

# ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT

## HISTORY CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

March/August 1997

Issue Number 13

### Editorial

It is very much regretted that this Newsletter (Number 13) has been long delayed in making its appearance. This has been due to a combination of circumstances, some personal, and some technical.

At the Spring Business Meeting, it was agreed that the Newsletter could in future be produced and dispatched by Kithhead Limited, at cost price. This, however, raised problems over compatibility of computer programmes. Some trial pages of this newsletter were produced using *Word 6* software, but to have continued doing this would have caused great editorial problems. The magazine is usually devised on *Pagemaker*, which allows pages to be created as is done in newspaper offices, and which allows from the outset for the fact that the newsletter is to consist of a certain number of pages, some of which will be facing each other, some of which will require illustrations of a particular size, some of which will require headings using a specific type-face etc. etc.

This newsletter has been produced for distribution in October 1997, and will be followed by issue 14 in late November, and which will probably be larger than normal.

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the Roads and Road Transport  
History Conference.

Issue No 14 will follow, and will  
contain full details of meetings  
held during 1997, and of the  
Symposium to be held at  
Coventry on Saturday October  
18th, on the History of Road  
Freight Transport.

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produced in Hong Kong.

# Necessary Journeys

Some interesting wartime tickets  
from Roger Atkinson's collection

Rare items indeed, for obvious reasons, are tickets issued for the conveyance of wartime workers to wartime factories. These were generally weekly 10 or 12 ride tickets, and, given that wartime factory journeys were often operated by volunteer conductors, men or women who undertook to guard the back platform or entrance, but who obviously did not take money or issue tickets, the weekly tickets were often issued by the workplace or an inspector from the bus company at the factory bus station.

Very unusual tickets are some issued by the Caledonian Omnibus Company at Dumfries. These were issued in booklets (French style carnets) of 12, at the factory, and are marked "FEMALE EMPLOYEES TRAVEL TICKET". There is no indication of fare value, so perhaps the tickets were issued free along with the weekly pay packet. The booklet had a cover on which the employee wrote her Name, Destination, and the Date. The tickets are inscribed "ICI FACTORY", and it is believed that this was at Powfoot.

The tickets were to be surrendered on the bus, one for each of the twelve weekly journeys, and each ticket bore the same serial number. It would therefore have been possible to keep very close control over who used the service, provided that the serial number of the tickets was noted down against the name of the recipient. Unanswered questions are a) how did males travel to this factory? and b) was this system used in any other instance? It was not uncommon for certain concessionary workmen's tickets or the like to carry M or F to limit transferability, but it is very unusual to have tickets set aside for one sex.

More typical 12 journey weekly tickets were fully geographical in having stated destinations PRINTED on, rather than written on at point of issue. This again suggests they were issued quickly at the factory gate, rather than involving a lengthy long-hand and nippers performance from a conductor who was wedged against a stanchion in a dimly lit and smoke filled upper saloon. West Yorkshire Road Car tickets issued for destinations in Steeton (situated between Colne and Keighley) show the following:

COWLING - STEETON R.O.F.

COLNE - STEETON STN.

LANESHAWBRIDGE - STEETON STN.

The first clearly declares that there was an R.O.F. at Steeton, and one wonders if the "Steeton Stn." was a pseudonym for the same place.

RA/ARP

## BOOK REVIEW

**LONDON TRANSPORT RECORDS AT THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE (Part 1)**, compiled by Peter Bancroft, Nebulous Books, 11 Oliver Rise, Alton, Hants GU34 2BN, 96pp, 1996. £17.50

There is a considerable element of chance which affects the results gained from any visit to the Public Record Office at Kew. For first time visitors the array of indexes may be overwhelming. This compilation offers both newcomers and more experienced searchers the opportunity before each visit to make a selection of documents which seem likely to be of interest and thus use the time at the search room actually reading the wealth of original material which has been preserved. With facilities both for advance ordering of documents by letter or telephone and for bulk orders for documents from one class, the precious time spent at the PRO may be maximised.

In the introduction, the compiler has provided a succinct and lucid account of the frequent changes of location to which many of the records relating to London Transport have been subjected. The first two sections of the book list clearly the records which have ended up at the Greater London Record Office or at the National Railway Museum, York. The next two sections, which form the bulk of the work, list first the former British Transport Historical Records and then Government Department Records, both of which are at Kew. The second category includes the Metropolitan Police files and reveal how road passenger transport in London developed in its own peculiar way. All the items listed have a connection with London Transport (defined with the capital L and capital T), or its predecessors before 1933.

When it is recalled that London Transport was involved with railways, both above and below ground, tramways, trolleybuses, omnibuses and the land associated with such activities, together with staff and passengers, it is stimulating to discover that Mr. Bancroft has been able to set out over 3,700 file titles likely to be of interest to researchers in this field. The Class List descriptions used by the PRO are not always straightforward, and the compiler has been able to show that a good many files concerned with road matters are to be found in the RAIL Classes.

Mr. Bancroft has also performed a very useful and time consuming task by identifying which of the dissolved Company Registry Files from the Board of Trade with London Transport connections have survived to find a permanent home at the PRO, and which of these files were arbitrarily destroyed at an



No. 29815

## Staffordshire County Council.

MOTOR CAR ACT, 1903.

### LICENCE TO DRIVE A MOTOR CAR.

of Reginald Guy Bassett  
Guy House Tittensor, Stoke-on-Trent

is hereby licensed to drive a MOTOR CAR for the period of twelve months from the  
twelfth day of October 1939, until the  
sixth day of October 1939, inclusive  
25 July

Inspector J.  
Clerk to the County Council.

N.B.—Particulars of any endorsement of licence previously held by the person licensed must be entered on the back of this licence.

earlier stage. As a closing bonus, the book ends with an Appendix listing over 900 file titles in the Board of Trade and Ministry of Transport correspondence class (MT6) relating chiefly to railway and tramway matters, roundly during the 100 years 1846-1946.

Two or three visits to the PRO spent searching page after page of indexes with little to show for the time would happily be offset by the cost of this book. It is well presented to a high standard of accuracy, and is firmly bound in an attractive cover. We are informed that Part 2 is anticipated in a year or two, and will cover those items which are even more difficult to locate. It will be hard to have to wait that long.

AGN

## Newsletter No. 14

The next Newsletter will contain an article on the subject of the expense of early bus operation, when tyres and mechanical parts required daily attention, and a look at a main road and the history to be found alongside it. There will also be a full account of the R&RTHC meetings during 1997. This newsletter will appear in late November/early December, and will be posted to all members.

Articles, book reviews (on either currently available books, or out of print) and other items may be sent to the Hon. Editor at the address shown.

The illustration above is of a locally issued driving licence from before the time when drivers became such a nuisance on the road that they were required to take a test. It makes an interesting comparison with the facsimile of a locally issued bus driver's/conductor's licence illustrated in Newsletter No. 12, page 12.

This licence was the second one issued to Reginald Guy Bassett; the first, issued a year earlier, coincided with his seventeenth birthday. He later was the proprietor of a family owned haulage business, based at Tittensor in Staffordshire, which has recently celebrated 100 years in business.

We are grateful to Mr. L. J. Bassett for his permission to reproduce this document.

Does anybody know what the criteria were to obtain a driving licence in those days? The above document cites the Motor Car Act, 1903. The skills required to drive a mechanically propelled vehicle in 1903 would be somewhat different to those required in 1929. Did the same licence extend to lorries? The wording above is "MOTOR CAR": one assumes that for a steam lorry or traction engine, one would need a licence for a "HEAVY MOTOR CAR" at least, or would it be for a "ROAD LOCOMOTIVE"?

