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# ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT

## HISTORY CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

June 1998

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### About this issue

This is the first Newsletter of the 1998 Subscription Year, the following issues will appear at the time of the September Meeting and at Christmas. At our February Meeting, it was resolved to organise a Colloquium at Coventry on Wednesday 14th October. The subject should be the history of roads, and planned topics are in the main concerned with the last one hundred years. It was also agreed that in 1999 the subject of the Symposium should be on the theme of "how to do research."

This edition of Newsletter contains a key article by our Chairman, in which he puts forward an evaluation of a well known if not widely available resource document, the serial "Garcke's Manuals". It is planned to print further items on important source material, and another issue which has been discussed is that we should publish some detailed lists of what materials relevant to our interests can be found in various archives and collections.

Members are reminded that the next Business Meeting is scheduled to take place at Coventry on Saturday 19th September. Notice of this meeting and the presentations given in the afternoon will be sent out soon.

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## CONFERENCE MATTERS

### AGM 1998

The 1998 Annual General Meeting, held at the Museum of British Road Transport on February 14th, 1998 was opened with words of welcome from the Chairman, Professor John Hibbs. After the business of reading apologies for absence and the approval of the minutes from the previous AGM, there was the discussion of a number of topics. There was no progress to report on the question of a list of all O.S. published papers being made available by the Omnibus Society. The Chairman reported upon the threat of dispersal of the collection of historic journals held by the Chartered Institute of Transport. He himself had challenged this decision and later chaired a small sub-committee of five (all Members of this Conference) to advise the CIT, and he was pleased to say that the recommendations made by the sub-committee had all been accepted. As a result, full collections of periodicals such as *Bus & Coach*, *Commercial Motor*, *Modern Transport* etc. would remain available at the CIT in Portland Place, which, it was agreed by the meeting, was a most convenient location for researchers. Other documents would be placed in other more appropriate archives, on the condition that they remain accessible, and be returned to the CIT in event of closure of such archives.

At this point Grahame Boyes raised the issue of the preservation of documentation concerning rail privatisation, pointing out that such as the Public Record Office had by no means an adequate stock of such material. Other members agreed, and it was felt that official directives concerning the deposit of some documents had not been strong enough.

The report on the current membership was made by the Secretary, who welcomed the Road Locomotive Society as a New Corporate Member. John Dunabin commented on the average age of the Associate Members present, but after some light-hearted discussion, it was felt that there was plenty of life left in the membership. It was pointed out that, in general, associate members join R&RTHC after years of membership of more specialised societies (many of which are Corporate Members of the Conference) because they have more time in later life to study the broader aspects of their specialism. This point was succinctly endorsed by Richard Storey, and others agreed that the conference membership is a well of erudition. However, some concern was expressed that transport as an academic subject was not thriving at present, and that an improvement is needed to the

relationship between industry and the academic world to help restore the subject to its proper place.

Discussion now turned to whether the question of resources and how best to use them should be a subject for a future symposium. It was also suggested that the R&RTHC might publish a list of archives with transport related material. It was agreed that we should publish Garry Turvey's address from our 1997 Symposium in the Newsletter, and it was noted with pleasure that the same text was to appear in the *CIT Proceedings*.

There next followed reports on the Society's Accounts by the Hon. Treasurer, who wished to place on record our thanks to the Museum of British Road Transport for their willingness to host our meetings. The Hon Editor, apologised for the "blip" in the regularity of publication of the Newsletter during 1997, and said that issue no.14, distributed at the AGM, was in fact in respect of last year, and that the next three issues would follow during 1998. The Hon. Research Co-ordinator likened his role to that of the man who appears to be doing nothing but is always there in case of emergency. In fact he had undertaken a number of tasks, if not in the name of the Conference, at least in the service of all those interested in the serious study of transport.

The AGM concluded with the business of the election of officers. The Hon. Secretary had for some time expressed a desire to resign from office, but now said that he was prepared to stand for re-election, as Gordon Mustoe had agreed to undertake to act as a minute secretary at meetings, and Corinne Mulley was willing to continue to help with organising symposia and colloquia. Gordon, in fact, was already "in situ", and those present confirmed the re-election of all officers by a show of hands. L.Gordon Reed and Grahame Boyes expressed thanks to all the officers of the Conference from the floor.

Items of other business (recorded under the "Matters Arising" heading below) followed, and the meeting was then drawn to a close.

### 13th BUSINESS MEETING

This Meeting followed immediately after the AGM. The Hon. Secretary reported that after a total halt, work on the Smithies' List of Bus Operators had now resumed. It was made clear to the meeting that the work in hand was to enable the list as it stood to be re-sorted (in company number order) as a tool for research, and it was not the intention to publish the list in competition with a version at present being worked at by the Omnibus Society. (see also page 9)

Richard Storey reported on behalf of the working party charged with the task of compiling a Com-

panion to Road Freight Transport, in the absence of the chairman of that group, Professor John Armstrong. Work was going ahead simultaneously on three fronts: finding a publisher, finding a sponsor/sponsors, and finding suitable authors. Conclusions and comparisons were being formed with the recently published Oxford Companion to Railway History. Further meetings were planned at the Modern Records Centre of Warwick University.

