*Above: Death notice from The Times in 1975*

## **A Melancholy Accident at Church Lawton**

Jim Sutton

"It is well known to our readers that during the week the rains have fallen to a very considerable extent, from which among other inconveniences, there has arisen very great danger in travelling. Yesterday morning (Friday) about two 'o'clock, the following accident happened to the Birmingham to Liverpool down mail". Thus starts an account in the Staffordshire Advertiser of an accident at Church Lawton which is recounted in great detail in James Caldwell's diary. Indeed, it is the most detailed account to be found in his diaries. He records the night of 10th September 1829 to be very wet with heavy rain. This may have been a factor in the accident recorded below.

### **Friday 11th.**

Between 7 & 8 this morning Mr Cooper of the Lawton Arms came to inform me of a melancholy accident which had happened to the Birmingham and Liverpool Mail by the breaking down of the bridge near Mr. Poyntons just as the coach was passing over at 3 o'clock this morning. Two out of the three inside passengers were drowned, the other having saved himself by getting out of the window and jumping off the coach wheel to the land. The coach with one of the horses and two passengers were still under water, no appearance of them being discovered. I immediately gave him a note to James Faram to go himself, and take all the canal people that could be of any use, with drags and other apparatus for finding the coach, and meet me as soon as possible at that place to stimulate the utmost exertions and service in my power. I arrived between 8 & 9 and found Faram and a great number of the company's people actively engaged. It was not, however, till between 11 & 12 that the coach was got up with one of the Passengers and the Horse. Immediately on my arrival, I sent for the Constable of the township, John Beresford, and

dispatched messengers to get surgical assistance, in order that aid might be given when the bodies were found and we also provided from the Lawton houses blankets, etc. On one of the bodies being found, I had it conveyed to the first house, and got it undressed, when Mr Holland of Sandwich arrived, to whose care I committed it. I took an account of and delivered to the Constable the money and other articles in the pockets of the deceased, who from a note, I found to be a Mr Bennett, but as there was no place of abode mentioned, I could not tell his residence. The Guard, who having been carried by the violence of the current through the crash of the bridge, and carried a considerable way down stream, fortunately got hold of some alder bushes, said the two passengers had taken the Coach from Birmingham and that one was from Liverpool, the other from Manchester but he could not tell which was which. The name of the other gentleman lost was Trueman. After leaving Mr Bennett's body, I went again to the bridge and not long after returned to the house to see how things were going on, where I met Mr Holland, who said that after having been so many hours under water, all attempts to restore life were entirely useless. Life being long expired but if I wished it he would use all the proper means. I desired him not to lose a moment in doing this, as however fruitless, it might afford the greatest consolation to the friends of the deceased by satisfying them that endeavour and assistance had been afforded. He then assured me that he would continue his efforts, and performed the proper operation. He also gave me his assurance that he would wait till the other body was found and resume the same cause, and that he would report to me. Having given directions to the people to continue to find the other body, and having been nearly three Hours standing on the wet ground, I thought it prudent to return home and direct the Constable to come to me, in the evening, bringing the papers, which we had found in the pocket of the deceased together with



any further information that he could obtain relative to him and his unfortunate companion, and that I would then write to their Friends. In the evening John Beresford came and informed me that notwithstanding every endeavour having been used the other body was not yet found. He brought the papers, which upon more careful examination, led me to conclude that Mr. Bennett was from Liverpool. John B said Mr Cooper had written both to Birmingham and Liverpool directing enquiry to be made about the unfortunate person, but I desired him to call upon Mr Cooper on his return with my recommendation that he would immediately go himself to Liverpool and Manchester to find out who they were and communicate the intelligence and property to their friends. I also directed John B to keep watch himself, or direct some proper person to watch till the body was found and to take care of it, and go as early as he could to Knutsford tomorrow morning to give Notice to the Coroner (Mr Hollins) of what had happened.