The rules regarding driving licences were made more strict several years ago, but it is hard to envisage how easy it must have been to get permission to drive before 1934.

## Double Deck Buses in China

### GUANGZHOU

#### (Canton)

That most British of vehicles, the double deck bus, has now been established as part of the scene in Guangzhou (once known to us as Canton) for the past decade. Canton was an early user, perhaps the first user, of the urban motor bus in China. There was a tramway system, and proposals for trolleybuses in the late thirties. At that time, these came to nothing. Eventually a trolleybus system, which still functions, was established, trams disappeared, and two motor bus companies, known as Guangzhou No.1 Bus Company (GN1BC) and Guangzhou No.2 Bus Company (GN2BC) began to provide urban buses along the streets of the ever growing city. The vehicles were mostly petrol engined 2 axle single deckers, similar in layout to the Bedford SB. Buses and trolleybuses were in a cream livery, relieved with red, and in the eyes of the casual observer all urban buses and trolleybuses appeared to be owned by one entity.

In nearby Hong Kong, double deck buses were introduced in 1949. By the eighties, this type of bus by far outnumbered the single decker, and so anxious had the Hong Kong bus operators been during the previous decade to eliminate the single decker from all routes but those of restricted traffic or clearances, that many second hand double deckers had been imported from Britain. Notable amongst these were over 300 Daimler Fleetlines from London Transport. It was one of them, owned by Citybus Hong Kong, which was the first to carry fare paying passengers across the border from Hong Kong into China, in advance of some specially purchased double deck coaches. The Citybus company was also involved in the hiring of double deckers, for trial purposes, to the Guangzhou companies, and the demonstration of an ex-London RM to Beijing.

It was in the autumn of 1987 that the first moves to establish double deck bus operation in Guangzhou came to fruition. GN1BC took on lease 12 double deckers formerly in the fleet of the Kowloon Motor Bus Co.(KMB). Six were ex London Fleetlines, and six were front engined half cab Daimler CVG6-34s. They were the property of a Hong Kong company called Speedybus, which rebuilt the buses with off-side doors (China drives on the left, Hong Kong on the right) and painted them in advertising liveries. The revenue for the advertising was paid to Speedybus. At the same time, GN2BC took ten Daimler Fleetlines from the KMB fleet from another Hong Kong based company, Goodview Engineering, whose other busi-

ness interests included bus assembly for the large KMB fleet. Not long after delivery, two of these vehicles were rebuilt with the driving position on the left, and one was intended to follow the RM on demonstration to the Chinese capital.

It seems that the double deckers were a great success. Although by no means new, they compared favourably with existing Guangzhou buses, and both operators applied to operate more buses on more routes. The Chinese authorities agreed to the purchase of 50 double deckers for use in Guangzhou in 1991, and this total was divided between 17 for GN2BC, all being Daimler Fleetlines of the type already used by this operator, and 33 for GN1BC, made up of a great variety of types. It would appear that the 33 buses had to be shipped to Guangzhou as quickly as possible, and the handlers in Hong Kong gathered together as many suitable buses as could be found, so that there were 13 ex London DMS class Fleetlines (mainly ex Citybus), 4 similar vehicles that had been converted to open top, 5 Fleetlines from KMB, 3 Dennis Dominators, 1 Fleetline originating from South Yorkshire P.T.E., and 6 Leyland Atlanteans imported by Citybus Hong Kong from Singapore. The open top buses were fitted with new roofs in Guangzhou. As these buses had already been rebuilt in various ways with the previous owners, it can safely be said that all 33 were in some ways different, and to the practised eye, instantly recognisable. The variety of styles is one feature of the double deckers of Guangzhou.

Most of the double deckers in both fleets were deployed on routes beginning at or passing the main railway station. GN1BC vehicles were operated on routes 269 and 270, and later the 201, 240 and 290. GN2BC vehicles initially worked on route 271, and later the 283 and 289. The advertising liveries were as varied as the vehicle designs. The majority were used to advertise tobacco products, with American brands such as Marlboro, Mild Seven, Hilton and Kent being the most common. A surprise was a group of six GN1BC buses advertising a long forgotten British brand - Craven A. GN2BC received a group of ten extra buses, again ex KMB Fleetlines, from Speedybus in 1991 which all advertised Marlboro, and which were all repainted to advertise Mild Seven when the contract expired. Other products were food stuffs, patent medicines, and Japanese electrical goods. There was no recognisable corporate livery on double deckers for either of the two companies.

The next development was surprising. Two groups of buses were imported via entrepreneurial companies probably based in Hong Kong. 25 ex BVG Berlin double deckers on MAN chassis and of an overall height not exceeding 4 metres (approx 13 ft.)

joined the fleet of GNIBC. These vehicles are of high bridge layout, but with less headroom than double deckers of the British type. Delivered in a mainly white livery, they received advertising for tobacco which was mainly confined to the area between decks. This group of vehicles also retained the original destination equipment, and took up duties on routes 528 and 529. The second group of vehicles came from the USA, and were single deck air-conditioned Neoplan city buses. These were put to service on route 202. As single deckers they are outside the scope of this article, but as German designed passenger vehicles they are not, for hard on the heels of the ex Berlin double deckers, there came a batch of 20 new double deckers built in China to German designs. The examples in Guangzhou were built at the local bus manufacturing plant, and are 12 metres long, on 2 axles, driven by a rear mounted in line Steyr engine, and with two door bodywork seating 89 passengers. Externally these vehicles reveal their German origin, but internally they are spartan, with slatted wooden seats. Although a low floor level is achieved for most of the lower deck gangway, most of the seating is arranged on pedestals of varying heights.

Curiously, the whole batch of twenty vehicles which joined the fleet of GN2BC and which worked exclusively route 62, carried a white livery with blue bands, and have never carried any advertising. At about the time of their delivery in 1993, a ban was placed on tobacco advertising in China. The result of this was that many of the earlier British style double deckers had the advertising liveries obliterated by a coat of paint, and about this time GN2BC seems to have adopted a blue and white livery for double deckers. This was perhaps based on the Mild Seven advertising livery of medium blue and white, with a dark blue waistband. GN2BC also took delivery of another 20 Daimler Fleetlines from Hong Kong. Up to this point, only ex KMB Fleetlines with Metsec bodywork had entered the GN2BC fleet, but as the supply of this type of bus was coming to an end, the new batch included one example from CMB, and some KMB examples with very angular British Aluminium bodywork. Some of this group entered service in Hong Kong liveries, and some may never have carried any advertising in Guangzhou.

The new group of vehicles operated route 522, as well as routes already worked by double deckers of the company. In the same year, a new operator also obtained 10 ex KMB Fleetlines with British Aluminium bodywork. This was the Guangzhou Trolleybus Company, which placed its ten vehicles supplied by Speedybus onto route 256. As seems to be the general practice in China, buses generally perform the same duties each day, and are permanently

allocated to their routes. Most of the GNIBC double deckers were sign-written for their routes by stencilled destinations and route numbers on pieces of paper, applied to the front and rear of the bodywork, or stuck on the windows. GN2BC generally applied route details to the front destination indicator, but often added extra information on papers stuck to the windscreens. As the destination details were in effect not able to be changed, the fleet numbers of the buses were given prefixes which indicated the route allocation. This meant that when a bus was taken off the road, often for a change of advertisement, and later replaced on a different service, the fleet number was altered and new pieces of paper for a different route would be pasted over the originals.