The Chairman spoke on the subject of the 1997 Symposium, regretting the untimely but unavoidable interruption to the proceedings, but describing the event as a success. It was intended that the three papers given be published in the Newsletter.

Conference now discussed possible subjects for a Colloquium in 1998 and a Symposium in 1999. It was decided that the Colloquium, in view of the fact that most members who attended meetings were not in full time employment, might be held on a day other than a Saturday, and a provisional date was set for Wednesday 14th October, at Coventry. The subject would be that of the first word in our title...Roads.... and would address matters such as turnpikes, the Road Fund etc. (Nothing as recent as Motorways, although it was revealed that the original layout of the network was known as the "Tea Room Plan", having been first displayed to civil servants on the tea room wall.)

Peter Jacques pointed out that the Kithead Archive held important documents on both turnpikes and the Road Fund.

Further details of the Symposium to be held in 1999 would be announced by the Chairman at the September Business Meeting. In the meantime, he would welcome any suggestions for subjects to be touched upon at the Colloquium. A date for the next Business Meeting was discussed, and it was agreed that it be held on Saturday 19th September, once again at the Museum of British Road Transport, Coventry. This concluded the formal business, and members now took a lunch break.

The afternoon session contained three presentations by member. These were by Derek Jones, on the subject of Local Authority licensing of passenger vehicles, by Ian Yearsley who spoke on aspects of early horse tramway operation, and by Roger Atkinson, whose subject was the involvement of the Co-operative movement in public transport. All three presentations will appear in the Newsletter in due course. Derek and Roger were both speaking on a subject that they were working on, and both were seeking more information. Such information was indeed offered, and the versions of their words in Newsletter will contain the new data. The afternoon's proceedings were both enjoyable and informative, and rounded off a most fruitful business Meeting.

## Matters Arising....

The following topics were raised at the two meetings recorded above, and will form the subject of items to be published in this or a subsequent Newsletter.

**Charles E. Lee.** Ian Yearsley pointed out that in a recent number of *The Railway Magazine* it seemed that Mr. Lee and his work were unknown. It had been pointed out to the RM that this was not the case. It was also suggested that Charles E. Lee should have an entry in the Dictionary of National Biography.

**C.R.Wason.** John Dunabin commented upon the fact that the author of a book he had reviewed in Newsletter no. 14, C.R.Wason, had recently died, and thought it appropriate, bearing in mind the career of our Chairman, that he supply some notes on Mr. Wason's career. Mr. Wason, it seems, left an academic career to become a bus driver! (See page 10)

**Bus Stations.** It was revealed that several authors of works on architecture were seeking to record British bus stations. It was thought that the first bus station was at Heswall, and the first covered bus station was at Workington. There was thought to be scope for further study on this topic.

**"National" photographic archives.** Several recent advertisements requesting donations of negatives or prints to a "national" archive were thought to be of a dubious nature. Those present concluded that any such idea was impractical in any case.

**Corporate Members.** It was pointed out at the Meeting that the Newsletter may be used freely to advertise the events, publications etc. arranged by any of our Corporate Members.

**The Country Bus.** We are equally happy to advertise outsider's events, publications etc. if these are felt to be of interest to our membership. The Market Harborough Museum is currently holding an exhibition entitled "The Country Bus", which will continue until April 1998. Several members have visited this display, and found it of great interest.

40 Years of the  
**"Atlantean"**  
VEHICLE RALLY  
at B.C.V.M., Leyland  
on Sunday 27th September 1998  
in conjunction with the  
Open Day at Preston Bus

This event celebrates the 40th Anniversary of the launch of the first rear-engined bus model to be series built, in 1958.

### Chartered Institute of Transport Library

The address of this Library is 80 Portland Place, London W1N 4DP. The Librarian is Emily Pillinger, and the telephone number is 0171 - 467 9406.

The hours of opening are 10 am - 4 pm, Mondays to Fridays, and there is no charge for using the Library. The nearest Underground Stations are (in increasing order of distance) Regents Park, Great Portland Street and Oxford Circus.

### Omnibus Society Publications

The O.S. are pleased to make available to members of the R&RTHC any currently available publications.

Those interested should contact:

Mr. Derek Broadhurst,  
25 New Street,  
Chase Terrace,  
Burntwood WS7 8BT

Mr. Broadhurst can let enquirers know what is available and the costs. It is regretted that a complete list of all papers published by the O.S. is not presently available, although it is being worked on.

### ACHTUNG!

No, it was not an unknown German secret weapon, nor a piece of propaganda to hide something that was not to be spoken of, but simply an "Act of God". A whirlwind brought down the roof of the bus depot, crushing a Leyland Lion, and leaving the transport department without repair facilities for a few days!