#### **Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>**

Went again to the Bridge and met the Father-in-Law and another relation of Mr Trueman, whose body had not long been found after a considerable time below the bridge. I did not speak to the older person, not knowing who he was, but the other following for a short distance with Mr Cooper, addressed me & expressed their thankfulness for my attention and the service I had rendered and also for the great exertions made by James Faram and all the men employed under him. I thought it right to call at the cottage where the bodies lay which I when looked at, found that they were very neatly and properly laid out for the inspection of the Coroner and the Jury. It happened that Mr Truman was a Tradesman (a Draper) from Walsall, about 45 years of age and had left a wife and 5 children. On my return I called again at Mr Cooper's to enquire whether I could offer any further assistance to the friends of the deceased, when

the Father-in-Law came out and again expressed in the strongest terms their gratitude for what I had done and said it was their greatest consolation to feel, that nothing had been omitted. He said the deceased was a smart worthy and respectable man, who would be an unspeakable loss to his family. I now learnt from Mr Cooper that the son of Mr Bennett had just before arrived, and that I must have met him as he was gone down to the body of his Father. I desired him to make the same offer to this gentleman of any further service in my power as I had desired him to do in the case of the other and so ended my share in this melancholy business.

#### **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup>**

On sending down to John Beresford this morning I was informed that the Coroner's Inquest had sat last night, and that the bodies had been taken home this morning by the respected friends. In the evening James Faram called to report to me the structure of the temporary wooden Bridge which had been thereon the (Brookhurst Lynbank) which being by no means satisfactory. I desired him to look at it again carefully tomorrow morning as early as possible and afterwards call upon me, when I would if necessary communicate with Mr Wilbraham upon the subject. He said Mr (Sherwin) the Surveyor of the road speaking of the old bridge acknowledged that he had no knowledge of the construction of bridges, however competent he might be to make roads. Faram said the second Body had not fallen out of the Coach when they were raising it. Mr Bennett was found sitting on the Bottom of the Coach with his (feet) to the door. He did not think much effort could have been made by the other Passengers to extricate the Sufferers, there being no time for it.

*This article first appeared in the Alsager Focus, October 2017*



## Book Reviews

**Regency Cheshire** Sue Wilkes. Robert Hale Ltd., [www.halebooks.com](http://www.halebooks.com), 2009. ISBN 978-0-7090-8530-0. Price £20 from publisher but may also be purchased from Postscript.

This title covers the years between 1770 and 1840, and is a very detailed look at life in the county and its wide range of activities. It should be remembered that at this period the county covered a far larger area than today. The Wirral, Stockport and many of the western foothills of the southern Pennines were within its boundaries. Chiefly agricultural, industry was already established in the most easterly parts, using both water from the Pennine rivers and early forms of steam power in the factories.

Riotous elections; the salt, spinning and weaving industries; high society and their lives and fashions; rural labourers; criminality and sports of all kinds (often bloody) are covered in detail, but there are two chapters devoted to contemporary advances in transport. These are 'The Golden Age of Coaching', (Chapter 8), followed by 'Making a Packet', which deals with the building of the canal system. Railways only get a very brief mention at the end of the book.

The chapter on the development of coaching in the county starts with a general introduction to the state of the roads, the first turnpikes and their later rapid development after the passing of the General Turnpike Act in 1773. It describes every type of coaching, coaching inns and all the various improvements made during this period.

In 1739 the Chester stage to London, pulled by six horses, took a whole day to cover the first 20 miles to Whitchurch and took six days to get to London. In the late 1750s the Stockport 'Flying Coach' took 4 and a half days. In 1803, after major improvements to the roads due to Telford

and Macadam the 'Royal Chester' coach left at 6.00am and arrived in London at 8.00pm the following day. Goods were still largely catered for by the 'fly wagons', which took six days from Chester to London via two different routes.

The years 1815-1840 have been described as 'The Golden Age of Coaching'. Speed was king. In 1828 the 'Wonder' coach left Chester every night at 7.00pm, had a refreshment stop at Birmingham at 4.30am and was in London at 8.00am.

The mail routes are covered in some detail, both in how they operated, and also the perils from highwaymen and other thieves, particularly the mail boys who took local mails from the major stops to towns and villages with no direct connections. Their uniforms were looked on with pride, and there were well-known characters working certain routes. The hotels the coaches used and variable quality of food they provided for travellers are also covered. Private coaches, the visible display of family wealth, were beautifully turned out and sumptuously upholstered. Their grooms were similarly immaculately dressed.