As time went by, double deckers have had to be rebuilt after accidents or because of corrosion. In general, the style of the original body has been retained, but several more Fleetlines in the GN2BC fleet have been changed over to left hand drive. Now that Chinese factories were capable of producing double deck vehicles, the government decreed that no more second hand units could be imported. Several joint venture companies began to operate new routes in Guangzhou, using new Chinese built single deck air-conditioned vehicles, all using a common livery of white with purple bands. One company used a Neoplan derived design similar to that of the buses imported from the USA (Pittsburg). It seemed as if the era of double deck operation would soon come to an end.

In the Autumn of 1995 the entire fleet of double deckers owned by the GNIBC was transferred to a newly formed company named, not surprisingly, Guangzhou No.3 Bus Company (GN3BC). There were 44 buses transferred (only one not having survived) of British design, together with the 25 ex BVG Berlin low height double deckers and the 25 Neoplan single deckers from Pittsburg. Following transfer and renumbering, a start was made in refurbishing some of the double deckers, and GN3BC adopted a fleet livery of off-white, relieved by coloured bands at cant rail level. The rather haphazard system of showing route details on scraps of paper gave way to signs displayed behind illuminated glass destination screens front and rear. Atlanteans and Fleetlines have been on the roads of Great Britain for almost forty years, but rarely have they shown route numbers and destination details at the rear. The six front engined ex KMB Daimler CVG6s were rebuilt at the front before joining GN3BC, and now have the task of serving route 235, one of the few double deck routes not to pass the railway station. The biggest surprise was the rebodging in Guangzhou of the former South Yorks P.T.E. Fleetline. This bus began life in the fleet of

Rotherham Corporation (110, OET 110M). It passed to the S.Y.P.T.E., and was then sold to Argos Bus Services Company of Hong Kong in 1985. It came into the GN1BNC fleet in 1991, and passed to the new GN3BC fleet in 1995. At this point it was rebodied locally, receiving a new double deck body of a type unique on Fleetline chassis. There is but one central door, on the same side as the driving position, which remains on the right. There is thus the unusual feature of a forward facing passenger seat for two alongside the drivers compartment, as this bus has no front entrance. At the rear, the engine compartment is built into the body, so that the usual bustle effect is lost. Unique in the world, this bus is just another in the great variety of double deckers found in Guangzhou.

Apart from the odd premature withdrawal, the double deck fleet of Guangzhou remains intact, but for the ten vehicles used by the Trolleybus Company. Route 256 is now worked by single deckers, and five of the Fleetlines have gone to another city in South China which runs a small fleet of double deckers, all originating from the KMB fleet. This is Foshan, which runs routes 1 and 2 from the railway station with its double deckers. All Fleetlines here have been converted to left hand drive. The fate of the other five Fleetlines once used by the GZTBC is not yet clear. Despite the ban on further second-hand imports, it seems likely that the double decker will remain part of the transport scene in Guangzhou for some time to come. The table below shows the fleet numbers carried by the various double deckers.

ARP

#### DOUBLE DECKERS IN GUANGZHOU

##### GZ1BC

1304-1315	(renumbered 1483-1494)
1357-1389	(later GN3BC 500 series)
1483-1494	(later GN3BC 500 series)
1495*	(later GN3BC 453)
1581-1604 \$	(later GN3BC 454-77)
1671 \$	(later GN3BC 478)

##### GZ2BC

840-866  
870-899  
1605-1624\*

##### GZTBC

3301-3310

##### GN3BC

453  
454-478  
500-543 (later 1501-1543)

\* Chinese built double decker  
\$ ex BVG Berlin double decker

## ARCHIVE NOTES

### The British Commercial Vehicle Museum Trust

The BCVM Archives were moved from Oak House, Chorley, to the British Commercial Vehicle Museum in King St. Leyland earlier this year. This meant that it was not possible for researchers to use the archives for several months, and that access will not be as free as it had been when the archives were housed at Chorley for the foreseeable future.

Orders for videos and books, and enquiries to visit the archive should be addressed to Mr. G. Baron at the address given below. Written enquiries only are accepted, and should include a stamped addressed envelope.

Mr. G. Baron.  
c/o Archive Department,  
The British Commercial Vehicle Museum,  
King Street  
Leyland  
Lancs PR5 1LE.  
Fax: 01772 623404

### London Transport Archives & Records

Kathryn Thomas, LT Archivist, writes in response to the Editorial of Newsletter 12, to say that the vast collection of archive material held by London Transport is currently being conserved and also catalogued. In due course subject guides will be produced, which will include one for road transport.

The LT Archives Office has produced an Information Sheet referring to the various records held by the London Transport Museum, the Public Record Office, the Greater London Record Office, and the General Register Office on the subject of transport in the capital city.

Researchers should direct initial enquiries to the London Transport Museum (at Covent Garden, WC2A 7BB) and these should initially be in writing. The material still with the Archives Office will be made available via deposit with a Record Office once the current conservation and cataloguing processes are completed.

The collection contains items relating to LT since 1933, as well as to over 90 public and private undertakings which provided transport in the capital before that date.

Miss Thomas promises to keep the Society informed on any developments concerning the archives, especially when some firm arrangements are in place for the documents to be made available.



## TALK AT ROADS & ROAD TRANSPORT HISTORY CONFERENCE

### Meeting in Coventry, Saturday 15 February 1997

This is going to be a talk that rambles in the foothills of road transport history, but that touches on several other themes and subjects, making it impossible for me to say what exactly it is about. You will have the feeling at the end, I fear "What on earth was he trying to tell us?"

The various items that I am laying out on the table give perhaps two clues — firstly that I am not only going to be talking about the British Isles. We venture, for a lot of the time, into Europe as well. Secondly, it is all centred on a period 90 to 100 years ago.

Once, when "The Times" newspaper was *the* paper, it was owned for several generations by the Walter family. In fact, it was founded over 200 years ago, by John Walter. All the eldest sons of the family were named John. So, the great-great grandson of the founder was a John Walter born on 8 August 1873, and who died in Hove in August 1968. On his death there was found a remarkable album, part scrap book, part collection of bus and tram tickets which he acquired on his travels. No photographs; no picture postcards. It is tickets, combined with poetry or doggerel.

John Walter, the compiler of this scrapbook, went to Eton and to Oxford, graduating (quite late, at the age of 24), in 1897. He was then appointed as assistant to the Paris correspondent of "The Times". It was a period when the industrial nations of Europe were rich, and at the height of their power. All principal towns and many minor ones had had horse tramways. Some were converting to electricity. There was no Euro, or common currency, but there was an immensely stable exchange rate, based on the gold standard. £1 sterling equalled \$5 (US), 25 Francs or 20 Marks.

There was a limited vogue at the period for collecting tickets. Railway tickets, then as now, were superior; bus and tram tickets, inferior. Riding on a bus or tram at that time, however, was socially acceptable, — and remained so, to about the same extent, until the restoration of private motoring in the early 1950s, after the end of petrol rationing and "waiting lists" for new cars. Since then, of course, most people have not been able to face the social stigma of being seen by their neighbours standing at a bus stop.

John Walter has one verse on this theme accompanying his tickets from Vienna : (p.39)

If you stay in the town of Vienna,  
Whatever you do, don't take an Einspänner.  
If you do, let me warn you (of this I am sure),  
That your friends, if they see you, will own

you no more.

So, if you must Drive, take two horses at least  
In Vienna enough's not as good as a feast.  
If you can't afford this (very few people can),  
Be like other poor devils and ride in the tram.