### WIDNES CORPORATION MOTOR OMNIBUS DEPARTMENT

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

Owing to extensive damage by recent whirlwind to the Omnibus Repair Depot it is probable that serious difficulties will arise in the maintenance of the Department's rolling stock.

Every effort is being made to maintain the Public Transport Services as fully as possible, but notice is hereby given that in the near future it may be necessary to curtail or cancel certain services without previous notice, and it is hoped that the travelling public will forbear with the conditions set up by these circumstances.

H. WOOD  
General Manager

Moor Lane Widnes.  
21/10/43

## BOOK REVIEW

**FOWLERS TRAVEL OF HOLBEACH DROVE, Serving the Fens for 50 Years, by G.R.Mills, MW Transport Publications, 12 Saxon Close, Lexden, Colchester CO3 4LH, 1997, 48pp. illus. £7.95**

East Anglia has long been associated in the enthusiast's mind with a wonderful multiplicity of bus operators, and an equally fascinating variety of vehicles. There will therefore be many potential customers for this well produced publication. The author's introduction, which includes a roll call of disappeared operators, is followed by a brief history, then a chronologically arranged, illustrated survey of the fleet, with informative extended captions. There are also a route map, depot plan, an illustrated section on tickets and fare collection, a review of service developments and a fleet list. Interestingly, although Fowlers began small, with a secondhand Leyland Cub followed by a new Austin CXB, they operated only two Bedford OBs, moving on to SBs and then heavier chassis. A list of vehicles owned but not operated includes an ex-Green of thorney OB Vista. Did this go back to Green? - a similar vehicle stood under a tarpaulin outside the garage for a decade or more.

RAS  
**WARD'S MOTORS OF DEVIZES, by P. Drinkwater, Ward's Motors Publications, 9 Woodside, Stowmarket, Suffolk, 1996, 96pp. illus. £6.95**

The many changes in the structure of the motor trade and the pattern of fuel retailing make a publication such as this, dealing with a long established garage business, especially welcome. They should stimulate us to record with camera and notebook before the smaller garage and filling station is entirely forced out of existence. Indeed, the book itself serves as a warning that it may be too late for such recording: Ward's were taken over by a regional group in 1965, which was itself taken over by a national distributor in 1973. Ten years later, Ward's was part of a sale to another distributor, which then needed to rationalise its outlets in Devizes, resulting in the disappearance of Ward's. The business began as Ward's Cycles, moving on to motor cycles and cars, a common tale. Less common is the reputed close friendship of the founder, Samuel Ward, with William Morris; the author has not been able to document this, but they had both been racing cyclists at the same period.

RAS

## SPECIAL FEATURE

# The Availability and Use of 'GARCKE'S MANUAL'

by JOHN HIBBS

Emile Garcke (1856-1930) was one of the outstanding men in the transport industry at the end of the 19th century and well into the 20th. As well as pioneering the generation of electricity and its use for tramways, through the formation of the British Electric Traction Company in 1896 he foresaw the importance of the motor bus. Less well known may be his contribution to the history of both electric and motor traction, through two serial publications which he founded, and which have become to be called after him; published by the Electrical Press, which was itself a BET undertaking.

The term 'Garcke's Manual' is loosely used to refer to two serials, of which the first is the one that is usually meant. They are **Electrical Undertakings**, which was published annually from 1896 (Volume 1) to 1959/60 (Volume 57), with a break for the years 1942 to 1945 inclusive. As well as listing electricity generators it has a 'Traction Section' which includes electric tramways and electrified railways. A full set is held in the British Library (shelfmark P.P. 2491.cg). The second is **The Motor Transport Yearbook and Directory**, and this appeared annually from 1916 (Volume 1) to 1941/2 (Volume 25); again, the British Library has a full set (shelfmark P.P.2498.keb).

The MTYB is an excellent source of data for road transport, both passenger and freight, and in an appendix to this paper I reprint a study of its use, cross-checked to other sources, in the hope that it will encourage further exploration of its value for research. I have also sought to indicate the limits of what I have always thought of as 'Garcke's Manual', but I believe these are more than offset by its unique value as a publication of record. We can now look forward to checking it against both the shorter and longer 'Smithie's Lists'.(1)

Accessibility of these records is reasonably easy, and need not involve the effort required to use the British Library. (Academics may note that Cambridge University Library holds full sets, and I suspect that London and Oxford do also). Of the specialist libraries, the National Tramway Museum Library at Crich has a broken range of the first list, and four volumes of the second; the Omnibus Society Library at Coalbrookdale has a longer broken range of **Electrical Undertakings**, and all of the MTYB, except Volumes 10 and 12/13. The Kithead Trust at

Droitwich has Volume 43 of the former and Volumes 15 and 25 of the latter. When I was writing my own paper (attached as an appendix) the then Institute of Transport Library had a substantial run of both serials, but these have since been sold, and their whereabouts is unknown.