The upkeep of the roads was, until turnpikes took them over, the responsibility of the parishes, who varied in their duties. Accidents and hold-ups due to the state of the roads were an accepted hazard on any journey, hopefully not too serious. In one case eight horses were needed to pull a coach through a bog, and there were instances of people dumping earth etc. in roadside ditches – eighteenth century fly tipping. One serious accident occurred in 1829 at Smallwood, on the present-day A50 between Alsager and Holmes Chapel. Early one morning, the Birmingham – Liverpool mail coach was crossing a flooded bridge when it collapsed, throwing horses, coach and all into the stream (full details of this appear in a separate article). In spite of the mail-guard's terrible ordeal, the letters were recovered from

the coach and the guard took them to Liverpool, arriving later the same afternoon – the mails must get through!

**John Edser**

**The History of The Channel Tunnel: The Political, Economic and Engineering History of An Heroic Railway Project.** Nicolas Faith. 2018. Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 47 Church Street, Barnsley S70 2AS., [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk) ISBN 978-1-526-712998. 223pp, inc 16 pages of illustrations, mostly in colour. Hardback. £25.00

As a frequent traveller on the Eurostar to Brussels, I was keen to read this latest book on the subject by an acknowledged journalist on transport matters. The initial impression was not favourable, the opening sentence of the dust jacket proclaiming: 'The Channel Tunnel, has been one of histories most protracted and at times acrimonious, construction projects' (sic). Such spelling and grammatical errors did not fill me with confidence.

However, the book itself deals competently with all the aspects referred to in the sub-title. Indeed, the author is to be congratulated for the light touch he brings to the convoluted management of the entire scheme in which 42 sub-contractors were to be involved over a lengthy period of time. Nicholas Faith has researched the topic in detail, bringing a deftness to the consideration of various fixed-link options and the reasons for rejecting alternatives to a tunnel (bridge, bridge-tunnel or immersed tubes). He traces the development of the tunnel, incorporating illuminating quotations from participants and stakeholders in the entire scheme. He outlines the political intrigues yet maintains an impartial tone. Some little-known facts are revealed – for example, the plethora of initial ideas for a link and that the early plans for a drive-through tunnel (Thatcher's preferred mode) didn't even

specify on which side of the tunnel cars would drive. Alarming, during the early stages of construction, British managers didn't visit the working site; acrimony and financial problems dogged the problem, certainly until Alistair Morton (later Sir Alistair) became the mercurial Chair. Amid all these 'the best of times, the worst of times' shenanigans, it was a miraculous achievement that the tunnelling from both ends resulted in the two tunnels being just 350mm apart horizontally and a mere 60mm vertically.

Much focus rests on the rail route through England, requiring the vision of Ove Arup's Mark Bostock to foresee a solution by crossing the Medway and Thames and running north into a rejuvenated St Pancras. As Faith reports, Bostock 'had only to see a box to start thinking outside it'.

Whilst the emphasis is inevitably on the rail aspects, Faith indicates that some drivers believed they could board Le Shuttle by car at Waterloo International, whilst some foot passengers believed that they could board Eurostar at the Cheriton terminal.

There are some weaknesses: the always-busy Brussels route hardly gets a mention; the names 'St Pancras' and 'Saint Pancras' are used interchangeably, even in adjoining sentences, as are 'meters' and 'metres', whilst the station's top 'stories' hold luxury apartments.

Notwithstanding these editing errors, this book is a fine piece of research into a complex history and makes an enjoyable and illuminating read.

**Rod Ashley**

**The British Transport Commission Group:  
Former Thomas Tilling Companies in the 1960s.**

Jim Blake. Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 47 Church Street, Barnsley S70 2AS., [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk). ISBN 978-1-473-857223. Price £25.00. Hard covers, A4 size, 156pp, mainly comprising black & white illustrations.

This volume covers the companies running in England and Wales during the 1960s which had been state-owned since 1948, and placed under the BTC until 1963 – given the period covered, ‘Transport Holding Company subsidiaries’ might have been a more accurate title. Inevitably the dominance of Bristol/ECW products led to a great deal of uniformity in fleets operated, although some interesting variations came from vehicles acquired through take-overs of independents, and in fleets such as Midland General. The use of black & white illustrations and limited variety leads to a somewhat drab appearance of many views, which follow no particular logical sequence. More selective examples, cutting out views of limited quality, might have produced a more readable volume. Text is largely confined to captions for each photograph.