Well, for at least a decade, John Walter did ride in trams — and kept the tickets. Perhaps he then bought a motor car. Perhaps he was simply recalled to London. We do not know; but the collection fades from roughly 1907 onwards.

As he was the assistant to "The Times" correspondent in Paris, and I suspect that this was more a genuine apprenticeship than a sinecure, he found himself on some assignments. For example, what took him to Rennes in August 1899?

How comes it that the streets of Rennes,  
By far the dullest town in France  
Today by some peculiar chance  
Are seething with a crowd of men?  
The fact is that the Dreyfus case  
Has started on its latest phase.

Curious men of every class  
Have come to see the dismal farce.  
Soldier, student, perjured witness,  
Painter, poet, painter's mistress,  
Lawyer, priest, reporter, Jew,  
Il y aura pour tous les gouts

Such fierce excitement ne'er was seen before.  
T'will not last long; the trial will; soon be o'er.  
In six short weeks the four years of strife will cease;

Distracted France once more will rest in peace.  
The motley crowd will melt away and Rennes  
Will sink to insignificance again.

Well, there are a couple of very nice Tramways Électriques de Rennes tickets in the Collection (p.17). Those must date from August 1899. (Electric trams had started in Rennes in July 1897).

Also that same summer, he went to The Hague (p.55).

In eighteen hundred and ninety-nine  
The Powers of Earth did all combine  
To swear an oath that war should cease  
And yield to everlasting peace.

The Czar it was who first did swear  
That war was neither here nor there.  
And France and England, nothing loth,  
Were quick to swear the self-same oath.

The Yankees were not far behind,  
Then Germany of slower mind,

And crowds of other nations too  
 Agreed to hold the self-same view.  
 Forthwith there settled on The Hague  
 A kind of Diplomatic plague  
 Of Gran Ambassadors whose ranks  
 Are swelled by journalists and cranks.

They seized on all the best hotels,  
 Defied the heat and fearful smells  
 And talked for ten long weeks, and then  
 Returned exulting home again.

Alas, the Congress scarce was o'er  
 When England started forth to war.  
 What's more – the thought should make us  
 wince,  
 She's been hard at it ever since.

But not the whole of John Walter's summer in 1899 was spent in The Hague and Rennes. He managed a break in the Tyrol, in Austria-Hungary, reaching Toblach. (It is now called Dobbiaco, and is in Italy; but then, it was in Austria-Hungary). On the sheet before you, you will see the illustration of the ticket which I take to be for his journey back to Cortina; it has written on it 9/8/99. Baedeker's Austria-Hungary, 1911 edition, records (p.229) :

From Toblach to Cortina (19½ miles)  
 Motor Diligence in summer 3-4 times daily in  
 2-2½ hours (fare 6½K) Stellwagen thrice  
 daily in four hours (4K).

John Walter, travelling this road in 1899 will not have had the speedy motor diligence. He will have had to be content with the stellwagen, of which Baedeker says :

"The old stellwagen, formerly the chief means of conveyance in the Tyrol, is now superseded by the more comfortable Omnibus". John Walter simply confines himself (p.40) to one of his less wonderful pieces of doggerel (p.40):

By the time the stranger gets to Toblach  
 He is feeling more than half inclined to go  
 back.

While he was on holiday (but there is nothing to show that it was the 1899 holiday; it may have been in another year), he rode the tram out to Fiesole – a place, I think, associated with the literary fraternity (perhaps E M Forster; but I have not researched this, and could be quite wrong). Anyway, John Walter recorded the journey thus :

If the afternoon is hot,  
 And you think to spend it lazily,  
 And pleasantly by lounging out by tramway to  
 Fiesole,  
 You'll be badly disappointed from the  
 moment you step in,  
 The car will fizz and grunt and spit and make a  
 horrid din.

Then all at once you'll hear a shriek, the man  
 will ring his gong,  
 And then you'll know you're off and as you jolt  
 and bump along,  
 You think you'd sooner travel in a dirty old  
 tin can.  
 They say it only takes about three trips to kill a  
 man.

We have only time for a momentary visit to Spain, – although there are some lovely tickets in the Collection from that country. The ones that I want to draw attention to are from Tranvía de Oviedo. Now, this was a great period of change. We have already had John Walter on electric trams in Rennes, a stellwagen or diligence in the Tyrol, a steam tram in Florence; we still have to go to a horse tram; (don't worry, we shall). But we go to Oviedo for what I believe, was a mule tram. It does not actually say so on the ticket, and there is no clue in the Collection as to its date. But Oviedo was a one-horse town – or one tramway town; and I think it was mule-drawn. I am afraid that Baedeker's Spain & Portugal, although detailing the line does not tell the means of traction – so that almost certainly means that it was not electric.

As I have said, this is a scrapbook – and you are being fed scraps. Can I offer you another – a tramway replacement bus service in September 1897 ? I do not make that the claim that it was a "first". When horse or steam tramways were being electrified, temporary horse buses were put on. But this instance has nothing to do with that kind of "tramway replacement". The Tramway du Casino at Fécamp ran only for a short period each summer – 15th July to 15th October, per Baedeker's Northern France, 1909 edition. John Walter rode on it in September 1897 – the ticket carries that date in tiny manuscript on the back (p.16) – so it should have been a tramway working. But he records that it was an "omnibus", so that those who peruse the album should not be misled by the title.

I did say that you would get the odd horse tram; and we've missed out in Fécamp, so let us go to the other extremity of Europe, to Constantinople, where the neurotic Sultan, Abdul Hamid II, lived in mortal fear of electricity, so that the tramways of Constantinople could not be electrified until long after his deposition in April 1909, (which followed the Young Turk revolution of 1908). Let us take it that the ticket on the sheet before you must be horse tram.

But if you demand absolute equine proof, there is one other ticket that is quite irrefutable. In fact, if you speak Lithuanian, you will have identified it on the sheet before you already. It is the ticket of Kauno Arklių Tramvajus. "Arklių" is Lithuanian for "horse"

Now from Kaunas to Glasgow. Here you have the back of a ticket, The front would be quite interesting as well; but the back has more to tell us.



As a new government initiative, 80 Labour Exchanges were opened in various parts of Britain on 1 February 1910. This ticket advertises a Labour Exchange — therefore, post-February 1910. But, no. There is a flaw in that. The ticket advertises the City Labour Exchange. Glasgow was a socialist city; so it had started a municipal labour exchange somewhat earlier — the best that I have been able to discover is c.1908/1909. The stage names on the front of the ticket — which, I am afraid, you cannot see — are from Crow Road to Dalmarnock Road. These would not be earlier than 30 April 1906 — so they do not narrow the dating of the ticket any further. There are two telephone numbers on the ticket, National and Post Office. Interesting, but not of help in this case. They simply place the advert before 1 January 1912, when the National Telephone Company was nationalised and the Post Office obtained its telephone monopoly.

So one has to delve still more deeply. Glasgow turns out to have been one of those 80 places where the new government-run labour exchanges opened on 1 February 1910; the government one was at 13 Carlton Place. The address of the City one, on the ticket, is 15-17 Duke Street. I have not absolutely established this, — as we know well enough in bus history, some inaugurations of service may be blazoned, but closures seldom are — the City *appear* to have closed theirs, in Duke Street, either at the same date that the government one opened, or shortly afterwards — which narrows this advert and this ticket down to 1908/9.

I did say that the Collection ran from 1897 to about 1907. In truth, there are some post-1907 tickets in it — this Glasgow one is one. There are some other scattered ones as late as the 20s — but not many.