However, a quick check of some of the major public libraries shows that the manuals are likely to be accessible from them. Birmingham Public library has complete runs of both serials; shelf location for **Electrical Undertakings** is B621.302, and for the MTYB is B338.47388324. An initial approach should be made at the Business Information enquiry counter on the ground floor. (The MTYB is held in the Basement Store, which I suspect may be the Paradise Bus Station which the planners built, but which WMPTE refused to use; a nice irony, if so!) Edinburgh Central Library has **Electrical Undertakings** from 1916/17 to 1958/59 (allowing for the wartime break), but no copies of the MTYB. Liverpool Central library has MTYB for 1938/39 and 1939/40.

Other public libraries may be expected to hold sets or individual volumes - I suspect there may be good runs at the Guildhall Library in London. If readers can identify sets, please send in details to the Editor of the Newsletter.

## APPENDIX

### Making Use of 'Garcke's Manual'

#### Introductory Note

'Garcke's Manual' is a little used source, and some knowledge of its character is necessary in order to interpret the figures in the following tables. It never claimed to be exhaustive, and in the nature of things it tended to be more complete in the case of municipal transport and the larger companies than it did in the case of private firms, partnerships and sole traders. It is important to remember that goods as well as passenger undertakings were included, but the cover is far more complete for passenger than for goods. An indication of the proportion is given in the supplement to Table 3.

#### Table 1 (Number of Undertakings Recorded)

The provenance of this Table may be tested by reference to the first Annual Report of the Traffic Commissioners, for 1931-2, when 6,434 passenger operators submitted statutory returns, compared with a total of 3,962 operators of all kinds included here for 1929-30.

The inclusion of Municipalities here may be taken to be exhaustive, but the figures for companies and private firms will reflect the increasing efficiency of the editor in tracing and including operators already in existence. This is likely to be more serious in the case of private firms, but the overall setback in 1926/7 awaits explanation. It may be due to the

impact of the General Strike, especially in haulage. Another is the merger in July 1927 of 74 London firms to create the London Public Omnibus Company. It is probable that passenger operators predominate among

the companies. After allowing for the increasing size of the sample, we may observe the sharp increase following the end of the war, and the subsequent period of more restrained but observable growth.

**TABLE 1 NUMBER OF UNDERTAKINGS RECORDED**

Year	Companies	Private Firms	Municipalities	Total
1916	218	44	69	331
1917	250	58	66	374
1918	263	60	72	395
1919	317	94	75	486
1920	584	119	97	800
1921/22	1,280	508	100	1,888
1922/25	1,472	834	100	2,406
1923/24	1,556	950	102	2,608
1924/25	1,765	1,352	105	3,222
1925/26	1,854	1,332	111	3,297
1926/27	1,588	1,304	117	3,009
1927/28	1,826	1,486	121	3,433
1928/29	2,014	1,485	127	3,626
1929/30	2,344	1,490	128	3,962

**TABLE 2 CAPITAL AUTHORISED AND INVESTED**

Year	Column 1: Capital Authorised: Companies		Column 2: Capital Issued: Companies & Private Firms		Column 3: Capital Expend- iture: Municipal- ities		Column 4: Total of Columns 2 & 3	
	No.	Amount £000s	No.	Amount £000s	No.	Amount £000s	No.	Amount £000s
1916	188	16,198	121	9,623	18	141	139	9,764
1917	215	17,125	134	11,391	18	167	152	11,558
1918	230	18,964	142	13,229	20	202	162	13,431
1919	280	19,588	154	14,592	22	382	176	14,974
1920	546	24,286	159	17,167	28	548	187	17,717
1921/22	1,025	29,249	509	19,339	53	895	562	20,234
1922/23	1,229	30,494	735	20,556	57	985	792	21,541
1923/24	1,392	32,278	929	23,176	64	1,239	993	24,415
1924/25	1,533	35,401	1,540	26,499	74	1,472	1,614	27,971
1925/26	1,683	36,153	1,512	27,137	76	1,746	1,588	28,883
1926/27	1,395	38,166	1,470	29,850	79	2,155	1,549	32,005
1927/28	1,567	44,246	1,519	36,468	90	3,015	1,609	39,483
1928/29	1,862	54,965	1,607	44,533	97	3,941	1,704	48,475
1929/30	2,123	61,199	1,801	50,130	98	5,553	1,899	55,684

Table 2 The sample is subject to the same bias as that in Table 1, but this is offset by the assumption that the larger operators (in terms of capital) are better represented. It may therefore be taken as a

more satisfactory measure of growth. Note again the sharp post-war increase, and the setback in 1926/27 is also apparent as to numbers, but is ironed out in terms of investment.