**Peter White**

**The London LS: the Leyland National bus in London service** Matthew Wharmby. 2018. Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 47 Church Street, Barnsley S70 2AS., [www.pen-and-sword.co.uk](http://www.pen-and-sword.co.uk). ISBN 978-1-473-862272. Price £25.00. Hard covers, A4 size, 138pp, extensive colour illustrations.

Following poor experience with AEC rear-engined single-deckers in the 1970s, LT’s experience of a standard mass-produced vehicle

proved much more successful, especially on suburban routes, but also the high-density ‘Red Arrow’ shuttle services in central London. An extremely comprehensive description is provided, both in text and a wide range of high-quality illustrations. The operation of LS type also spanned the shift to local management units and then privatisation of London’s bus operation, producing a wide variety of liveries and marketing initiatives, including some commercially-registered services in the early phases of deregulation: scenes in the Hounslow area from this period are certainly familiar to the reviewer. Later operations saw the rebuilding of some vehicles to ‘Greenway’ by East Lancs, surviving until replacement by articulated Mercedes in 2002. A number continued to run with other operators for a substantial period.

**Peter White**

**Enid Marx: The Pleasures of Pattern** Alan Powers. Lund Humphries in association with Compton Verney Art Gallery. ISBN 978-1-84822-252-6. 176pp, extensively illustrated.

One of the London Transport ‘Poster Girls’ (see review in RTHA Journal no 92, pp5-6\*), Enid Marx now has a splendid volume dedicated her life and her career in design. In transport circles she was probably best known for her moquette patterns for LT seating.

**Richard Storey**

\*Note that in that review, the word ‘text’ refers to the role of David Bowles, and is not part of the book title.

**OVERLEAF**

**From the Archives**

Our ‘Archive’ feature in this issue is taken from a paper by John Howie in issue 46, June 2006. It may be read in conjunction with the paper in this issue on cascading buses by David Stewart-David.

# The Second Hand Bus Dealer

JOHN D. HOWIE

The role of the bus dealer has been referred to previously in *Newsletter* (including a brief history of *Ensign* - Issue 29).

I have undertaken some initial research into this topic and offer the following information in the hope that it will add to the cumulative knowledge and, possibly, stimulate debate to enable a more detailed study to be published in due course.

## Early trading

Specialist dealing in used buses seems to have become a distinct business from the mid-1920s. Prior to that date vehicles were offered for sale by individual proprietors through the pages of the *Commercial Motor*. Typical are the following:

24 October 1912:- 'The Metropolitan Steam Omnibus Company at 111 Lots Road, Chelsea offer for sale a number of steam chassis, complete and in excellent running condition'

12 December 1912: 'Char-a-Bancs bodies of all types for sale 27-32 seaters. Apply Commercial Car Hire, Lots Road, Chelsea'

Of note is the tendency to treat chassis and bodies as separate units.

Commercial Motor introduced a separate classification for 'Used Passenger Vehicles' from about October 1920, but still the advertisers were former operators:

12 October 1920: d/d bus, 24 seats, Aster engine, 1st class order mechanically, smart appearance, suitable for private parties or station work, any trial, photograph, bargain, £550. Midland Motor Bus Company, Northampton'

28th October 1928: For sale 2 Dennis 30cwt 16 seat saloon buses (Short Bros) - would make excellent lorries - £75 each. Wilts & Dorset M.S.Ltd, Salisbury

26 December 1920: 3 AEC 33 seat s/d buses- new 1919. £750 each or £2000(the three), Crosville Motor Co Ltd, Chester

Direct sales like this were few in number; normally used vehicles were taken by manufacturers in part exchange for new vehicles. Hence Leyland and AEC, in particular, acquired a selection of Daimler Y types, Leyland SGs and similar obsolete types which had little resale value as buses. Most eventually reappeared as lorries, although the actual process of how they were 'transformed' and by whom does not seem to have been recorded. It is likely that the recipient manufacturers immediately resold them to a third party who prepared them for resale and hence created the role of 'dealer'

An early candidate would seem to be Oswald Tillotson of Burnley who, advertising himself as a Leyland agent, offered a 'second-hand selection of various makes' alongside his genuine reconditioned RAF types. From the same date, Alldays Commercial Motors Ltd were offering a similar service from an address in Fulham.