But now that we are safely back in Britain, let us look at just one more John Walter ticket. It is another from the beginning of his collecting days, when he wrote the date neatly on the back. It is from the Hythe, Sandgate & Folkestone Omnibus Company Limited. Walter put the date Aug '97 on it (p.4).

If we may now digress to a subject of consuming interest to Tony Newman — the company records preserved at the Public Record Office at Kew. The file for the Hythe, Sandgate & Folkestone Omnibus Company Limited was safely preserved there several years ago — and I hope that it still is — under reference BT31 / 15152 / 33980. That file tells us that the company was registered on 11 May 1891, with registered office at 54 High Street, Hythe, (later, Linton Lodge, Sandgate Road, Hythe). It invited subscription for 1,000 £5 shares. 500 were taken up, (but only £3 called on each). The holders were numerous, but mainly residents of Hythe.

The return of directors in 1901, shows it still to

be a totally local company, with six directors :

Robert John Sidle, Secretary to public companies, Hythe  
John Wright Palethorpe, gentleman, Folkestone  
Frederick Ben Ninnies, Jeweller, Hythe  
George Young, gentleman, Hythe  
Thomas Elliott, licensed victualler, Hythe  
Charles John Denne, omnibus company manager, Albion Mews, Hythe.

Mr Ninnies, the jeweller, advertised on the back of the ticket.

In submitting the accounts for y.e. 18 August 1908, there was a recommendation that the company should cease on 3 October 1908. Per the 1909 accounts, this seems to have happened, although the company continued as a property owning company, deriving rent from letting out the stables. It went into liquidation on 25 September 1919. It deserves to be remembered that Folkestone, and the route from Folkestone to Hythe, were the location of some of the earliest motor bus services in England, so the survival of this horse bus company until October 1908 is almost surprising.

Almost at the close, I put out a ticket that has nothing to do with the Walter Collection. It has very little to do with this talk at all. It is from Crete, in the autumn of 1996. USE THE PUBLIC BUS SERVICE it says on it. I am inclined to think that it means use the buses, don't go on a coach tour, rather than promoting the bus vis à vis cars. But to me — perhaps only to me — that ticket from Crete, (and a number of current tickets in Britain itself), do hold out hopes not just for the survival of public transport, but for some resurgence.

We may be a long way short of the position a century ago, when an intelligent, educated newspaperman, like John Walter, could observe developments in public transport with comprehension, but I do see a minimal understanding of public transport creeping into the press, which is more than there was, say, thirty years ago, when the heralded vision was, for example, "Leeds, the motorway city of the future".

May I just finish with a quotation from John Walter. The ticket of the Münchener Trambahn on the sheet before you is an accompaniment (p.47):

When Smith went back to Munich city,  
He said at first "Why what a pity.  
Where once the horse cars used to ply,  
Electric trams now whistle by"

But when he saw how fast they went,  
How very little noise they made,  
How evenly the lines were laid,  
He soon grew happy and content,  
and said "Well, it must be confessed,  
Electric trams are far the best"

**TRAMWAYS ÉLECTRIQUES DE RENNES**  
 De la Croix St-Hélier  
 au Port Cahours  
**37725 c 10**  
 Ce billet doit être présenté à toute réquisition des Agents  
 de la Compagnie et détruit en descendant de voiture.

**CASINO - ABBAYE**  
**TRAMWAYS DU CASINO**  
 Direction H. d'ALBERT Q 1  
 Le Voyageur doit présenter ce coupon à  
 toute réquisition: S'ASSURER QUE LE CON-  
 TROLEUR DÉTACHE CE COUPON DU CARNET A  
 SOUCHES, et est prêt de déchirer ce coupon  
 en descendant.  
**475 15 cent.**

**Abfahrt 3 Uhr Nachmittag.**  
**Omnibus - Fahrt Toblach - Ampezzo.**  
 Von Toblach nach Sandro . . . fl. fr.  
 " " " Schludersbach . . . fl. fr.  
 " " " Cortina . . . fl. fr.  
 " " " hin und retour . . . fl. fr.  
 " Sandro nach Schludersbach . . . fl. fr.  
 " " " Cortina . . . fl. fr.  
 " Schludersbach nach Cortina . . . fl. fr.  
**E. Ueberbacher.**  
 Transport von grösseren Gepäckstücken zu ermässigtem  
 Tarifa ist vorgesorgt.

**SOCIÉTÉ DES TRAMWAYS DE CONSTANTINOPLE**  
 LATA-GALATA SÉRAI  
 " Classe **N° 0306**  
 Paras 80  
 برنجی اشوب بلیت هر روز در راه ایستگاه محمود  
 Le voyageur doit présenter ce billet à toute réquisition.  
 RETOUR

**KAUNO**  
 Arkilij Tramvajus  
**051966**  
**KONDUKTORIUS**  
 21  
 duo ROTUSÉS iki  
 Bepriliasomybės alkš'ės  
 arba atgal  
 - - - - - kontrolerius

**SERIE Q**  
**12590**  
**FIRENZE**  
 Bar. Cure. 10  
 Forbicl. 10  
 S. Gervasio 25  
 S. Domenico. 40  
 Reg. Maiano 70  
 FIECILE 70  
 Firenze, Stab. Pallas.  
 Conservare il biglietto per presentarlo ad ogni richiesta  
 sotto pena di pagare un'altra d'adempimento.

**Tickets Illustrated**  
 (down, left then  
 right)

Rennes  
 Tolach  
 Florence-Fiesole  
 Oviëdo  
 Fecamp  
 Constantinople  
 Kaunas, Lithuania  
 Munich  
 Glasgow  
 Folkestone

**TRANVIA DE OVIEDO**  
 10 céntimos  
 Consérvese este billete  
 UNA SECCIÓN  
**B 12707**

**Correspondenz-Quittung über 10 Pf. Billet**  
**MÜNCHENER 00674 TRAMBAHN.**  
 Diese Marke ist nur bei unmittelbarem Wagens  
 Wechsel an der Haltestelle gültig.  
 Auf Verlangen vorzuzeigen.

**EMPLOYERS IN NEED OF WORKERS**  
**WORKERS IN NEED OF EMPLOYMENT**  
 Should apply at the **CITY LABOUR EXCHANGE,**  
 15-17 DUKE STREET.  
 Phones { Nat. 231 Tron. P.O. 77 }  
**NO FEES.**

**HYTHE, SANDGATE & FOLKESTONE**  
**OMNIBUS COMPANY, LIMITED.**  
**3**  
**Dan West**  
 For TEAS PROVISIONS AND BOTTLED BEER.  
 HELL PUNCH & PRINTING Co., Tabernacle Street, E.C.

# TRAFFIC IN THE TWENTIES

## A Roadside View

**John Dunabin recalls scenes from his childhood alongside one of the early toll roads of Britain.**

I was born in the middle of the First World War, less than 400 yards south of the Liverpool-Prescot - Warrington Road, now prosaically the A57, but then known to local people as "The High Road". While it might have been still better to have arrived on the scene a few years earlier, I was in time to witness the great upsurge in mechanised transport for goods haulage in the early 1920s on what quickly became one of England's most heavily trafficked inter-urban roads; it was, according to an official report, the busiest main road outside Greater London.