**TABLE 3 ROLLING STOCK IN SERVICE (Not Tramcars)**

Year	Number of Companies	Vehicles in Service	Number of Municipalities	Vehicles in Service	<u>Combined Totals:</u> Under- Vehicles takings in Service	
1916	140	5,155	28	177	168	5,332
1917	147	5,537	26	198	173	5,735
1918	151	4,423	26	226	177	4,649
1919	166	5,583	28	243	194	5,826
1920	204	7,583	43	500	247	8,083
1921/22	414	10,937	52	649	466	11,586
1922/23	684	13,271	57	684	741	13,955
1923/24	803	16,319	64	781	867	17,100
1924/25	1,346	20,546	74	1,011	1,420	21,557
1925/26	1,314	23,115	76	1,294	1,390	24,409
1926/27	1,253	24,058	79	1,705	1,332	25,763
1927/28	1,260	27,574	90	2,564	1,350	30,138
1928/29	1,328	32,835	97	3,568	1,425	36,503
1929/30	1,425	38,066	98	4,172	1,523	42,238

Table 3

Once again the sample is biased. The setback now appears over a longer period, commencing 1925/26, and with no return to the previous year's figure until 1929/30. This seems likely to be the consequence of some unknown shift in the basis of collection, but it is once more noticeable that the overall growth in the

number of vehicles continued, with a sharp increase at the bottom end of the period. The size of the sample may be roughly assessed by comparison with the following figures from the Traffic Commissioners' Reports for 1931-32, which are themselves stated to be under-representative. They refer, of course, to road passenger vehicles (buses & coaches) only.

**TABLE 3a PASSENGER ROLLING STOCK IN 1931 (Traffic Commissioners)**

Date	Total Vehicles	of which, licensed
31. 3. 31	47,870	34,651
30. 6. 31	47,984	44,608
30. 9. 31	47,578	44,606
31. 12. 31	46,230	37,838

Table 3a

Garcke also gives his own breakdown for certain years only, and this may be used to compare with Tables 3 and 3a. (Note that tramcars are not included in the above figures)

Table 3b (overleaf)

In this table, after allowing for assumed growth, Garcke seems to be within reach of the Commissioners' figures for licensed vehicles, and we may assume that, by the end of the series, his sample was of a very

adequate size. In view of the tendency shown by subsequent figures for fleet size to be either very small or fairly large, the sample is likely to be reasonably representative, and its weakness probably lies in the under-representation of the smaller fleets.

Cross-checking to the MoT data on licences current, and to the 1922 Traffic Census, we obtain a rather different picture. However, these sources do not differentiate on a very meaningful basis for this purpose: 'Motor Hackneys' include all taxis and hire

cars as well as buses and coaches, while 'Goods - Motor & Steam' includes own-account transport (delivery vans &c), which are excluded from Garcke's figures. It is not clear how much double counting may

have taken place in the 1922 Traffic Census of Road Vehicles in Great Britain.

Garcke also gives his own breakdown for certain years only, and this may be used to compare with 3 and 3a.

**TABLE 3b ROLLING STOCK BROKEN DOWN BY SERVICE TYPE (approximate)**

Year	Col. 1 Buses	Col. 2 Coaches	Col. 3 Total, Cols 1 & 2	Col. 4 Private Hire Cars	Col. 5 Goods & Parcels Vehicles	Col. 6 Total, Cols 3, 4 & 5
1924/25	13,000	3,700	16,700	1,400	3,400	21,500
1925/26	15,000	3,700	18,700	1,700	4,600	25,000
1926/27	15,600	3,500	19,100	1,700	5,000	25,800
1927/28	19,000	3,000	19,300	1,500	6,700	30,200
1928/29	22,800	3,100	25,900	1,600	9,000	36,500
1929/30	26,400	3,950	30,350	1,760	10,130	42,240

**TABLE 3c ROLLING STOCK LICENSED (Ministry of Transport)  
Traffic Census of 1922 Road Vehicles - Great Britain**

Date	Goods Vehicles Motor and steam	Motor Hackneys	Basis
Year 1922	151,000	78,000	Estimate from Traffic Census
31. 5. 27	269,217	86,488	Licences current (approximate)
31. 5. 28	286,259	86,692	
31. 5. 29	307,778	87,772	
31. 5. 30	327,016	90,036	

A further cross-check, this time to Mitchell & Deane's use of the British Road Federation statistics, merely shows what uncertain ground we still tread in this period.

**TABLE 3d ROLLING STOCK IN USE (Mitchell & Deane)  
(B.R.Mitchell & P.Deane Abstract of British Historical Statistics 1962 p.200)**

Year	Buses and Coaches 000s	Taxis 000s	Goods Vehicles 000s	Total 000s
March				
1916	51		82	113
1917	48		64	112
1918	42		41	83
1919	44		62	106
1920	75		101	176
August				
1921	83		128	211
1922	78		151	229
1923	86		173	259
1924	94		203	297
1925	99		224	323
September				
1926	40	61	257	358
1927	42	53	283	378
1928	46	49	306	401
1929	50	48	330	428
1930	53	48	348	449



The final time series, while not indicating the scale of growth of the industry, is of particular interest since it is perhaps a unique source of information concerning the rate of return on capital. Whereas the data given above ceased to be included in the manual when more reliable statistics became available from the

Traffic Commissioners, the sequence below continues throughout the inter-war period. The first two columns indicate the size of the sample.

\* Note that in 1925, Thomas Tilling Limited declared a dividend of 58.66% on an ordinary capital of £308,850.