## The dealer becomes established

By the late 1920s there was an increasing tendency for used buses to be sold on for further passenger use, although lorry conversions were still more common and there was a growing market as 'showman's vehicles'. As a consequence, the period from 1927 to 1930 saw a rapid increase in dealerships in various parts of the country - some of whom remained significant over many years. Amongst the more prominent were Allsop, Sheffield; Lancashire Trading, (initially at Aintree but later over a wider area); Patmore, London; Wintour, London; Yeates, Nottingham; Greenhous, Shrewsbury; North, Hull (and later at Leeds & Sherburn) and Millburn, Glasgow. Further companies entered the market during the 1930s, some becoming very significant - in 1938 Dawson of Clapham was proclaiming itself as 'Britain's largest dealer in coaches, buses, and lorries' with addresses in Clapham, Croydon, Cricklewood and Euston.

Disposals from the large fleet of Ribble Motor Services give an indication of the evolving market:

Nearly all sales in the 1920s and early 1930s reappeared as goods vehicles; it was not until used Leyland PLSC models became available in the late 1930s that continued bus use became significant. This 'massive' clearout of 10 year old vehicles was almost certainly a major reason for Millburn establishing a branch in the Preston area. Small bus companies took the opportunity to re-equip with these larger robust machines; new operators included Bolton-by-Bowland Motor Services; Pennine; Rothwell of Holt and Baddeley Brothers of Holmfirth. Even so, the new owners of the bulk of the vehicles handled during this period are described as 'showmen'.

The Second World War severely affected the supply of second-hand vehicles; nevertheless, in 1943 a few dealers including Arlington and Millburn were still offering a very limited stock. The main trade was in spares and 'large number of 32 seat bus and coach bodies removed from chassis used for emergency purposes'

There was also a need to dispose of vehicles which were not fit for further service or unable to find new owners hence; the bus breaker developed in parallel to the dealer.

## Bus Breakers

Although some dealers dismantled vehicles, the roles were normally undertaken by separate organisations. The process of bulk scrapping was a specialist activity which could generate economies of scale in the production of economic quantities of components and metals for resale.

Whilst breakers were to be found in various parts of Britain (e.g.: Way, Cardiff; Birds Stratford-on-Avon) the first concentration occurred in the Manchester area in the immediate post-war period probably as a result of the large number of time-expired buses being offered to local dealers.

By the late 1960s the major activity had transferred to



Barnsley in Yorkshire, as a consequence of the decline of coal mining which left a legacy of suitable redundant land and a workforce who had the necessary skills.

For a while some organisations performed the dual role of dealer and breaker. Bird of Stratford upon Avon made substantial purchases from London Transport and Birmingham Corporation (amongst others) both for resale or (in the case of trolleybuses), for dismantling in the large quarry adjacent to their premises. Daniel of Rainham in Essex acquired over 2000 ex London Transport vehicles in 1949/50, the majority of which were broken, and reusable parts returned for use in new vehicles. Don Everall of Wolverhampton went one better by creating his own rebuilds incorporating salvaged parts.

### Case studies

Three individual company histories indicate the evolution and complexities of bus dealing organisations and their relationship to economic changes.

The trading name **J W North** was first adopted by J S Kaye in 1934 when he occupied a site in Whinmoor (6 miles east of Leeds), but for many years prior to this he had traded in his own name as a car and bus dismantler in Leeds. Four years later he joined a partnership (W North Ltd) at a new site at Stourton (also in the Leeds area) whilst continuing to trade in his own name from his original address.

In the late 1940s he acquired redundant PSVs (which had been stored or used for ancillary duties during the war) plus a large number of trucks and surplus military vehicles.