Despite the existence of the Manchester Ship Canal, along which one ocean going vessel could easily carry as much as a hundred or more lorries, and four separate railway lines between Liverpool and Manchester, road transit using mechanical means offered considerable attractions in terms of speed and flexibility, and in the early postwar period vehicle movements mounted rapidly. At the beginning of the decade, however, while the internal combustion engine was rapidly supplanting the horse for passenger carrying and retail deliveries, freight capacities were generally limited to a few tons, and for the carriage of heavy goods other than over short distances steam was dominant. Slow moving traction engines (road locomotives) were in use for special loads, but for medium to long distance haulage self propelled steam lorries, often pulling trailers, were preferred.

There they were, not far from home, a nose to tail procession of them, trundling along well laden to Liverpool Docks (as many must have been coming the opposite way, carrying raw cotton etc., but prudence or parental imperatives kept me on our side of the road). Comparing then and now, one thing was very striking. now, on a still day, I can hear the continuous motorway roar from two miles or more away. Then, over a distance of less than a quarter of a mile one heard little or nothing. Steamers hissed and occasionally clanked but never roared, moving quietly at around 10 m.p.h. - their limit was I think 12 m.p.h., and I doubt if it was often exceeded, on this road at least. As I write, though, one long forgotten sound comes to mind, a dull thud heard every one or two seconds. Long before they wore out, many of the solid tyres (on the rear driving wheels as I recall)

developed bad flats. Occasionally there were other less regular sounds, when pieces of disintegrating tyre flew off, adding to the hazards of roadside walking. The commonest was being struck by a shower of hot sparks, when one of the wagons hit a bump in the road, and there were many of these! Iron pans were placed beneath the fires to catch cinders, and these should have contained water for quenching, but they often ran dry.

Mention of these cinder pans leads me to recall some different steamer types, insufficient to satisfy the vehicle specialists, but the best I can do after seventy five years. Commonest were Sentinels - they seemed to be the ones most prone to spread red-hot cinders - with driver and mate up front, part surrounded by a half-height steel shield, and the "works" down below. Then came the Fodens, more refined and more robust looking. In them the driver and mate still sat side by side, but separated by the boiler, and looking much more comfortable, even relaxed. One leading Manchester haulier had something different, possibly Atkinsons.

Water, of course, was as essential as coal for these machines. Coal could be carried, and water too, but not enough for more than short journeys: cinder pans could be allowed to run dry occasionally, but boilers never. About a quarter of a mile west of the Warrington borough boundary, in a convenient gap between terraces of houses, a hydrant was installed alongside a short lay-by. Here vehicles queued up to take on water and, regrettably, to get rid of spent ashes. These activities together soon created a muddy mess, spreading well beyond the confines of the lay-by, but for the crews there was a bonus in stopping there: somebody with a quick eye for business set up a cafe on the empty ground. Other transport cafes quickly sprang up along the route (there were, I am sure, other hydrants too) wherever the road was wide enough for parking. Their proliferation may even have persuaded drivers to continue using the High Road, rather than some less congested but less refreshing alternatives.

Increased usage by these heavy solid tyred vehicles and, outside the urban area by lighter vehicles moving at much higher speeds than in former times, presented immense problems of road maintenance, as is well known. In much of South East Lancashire, the enduring solution was the laying of granite setts, six inches square with fairly flat tops on main roads, and elsewhere larger ones with more rounded profiles. Even the smaller ones made cycling a punishing exercise, but setts, including the larger ones, remain in some side streets even now. Many rural roads, particularly some heavily used ones, originally of undressed stone laid according to Mr. McAdam's principles, were kept in shape by frequent top dressings

of tar and chippings. On the High road a different approach was adopted, using a thick layer of asphalt, laid hot and then rolled as it solidified. This looked excellent when it was newly done, but asphalt never becomes rock hard, and in warm weather it softens considerably.

The heavy lorries pounded along, producing wide ruts inches deep, and pushing the putty like surface into a wavy border along the road edges. Cycling on these borders was almost impossible, while steering motorcycles and even the lightercars to stay in the ruts was difficult in the extreme. Getting out of them was an even more dodgy matter. This could have led to many accidents, but the drivers were kinder than their present day counterparts in many ways. Where roads permitted, the crews didn't seem to mind (as I learned firstly by observation and later more directly) towing cyclists with them, the braver ones on the offside, the more nervous on the nearside. This could not be done on trailers; they yawed far too much. As motors improved they moved far too fast for such purposes: the solution was then to spot a large van and get into its slipstream, but this required an iron nerve - and good brakes !

I have mentioned driver's mates. In the motor age their role diminished until they could be dispensed with. On the steamers, though, they were kept busy stoking the fire, clearing cinders, checking steam pressure and water levels, and, importantly, keeping an eye open for itinerant policemen. One job a few of them undertook was more intermittent and even less official. There were no electrical connections to trailers even after electric lighting came into use; their rear ends after dark were marked by swinging hurricane lanterns. Understandably the lanterns often got broken, but luckily there were replacements to hand. Road repairs and excavations, of which there were many, were delineated by, yes, hurricane lanterns. A skilled mate could lean out and scoop one up without his driver slackening pace. A friend of my father, actually a shopwalker in a draper's shop, but with an inventive turn of mind, was given the job of designing a snatchproof hook.

Returning briefly to road construction, the use of concrete, moderately successful in some places (the Kingston by-pass on the outskirts of London was a notable example) was not tried here: the eventual solution was tarred macadam ("Tarmac") Before this happened, I had moved to a new home not far away, and similarly distant from the A562, which branched off the A57 to serve Widnes and the southern end of Liverpool (Garston Docks). This road had not been much used by the early twenties steam men, but was becoming increasingly busy with motors, although there were still enough steam lorries to maintain the

excitement. I noted other differences too, possibly more to do with time than place. Familiar haulage names remained, with steamers of Cowans, Ancliffs and Springfield Carriers joined by well kept Leylands of Garlick, Burrell and Edwards, but there were growing numbers of "own brand" vehicles, such as those of the United alkali Company of Widnes, setamers and later Commer motors. These, belying the company's name, were packed with glass carboys of sulphuric acid....highly dangerous loads for lorries, but treated in those days as commonplace. I never heard of any accidents in which they were involved, but I did once see a carboy (empty) lying by the roadside.

Covered vans increased in numbers, probably overtaking those of platform and low sided lorries, and in the mid 1920s frameless articulated tankers. Scammells of course began to appear; the names of Andrew Cowburn and Coupar, and of United Molasses on their sides spring to mind. Also remembered from around the same time are the massive Swiss built Saurers (subsequently Anglicised as Armstrong Saurers), towing equally massive trailers. With their bonnets protruding well beyond the front axles and extremely strident exhaust powered horns - after a while these were banned - they seemed very threatening. A little later came a more striking development.

The Vulcan Foundry at Earlstown won a contract to supply locomotives to the Indian State Railways. The Indian railway gauge was 5 feet 6 inches, and therefore could not readily be transported by rail to Liverpool Docks. With the assistance of Scammells as builders, Marston's Road Services of Liverpool, already active in heavy haulage, provided an articulated petrol powered low-loader, with an independently steered rear axle, to do the job. The day's journey for each one took this long vehicle through Warrington, with a tight right turn in the town centre, and across the lifting bridge over the St. Helens - Sankey Canal. Crowds turned out to see the first journey, and I remember watching an official standing with his heels on solid ground and soles on the bridge, to detect any movement under this heavy load.

Other events by comparison were less exciting. At some time in the late twenties I began to notice largish light brown vans going eastwards rather fast through Penketh. These bore the legend "Manchester and District Co-operative Laundries Association". Then, after perhaps a year, this changed to "United Co-operative Laundries Association", but not long afterwards they all vanished: I never found out why.