JH (1973)

**TABLE 4 AVERAGE RATES OF DIVIDEND AND INTEREST (Companies)**

Year	Number of companies	Aggregate Capital	Average ordinary dividend	Average preference dividend	Average loan interest	Total average rate
		£	%	%	%	%
1915	38	8,381,067	6.79	5.30	4.80	5.09
1916	41	8,498,549	5.82	6.03	4.77	5.47
1917	44	8,692,899	6.75	5.98	4.75	6.00
1918	42	8,619,925	5.33	6.06	4.78	5.21
1919	45	9,261,436	6.48	5.98	4.67	5.88
1920	55	10,429,884	5.84	6.95	4.74	5.68
1921	71	11,639,528	6.50	5.18	4.85	6.03
1922	75	13,060,876	6.05	5.57	4.81	5.70
1923	83	13,081,954	7.97	6.08	4.69	6.93
1924	88	14,314,032	7.65	6.70	4.83	6.56
1925*	96	16,979,949	8.62	6.59	4.89	7.25
1926	110	19,053,361	7.79	6.42	4.78	6.27
1927	124	21,638,236	6.40	6.09	4.86	5.91
1928	129	27,807,554	8.37	6.23	4.86	7.01
1929	153	38,550,049	7.65	6.25	4.91	6.61
1930	139	33,318,350	8.41	5.97	4.84	6.76
1931	125	40,121,315	8.55	6.21	4.87	7.02
1932	128	43,879,719	6.91	5.77	4.72	6.09
1933	122	35,168,438	8.00	5.87	4.83	7.00
1934	121	39,491,825	8.82	6.17	4.72	7.64
1935	111	39,771,773	8.31	6.29	4.69	7.63
1936	116	45,218,203	8.27	6.29	4.89	7.56
1937	109	47,938,905	9.22	6.37	4.51	8.33
1938	111	51,728,975	9.10	6.50	4.53	8.35
1939	109	52,520,445	9.06	6.24	4.68	8.27

**Notes**

The above article was submitted by Professor Hibbs for use in an Occasional Paper but, as stated in the Editorial, its publication now fits in with the decision to discuss transport research and the various means available to students taken at our last meeting.

(1) The "Smithie's Lists", another important piece of data, will be discussed in an article in the next edition of the Newsletter. These have often been mentioned at meetings, but have never been described fully in these pages.

Other items on sources of data of use to researchers of road transport are planned. Contributions from readers are welcome. Please write to the Hon Editor at the address shown on page 1.

**End of an Era**

The China Motor Bus Company of Hong Kong will cease to operate 88 urban bus services at midnight 31/8/98, after 65 years as franchised bus service provider on Hong Kong Island. The still family controlled company has shifted its capital into other areas over the last years. The routes abandoned are to be taken over by a joint venture company, in which the British FirstBus Group is a major partner. It is anticipated that there will be some difficulties in the early days of September, as CMB has refused to co-operate with the new bus company.

## An Ullage Problem

### Transporting a Dangerous Load

John Dunabin writes of the early problems of bulk liquid transport, when vehicle technology and road surfaces were not what they are today.

Once Alfred Nobel (of the famous prizes) had discovered how to control the rapidity of its decomposition, glyceryl trinitrate, commonly known as nitroglycerine, became an essential ingredient of many explosives for use in peace and war.

Glycerine, starting point for its production, was a by-product in the manufacture of soap, and a war-time (WW2) need arose for the transport of large quantities from the Manchester area to storage facilities in the north-east of England. The most suitable vehicles then available were large semi-trailer frameless tankers, of the type introduced by Scammell in about 1926. The elimination of a chassis for the trailer was meant to increase the payload, but could have resulted in a dangerously high centre of gravity when it was fully loaded. The tanks were simple cylinders, which had to be mounted high in the air above the tractor units - postwar modification of their shape allowed lowering by a few feet. Their rear ends from the start, though, could be dropped to just above axle level, improving stability but resulting in a cant of perhaps 10 degrees to the horizontal.

The absence of a chassis meant that the tanks themselves were subject to considerable stress, even leading to complete failure and possible loss of contents (double skinning would have taken away the weight advantage.) Upper limits on laden weight were of extreme importance. This presented no problem in the case of e.g. petroleum spirit, but a full load of glycerine (specific gravity 1.265) would have weighed 30 per cent more. The only possible solution was to underfill by say a quarter, leaving a great void at the upper end of the tank.

Starting off posed no problems, but slowing down, worse still stopping, did, even from 10 m.p.h. A second after the driver took his foot off the accelerator pedal, he was propelled forward again, as ten tons or more of glycerine surged up, and hit the front bulkhead. I only had to ride a couple of miles to the nearest weighbridge (Fisher Renwick, White City at Manchester) when we never got up speed. The drivers then had several miles of granite setts through Manchester traffic, much of them stop-start, followed by other towns. This was uncomfortable, even mildly hazardous, but worse still was the descent from the top of the Pennines, when the liquid climbed up the tank and stability went down. "Bloody murder", words

used by one driver to describe this part of his run, were probably quite justified.