Post war stock was purchased from municipal and company bus operators, normally by competitive tender. The recipients reflected the social structure of the day with demand from independent bus companies, manufacturing companies for staff transport and the ubiquitous 'showmen'. A few were dismantled to provide a source of spares.

1953 saw their biggest purchase of over 2000 vehicles from London Transport comprising no less than thirteen different vehicle types of Bristol, Daimler, Leyland and AEC manufacture. To execute this North established an office at London Transport's Chiswick works so that in the end only about 600 vehicles were required to travel to Leeds. Many that did were dismantled and the chassis exported to meet the then almost insatiable market for mechanical spares.

In December 1962 the company moved to extensive premises on a disused airfield at Sherburn-in-Elmet, now trading as **W Norths (PV) Ltd** and throughout the late 1960s and 1970s proclaimed themselves as 'Britain's largest bus dealers'. They did not undertake any major mechanical work, their involvement being servicing, repair and recertifying, hence any that were uneconomic to repair were sold to breakers.

During the 1970s many traditional markets gradually

disappeared. The Bus Grant scheme introduced from 1969 reduced demand as small operators took advantage of the scheme to purchase new vehicles. Travelling showmen transferred their allegiance to trucks, and a combination of high shipping costs and easier credit led to a massive reduction in exports.

However, business was sustained by sales to Hong Kong and Macau; so great was the demand that it proved economic to repurchase Atlanteans which had recently been sold. Significant among which were the ex Ribble 'Gay Hostesses'

The 1980s saw a greater emphasis on dismantling, with a contract with London Transport to 'cannibalise' Routemasters and return the parts to London. (reminiscent of the 1950 agreement with Daniel!), and the reduction of Bristol REs to component parts. As usual all remains of the bodywork etc were sold on to a breaker.

Deregulation in 1986 generated an 'active market'. A large quantity of resalable vehicles became available as major companies 'downsized' and new companies appeared, requiring vehicles to take advantage of the opportunities presented. Contemporary with this new industry structure, was a growing trend to buy and sell vehicles by public auction, and North's adopted this method as well as traditional dealing. Again this was not entirely new – regular weekly auctions at Millburn's Preston premises had been a feature of the early 1960s.

Purchases in 1990/1 were so significant as to require temporary storage to be needed but by 1993 stocks had diminished and the company again began to concentrate on dismantling to yield spares; some vehicles even being imported from their associated Dutch company (Centraal of Utrecht) solely for this purpose.

By contrast **Amalgamated Passenger Transport Ltd (APT)** was a much newer and shorter-lived company set up for a specific purpose.

Originally set up in 1975 as a subsidiary of Lincolnshire Road Car Company under the auspices of the National Bus Company, APT became a wholly-owned subsidiary of the National Bus Company in 1981. It was responsible for 'processing' surplus vehicles from the organization's northern area, rather than their being sold directly to established dealers.

All redundant vehicles were collected at a site in Bracebridge Heath in Lincolnshire where they were evaluated. Some were resold, either within the NBC Group or converted for other uses, but the majority were dismantled on site. The spares generated were reused by NBC or sold. By the late 1970s this activity was unable to keep pace with the flow of incoming vehicles and the 'conventional breakers' had to assist – a contract with PVS of Carlton saw them undertake breaking and returning specific components.

As is often characteristic of a 'profit centre' which is encouraged to pursue 'commercial interests' within a large organisation, the company engaged in a variety of activities – engineering activities extended to major



overhauls and conversions for non PSV use, whilst the commercial side embraced a separate hire fleet and driver training. Acquisitions policy extended to vehicles from non-NBC sources as 'in house' companies could not provide a steady volume of work.

The balance between scrapping and sales changed over the years with former being predominant in the period to 1982; thereafter sales (particularly to the USA) were significant. But in 1984 the imminent break-up of the National Bus Company led to the decision to cease trading.

**Millburn Motors** was a major dealer in Scotland and North West England between the 1930s and the early 1970s. During this period trade seems to have alternated between 'peaks' and 'troughs' with the 'lean' periods sustained through stock reduction and sales of new coaches on an agency basis. Unlike other dealers the company did not engage in any dismantling of vehicles, un-saleable stock was always passed on to breakers.