Two other frequent appearances on the same road, starting a little later, stay in my mind for like reasons, both being connected with the tanning industry, noted for the strong smells it generated. The Mersey White Lead Company of Sankey, whose plant

was situated close to the above mentioned water hydrant, used spent tan bark in its process and, so I was told, obtained it free from Warrington tanneries on condition that it took all that was on offer. The supply was much more than its needs, so the company's Leyland lorry was employed taking loads of it to local farms, the driver persuading farmers to let him tip it at the base of their hedgrows, where it was said to have a beneficial effect. The other involved less savoury loads. Prior to tanning (there was also a lime treatment in between) raw hides had to be scraped free of blood, flesh, hair, and even more noxious substances (fleshing). The resulting foul smelling semi-liquidness was transported through our village (Penketh) in open wagons to a factory beyond widnes, where it was treated to yield glue and gelatine. The latter was then moved on, so it was said, to be further refined for use in table jellies.

By the end of the decade, while the first Mersey Tunnel, intended to provide a better link between Liverpool, the Midlands and the South of England, was still unfinished, the East Lancashire road had come into use, wide and straight, connecting the eastern edge of Liverpool to the western limits of the built up area of Manchester without passing through any towns. Everywhere it seemed steamers were disappearing. Traffic on the A57 and A562 was still considerable - if I missed my bus to school in Widnes I could rely on a friendly lorry driver picking me up in minutes - but the days of a slow procession of smoke belching juggernauts had gone forever.

JED

## POSTSCRIPT

### Hydrants for Steam Wagons

In my scrapbook I have a cutting from the "Liverpool Echo" in the mid-sixties, showing a still extant water hydrant for steam wagons in King Edward Street, Liverpool. (This is part of the Dock Road, leading away from the Pier Head northwards towards Seaforth). The hydrant was encased in a cast iron pillar similar to those used by Liverpool Corporation as feeder pillars for the tramways, except that it was of heavier appearance. There is a Liver Bird embossed on the door, which carries the initials L C W W above and MOTOR WAGON SUPPLY below.

The text which accompanies the photograph is inaccurate. It suggests that such pillars were in regular use "forty or fifty years ago" (i.e. 1916-1926) when in fact the writer remembers daily sightings of steam driven lorries in Liverpool as late as 1945-1950.

However, I have no reason to doubt the truth of the information given in the following quotation:

"The engine drivers would be given a certain number of tallies by their company. They would take

a tally to the nearest supply point (there were a number in Liverpool at this time), insert it in the slot at the side of the appliance, and draw water.

"Liverpool Corporation would later collect the tallies and charge the appropriate sum to the firms which corresponded to the tally numbers"

Discussion of this item led to further details being discovered. What has not been discovered (yet) is a tally or token for use in such a hydrant. However, I have spoken to a man who interviewed the man who actually dismantled the very hydrant mentioned by John Dunabin, only a few years ago. The site of the device is still obvious, and what was a dwelling house converted to a transport cafe is now a corner shop. Some references in Warrington municipal minutes to the hydrants have been found, the location of some others has been revealed verbally, and the subject will be further aired in these columns when enough data has been gathered.

ARP/R/RI.

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### Letter to the Editor

Sir,

While it is correct to state that I "provided" the short biography of the late W.T. Underwood which prefaced the account of the latter's wartime activities in Occasional Paper No.1 of this Society, I should make clear that this was the work of Arthur Staddon.

The bulk of Mr. Underwood's preserved papers are at present in his custody on behalf of the Omnibus Society, for use in the preparation of a definitive history of United Automobile Services Ltd. by members of the Provincial Historical Research Group of the Society.

16/4/97

J.E. Dunabin  
Warrington

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## Municipal Transport

The number of Limited Companies which were formerly municipal transport undertakings continues to dwindle. However, the Conwy County Borough Council continues to operate a seasonal cable tram and motor coach services at Llandudno. The 1997 brochure correctly claims that the coach tours have operated from Prince Edward Square for more than 65 years. There is a new Rhos-on-Sea Circular for 1997.

The Blackpool Borough Council continues to operate the vertical lift at Uncle Tom's Cabin. What other directly operated municipal transport systems continue to operate?

# ASDA

## Modern Distribution

This article by Glen McBirnie examines the current distribution system operated by ASDA, one of Britain's leading supermarkets, which is entirely road based.

Increased affluence during the 1960s meant that most families gained access to the motor car. A boom in building changed the face of many cities. In the USA, with ample land space and cheap petrol, out of town "one-stop" shopping was well established and now spread to Britain. A pioneer in this type of shopping is ASDA (Associated Dairies), founded in Leeds.

Today, ASDA operates around 200 stores of varying sizes in both out of town and city centre locations, providing its style of service to large areas of Britain. Fresh, frozen and dry groceries are delivered daily to the stores by a network of Distribution Centres. This article tells the story of how the transport team at ASDA's Regional Distribution Centre at Lutterworth deals with logistical demand.

Those involved in overcoming the challenge of setting up ASDA's first RDC at Lutterworth could not have envisaged how smoothly it would handle a regular weekly throughput of 1.1 million cases. Such high volumes mean that vehicles based at the Centre are operational through 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A high degree of planning and control is required of the contractor appointed by ASDA to accomplish the task. This is Lloyd Fraser (Distribution) Limited, part of the Lloyd Fraser (Holdings) Company Limited, whose Head Office is in Lutterworth.

Thirty six ASDA Stores dispersed as far as Great Yarmouth to the east, Telford to the west, and Slough to the south are serviced by RDC Lutterworth. Up to 16 loads per day are delivered to its biggest store, Minworth, alone. On average, each store receives over 100 tons of food every day.

In a typical week RDC Lutterworth's vehicle fleet makes over 1100 store deliveries, covering over 14,000 miles. A tractor unit can be used on four separate shifts within the 24 hour cycle. 140 highly skilled drivers are employed on a permanent basis, supplemented by Agency drivers when necessary. Deliveries are made in three distinct waves with all products held at constantly monitored temperatures to ensure the highest quality at point of sale in the ASDA Store.

Wave 1 -

highly perishable chilled goods - 0100-0700

Wave 2 -

long life chilled & frozen goods 0700 - 1700

Wave 3 -

ambient goods

1700 - 2400

In addition to store deliveries, RDC Lutterworth makes daily trunking journeys to each of ASDA's five other Regional Distribution Centres with frozen goods. The distance to RDC Grangemouth in Scotland necessitates a trailer swap to be made at Camforth in Cumbria. Vehicles travelling back to Lutterworth divert to Manchester to pick up a return load of products from Proctor & Gamble for delivery to RDC Lutterworth. Such supplier partnerships are becoming commonplace in an effort to reduce operating costs and to reduce traffic and emissions. "Backhaul" arrangements exist with a number of suppliers in both ambient and chilled goods, including:

Kimberley Clark	Spondon, Derby	Paper goods
Britvic	Lutterworth	Canned drinks
Van den Bergh	Dartford	Oils & Fats
Robinsons	Norwich	DTT drinks
Elisabeth the Chef	Worcester	Fresh cakes
Geest Foods	Spalding	Dips/sauces
Birds Eye	Gt. Yarmouth	Frozen foods
Chambers	Ely, Cambs	Potatoes

Consequently, RDC Lutterworth requires a fleet of over 60 vehicles, including a base complement of fifty-two Scania 113 tractor units, with some additional hired units such as Volvo FL/FH or Renault Premium or Magnum models. The Scania fleet is leased through a national agreement between ASDA and Scania GB. Servicing arrangements are made with the local dealer, East Midland Commercials, whose vehicle maintenance unit is situated at Lutterworth.