Two questions may be asked, firstly, why no baffles in the tanks to reduce surging? This was a later refinement: the tanks in use at the time had none. I can state this positively as I had to clamber inside one, suitably clothed (partly unclothed actually), to check on its cleanliness. The second, why not have used rail tankers, horizontally mounted on strong underframes, which could be filled to the brim? The answer may be found in the story circulating at the time, of an occasion when, it was said, one such had reached its destination a hundred miles or so away with its official seals still intact, but entirely devoid of the original contents. Sugar was rationed, but glycerine could be used as a partial substitute in cakes etc.

In writing the above, a third question comes to mind: would not all that surging increase stresses considerably? The answer is almost certainly yes.

JED

## ROLY WASON

By a surprising co-incidence, the day before distribution of the last Newsletter, which contained a review of Mr. Wason's *Busman's View* published forty years ago, "The Guardian" contained a laudatory obituary of him, following his death at the age of ninety.

Clearly Roly Wason was a man of talent, ability, and, more importantly, great adaptability. On leaving Rugby School, he went up to Cambridge, where he graduated first class with distinction in Latin, Greek, and Ancient History - and moved well to the left politically. From Cambridge he went to Canada as professor of archaeology at the University of Toronto, but only remained there for a year. He returned to Scotland where, following a short spell of teaching, he became a skilled lens grinder and a shop steward.

Neither of these two occupations seem to have held him for long. After attempting fruit farming in Somerset without success, he became works manager for a Hartlepool engineering firm. With such a varied career behind him the choice of bus conducting, even if the engineering business had not collapsed, does not seem all that surprising.

Promotion to driver, and with his wife as a conductor, was clearly only a short-term expedient. A lengthy return to teaching along with his wife followed next, and there were camping holidays among Albanian brigands and the Greek intelligentsia, but it seems legitimate to wonder whether this restless man may have found partial fulfilment at least behind the wheel of a motor bus.

Concluding on a personal note, over the past seventy years I have talked to hundreds of drivers and conductors, acquiring the status of a personal friend with quite a number of them, but I have never discovered one to have as colourful a background as this. Perhaps I failed to ask the right questions!

JED

## Matter Arising....

Newsletter 13 contained an item by John Dunabin on the subject of his memories of steam wagon and other traffic in the twenties, along the A57 Liverpool to Manchester road. Further light has been shed upon the Motor Wagon Water Supply.

Recent research into newspapers of 1922-23 has cast new light on the location and nature of the stopping point in Liverpool Road, Warrington, which John Dunabin remembers. The road left the Borough of Warrington at the point known as Sankey Bridges. This name relates to the three contiguous bridges over the Sankey Brook, the Mill Brook, and the St. Helens Canal (the first commercial canal in Britain, built to bring coal from St. Helens to Widnes, and thence into the Mersey). After this, the Liverpool Road bears to the left, with industrial sites to the left, and (in the twenties) open fields to the right, except for a long initial terrace of houses. This stretch of road ends after about half a mile, where it forks left to Penketh and Widnes, and carries straight on to Great Sankey, Rainhill and Liverpool (A57).

There was, about two thirds of the distance along from Sankey Bridges towards the bifurcation (known as Penketh Lane End) a small group of houses set back from the road, in front of which was a track forming a "loop" before going off in a northerly direction. It was here that steam wagons were in the habit of taking water from a natural water course, and where the tenant of one of the houses saw fit to establish a small canteen/transport cafe. In the early twenties, the Parish Councils of both Penketh and Great Sankey held a meeting to discuss the nuisance of parked wagons on the highway and pipes trailing across the footpath. They called upon the authority responsible for roads in that area, Warrington R.D.C to construct a proper lay-by, and it was here that the water hydrant was later set up.

The importance of the A57 is seen in a report by the Surveyor to the W.R.D.C., who in July 1922 took a census of passing traffic at Sankey, as well as at Manchester Road and Winwick Road (A57 East, and A49 North from Warrington) which showed that Liverpool Road "stood out by itself", with 2,400 vehicles passing in the space of 12 hours, whereas at the other two points less than one third of that number were recorded.

ARP

## The Real Thing

Ron Phillips relates a recent journey to remember

Last October, I visited Blackpool with the specific aim of riding on the open top car, no. 31, which I had heard was newly in service. I was not quite sure of the details of this car, as it was not one which has spent many recent seasons in Blackpool. It had, in fact, come from Beamish Museum in September, on loan to B.T.S. for what remained of 1997 and to stay into 1998, Centenary Year for the Blackpool and Fleetwood Tramroad. Originally a Marton car, it is not quite original in its present form as a bogie open top car, but it has enough Blackpool features for me to seem authentic, being essentially restored as an open top "Standard" If the car is not quite right, the experience of riding on it was brilliant.