It seems to have been a feature of bus dealing that parallel trade was often conducted by company directors in their own name as well as in temporary alliances with other individuals and organisations. Hence, although the earliest reference found so far is an advertisement in *Commercial Motor* in June 1936, the company is thought to have been started in 1932 by A Sanderson, with involvement (at various dates and in undetermined relationships) by Sanderson Brothers, Dixon & Wallace and, Simpson & Norris. Ultimately these last two took over the business for a few years prior to cessation of trading in the early 1970s

A brief review of the stock handled at the Preston premises gives an indication of the fluctuation of the business:

- 1938: Leyland: 50 plus Tiger TS2 (ex Ribble); 50 plus PLSCs (ex Ribble); Cheetahs; TS6 coaches; Titans
- 1940: Leyland TD1s (ex London Transport) most resold to Liverpool Corporation
- 1943: spares for AEC (Q & Regal); Daimler; Albion. Also Tigers and Lions (presumably for spares)
- 1948: Leylands (ex Sheffield, Chesterfield, Bolton & Middlesbrough)
- 1949 – 52: no significant purchases
- 1953: Leylands ex St Helens & Burnley
- 1954: 60 plus Leyland (diesel) Cheetahs (source not specified)
- 1955 – 58: very little activity
- 1959 – 61: various vehicles ex Wallasey, Maidstone & District, Western SMT, Wigan and Sheffield
- 1962 – 71: principally ex Ribble vehicles

After closure the site was sold for development as warehousing.

#### Current situation:

Over the past decade most of the major bus dealers have ceased trading leaving only Ensign handling large

volumes. Part of their history was outlined in *Newsletter* 29, since when their principal business has been disposing of London Buses including most 2005 Routemaster sales. Smaller organisations exist elsewhere in the country, such as Wacton in Herefordshire and Wealden in Kent but, in most instances the proprietor also engages in bus operation or general engineering. There are a few 'specialist' dealers (e.g.: London Bus Export of Lydney) who provide vehicles for film and exhibition work, often undertaking the conversion work 'in house' but the volume of vehicles involved is very low.



The general trend at present is for major operators to only dispose of vehicles when they become life-expired hence they tend to pass directly to breakers rather than for re-use within Britain. The fact that 80 plus vehicles could be donated to 'Tsunami Relief' during 2005 indicates that there is currently a limited potential home market for used buses. Safety legislation is also a factor in restricting their use for school transport without 'uneconomic' modifications.

#### Summary:

The bus dealer provided an essential role in the redistribution of second-hand buses but the limited volumes and erratic supply of stock meant that it afforded very few a continuous living. Thus companies involved themselves in other parallel activities to fill the times when their bids were unsuccessful.

More research is required to fully appreciate the role of the bus dealer but the proprietorial nature of businesses does not lend itself to written records and many individuals have retired. One of the more significant 'gaps' to be filled is the reason for the decline in the number of dealers in the past 10 years and the degree that this is due to the changing utilisation of buses within the major bus groups, the increase in property values and the age profile of the individuals within the business.

#### Sources & Acknowledgements:

- Bus Fayre* – various issues (especially for the history of North)
- PSV Circle Journal* – August/November 1999 – comprehensive listing by David Corke
- Buses* – April 1984

## Chairman's Note

A few updates to share with members:

We now have a new bank account with CAF which should overcome the problems encountered with the previous bank. If there were problems with you re-subscribing this year, please accept our apologies but we are confident that matters will now be a lot smoother.

Stabilising the position with our bank accounts has enabled an audit on our membership payments. A number of memberships had lapsed but we have now written out to those affected and many have now caught up with payments. For any who have not responded, their membership has been deemed to have lapsed and they no longer receive the Journal.

We are working on ideas to make membership more attractive to a younger audience whilst, of course, continuing to value the rich experience of all members. We will be able to announce more detail in the next conference.

*Wales on Wheels* was a successful event in perfect weather on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2018, even if it competed for numbers that day with the FA Cup Final and the royal wedding. Thanks to John Ashley for organising it in association with various other bodies.

A date for your diaries: the next conference will be on **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October** at the **Transport Museum in Coventry**. The list of speakers will be announced on our website nearer the time. We look forward to seeing you there.

**Rod Ashley, Chair**

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