From a driver's point of view, the Scania 113, with its 11 litre engine coupled to an eight speed range gearbox, is a delight to drive. Comfort is provided by adjustable seating, and ease of coupling and uncoupling trailers is aided by an air suspension system which allows the rear axle assembly to be lowered and raised.

The standard ASDA liveried temperature controlled trailers have a range of three working temperatures to suit the type of goods being carried. These range from 15°C to -25°C. The RDC Lutterworth temperature controlled ("tempcon") fleet of 52 trailers is made up of Gray and Adams (60%) and Massey (40%) units. A fleet of 14 ambient trailers is mainly of Montracon manufacture

Obviously the transportation is only one link, although a major one, in the distribution system which brings goods from source to the customer at the ASDA



superstore. The Company sells a wide range of goods outside foodstuffs, and there is a constant 24 hour cycle over seven days. The distribution chain must keep turning with demand driven by the customer, and goods procured, brought to the RDC, and sent out to the stores in the shortest possible time.

RDC Lutterworth is responsible for deliveries to 35 ASDA Stores within the East and West Midlands, together with locations further afield. Deliveries are made in every 24 hours to the following stores:

Arnold	Norwich
Bloxwich	Nottingham
Boston	Oadby
Brierley Hill	Perry Barr
Bromsgrove	Peterborough
Corby	Queslett
Coventry	Sinfin
Dudley	Small Heath
Great Yarmouth	Tamworth
Hafield	Telford
High Wycombe	Slough
Hinckley	Stowmarket
Ipswich	Watford
Leamington Spa	Wheatley
Leicester	Wolstanton
Long Eaton	Wolverhampton
Luton	
Minworth	

Vehicles currently in use include Scania 113 320 bhp tractor units registered M501-518 HFP, and M786-783, 803-6, 816-20, 846-7, 855 UYG.

## History on a Postcard Liverpool Landing Stage c.1953

There is unfortunately no space to illustrate this card, but we can still learn from it. It shows the part of the landing stage to the north of the Pier Head. This was used by liners, by 1953 not so common here, and the boats to the Isle of Man (which still sail) and to Llandudno (long gone). Ships of both companies can be seen on the card, together with a Liverpool bus, in what would be at the time a superseded livery. The bus would be working the Lime Street Station to the Landing Stage service which only operated in connection with train arrivals and boat departures, and this service was always worked by the oldest buses. very often one of the five "unfrozen" Bristol K5Gs, which could be the type seen in this picture. The presence of a Standard Vanguard van, a Jowett Javelin, and several Bedford OL type lorries also helps to give a clue to the period.

The largest building visible is the Riverside Station, whose long train shed could take main line passenger trains. Immediately at its exit, the tracks crossed the entrance to Princes Dock on a movable Bridge. Adjacent and to the east of Riverside was the Princes Dock, terminal for the nightly sailings to both Dublin and Belfast. This meant that all the regular interval passenger boat departures from Liverpool were in the same vicinity, and close to the main city bus, tram, and local ferry terminal of the Pier Head. The Belfast Steam Ship Company even had its own fleet of Muadslay and AEC buses to bring luggage and passengers from Lime Street.

ARP



An earlier Scania 113 with a non-refrigerated trailer.

# BOOK REVIEW

Not so much a book review on one volume, but a review of a series, and a comment on a scene where buses are perceived as smart. The Hong Kong Bus Handbooks are published in HK by Northcord Transport, but are available in the UK from the PSV Circle.

Do you remember the yearly appearances of the Ian Allan *ABC of London Transport Buses and Coaches*? So much was happening in the late forties/early fifties with the replacement of large numbers of trams and pre-war and wartime buses. Huge fleets of standardised vehicles flooded into service, and the average age of the London bus plummeted to single figures. Those little books were part of the scene, and must have encouraged many to record whatever aspect of the transport scene most took their fancy. LT revenue was probably aided by extra travel to the furthest flung parts of the network, in search of the Godstone STLs or exotica such as RTC1 and the CRs.

The Hong Kong Bus Handbooks are a new and exotic product from the Far East. These large pocket size books (approx 6 x 8 inches, 100+ pages, large pocket needed if you buy them all !!) document the current fleets of the Kowloon Motor Bus Company, the China Motor Bus Company, the New Lantau Bus Company, the Kowloon-Canton Railway (Bus Division), the Buses of Macau, and there is even a volume on the Singapore Bus Service, and double deck buses in China (see article on page 4, but which is compiled from different sources).

All titles have appeared since Spring 1996 and all are profusely illustrated in colour. The photos are superb, and the colour fidelity outstanding. Every class of bus is illustrated, with particular attention to prototypes, and whilst many illustrations are just very fine photographs of buses, some transcend the love affair with the machine and include architectural, scenic, or human detail too, in full focus.

These books are vehicle oriented, with verbal descriptions of vehicle classes, technical data and a list of fleet and registration numbers. The text and the captions are in Chinese, with parallel English translations which, unfortunately, copy the Chinese syntax and spoil such a high class (almost lavish) product for the non-Chinese speaking reader.

That the "humble" bus should receive such glamorous treatment reflects the importance attached to public transport in the densely populated area that forms the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Although there are some Dennis Darts, the average

Hong Kong bus is a 6 wheeled air-conditioned rear engined double decker. There are many premium fare Residents' Express Services which whisk wealthy commuters from condominium to down-town office. Some Residents' Services feed into interchanges with the Mass Transit Railway, which will soon have an express line of its own, which will parallel an existing underground line with trains travelling at 85 kph. Singapore too has similar facilities with wide spread use of air-conditioned buses and bus-train interchanges, but has gone one step further than Hong Kong in limiting the degree to which private cars can penetrate the urban centre. In Hong Kong, restraint on private cars is effected by taxation.

That the man behind the books, Hong Kong's version of Ian Allan, Danny Chan, should have been able to turn out eleven titles in less than 18 months (some of his books are about aircraft, too) is an indication that buses are an "OK subject" in Hong Kong. They sell at 100 HK dollars, and are over £10 each in the United Kingdom. (Does £10 today equate with the 2/6d paid in 1948 for Ian Allan titles?) On top of this, the sale of the first book in the series, on the subject of KMB, has been such a success that a New Edition has already appeared. Notwithstanding the fact that there was also a Hong Kong Buses Year Book (to similar format) to update the local enthusiast with new transport developments, this new edition, with more new and magnificent pictures, brings the KMB story up to date, with a 1997 fleet list.

This can only be done because things move so fast in Hong Kong. Since 1996, KMB has created a new bus company to work bus services to the site of the new HK International Airport on Lantau Island, which cross a new suspension bridge opened earlier this year by Baroness Thatcher. It also created another new entity, this time a joint venture company, to operate a cross border shuttle service to mainland China. The first of these has 150 buses on order, most of which are new three-axle low-floor Dennis Trident double deckers. The first of these, in a special gold livery, graces the cover of the new book, whilst inside there is a two page spread showing the new double decker parked on the viewing point adjacent to the new bridge.

Buses are the smart way to travel in Hong Kong. There is even one small piece of territory, a residential enclave known as Discovery Bay (Lantau Island) where private cars (but not golf buggies) are banned. The only motorised transport consists of buses and service sector vehicles. Danny Chan's handbooks are a window into a long forgotten world for those who live in Britain of a bus friendly environment. The KMB fleet alone, with all buses full, could transport half a million people at once.

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