The car was running in ordinary service until it was time for the Illuminations Tours to start. At dusk I found myself sitting on a crowded top deck (the weather was quite mild for the time of year) and saying to myself "Remember this ride! You have not ridden on an open top tram in the street since 1956 at Llandudno." That was not quite true, as I did ride on the Dreadnought in Blackpool in the sixties, but its progress was staid, and I can never really think of Dreadnoughts as being real trams with such an odd design of staircases and platform.

No.31 was not staid. It was driven at full speed on several stretches, despite being without air brakes and brought to a halt by good old-fashioned muscle power. Not only was this tram crowded, but so were the other trams and buses which passed, as the mild weather and illuminations had brought in the crowds. Here I was, hurtling along in the open air surrounded by full trams and buses, with lots of people promenading (literally!) and this was *Britain, late 1997*. In addition, I was doing this on a tram *in service* in the town for which it had been built getting on for a hundred years ago.

The rumble of the equal wheeled bogies, the hiss of the trolley wheel, the gentle rocking motion of the car, the number of people about in the open street as darkness fell, this was an *actually real* sensation. Virtual reality can never match this. A tiny window of opportunity exists for you all. Go to Blackpool in 1998 and get a ride on this car. You do not need to close your eyes for this experience, keep them wide open and remember it. A British open top double deck tram in normal passenger service on street track in its own town. Beat that!

ARP

# Co-operative Transport

Roger Atkinson's presentation at the 13th Business Meeting (Feb 1998) touched upon his recent research into passenger transport services provided by the Co-operative Movement. Contributions from those at the meeting and some subsequent further research is gathered together below. Further contributions are welcomed.

The subject excludes owners' co-operatives such as A1 Service in Ayrshire and elsewhere, but includes workers' (or former workers') co-operatives such as were found at Watford, Folkestone, and Gravesend. Community buses, a modern and quite numerous feature of the transport scene during the last 20 years, generally fall outside the scope of this item, but two examples of bus users banding together to provide a service or sustain a threatened one are mentioned.

The notes are presented in alphabetical order of main town served. No claim is being made that this list is exhaustive.

## **BARNESLEY**

Barnsley British Co-operative Society Ltd.

Operated charabancs and motor coaches, from the twenties until the sixties. Also ran haulage with steam wagons (1931). After World War Two, BBC took over a coachbuilding firm, which had started prewar as John Taylor, t/a Barnsley Motor Bodies. The works were situated in Foundry Street, Barnsley, and under BBCo-op the bodywork was known as "Unity", which was also a fleetname used on the Co-op coaches.

This society used motor traction from 1899 for moving its own goods, but by 1930/1 was quoted as "Motor coach proprietors and haulage contractors"

## **BIRMINGHAM**

Birmingham Co-operative Society Ltd

Operated charabancs and motor coaches from at least 1921, and at one time ran an express service, Birmingham - Westward Ho! There was also a furniture removals service. In the early thirties the fleet was reported as 100 vehicles, AEC, Dennis and Albion coaches, and Dennis 6 ton lorries. The operation continued into modern times - until at least 1978.

## **BIRTLEY**

Birtley & District Co-operative Society Ltd.

Operated road haulage, at least during the twenties/early thirties

## **BRISTOL**

Bristol Co-operative Society Ltd (St. Werburgh's)

Operated charabancs, probably starting in the

twenties, at least into the fifties. Also built motor bodies under the name "Coboco"

## **DERBY**

Derby Co-operative Provident Society Ltd

Known to be operating coaches in the early thirties..

## **DONCASTER**

Involvement in transport unclear, but listed one of their trading departments as "transport" in 1932.

## **EDINBURGH**

St.Cuthbert's Co-operative Society Ltd.

Operated coaches, including one Dennis that was supplied via the C.W.S., Manchester.

## **ENFIELD Highway**

Enfield Highway Cooperative Society

Believed to have operated a furniture removal service, and coaches c.1950-65.(3 coaches in 1956) Held express road service licence.

## **FOLKESTONE**

Co-operative Transport Society Ltd.

The registered office was in London SW7, but the operating centre was 12 Bradstone Road, Folkestone. It commenced services between Folkestone - Dover in 5/21, and owned buses, charabancs and (a) motor lorry. It used the trading name "Co-operabancs" (*see below*).

The Company's buses also operated in Gravesend after a strike by Maidstone & District employees in 1923 (see also Gravesend).

The Company itself eventually amalgamated with London & South Coast Motor Services (1915) Ltd.. in 1928.

Tickets were by Bell Punch, and were titled CO-OPERATIVE TRANSPORT SOCIETY LTD. See illustration below of reverse of ticket (facsimile)

## **GRAVESEND**

Co-operated Bus Services.

Towards the end of May 1923, Maidstone & District Motor Services Ltd. suffered a major strike by the bus crews, and full services were not resumed until June. A local official of the T&GWU announced in early June that competitive services were to be started. Maidstone Town Council granted a licence for six buses, and vehicles of the CTS Folkestone duly appeared. Licences were also granted by the councils of Chatham and Gravesend and the UDCs of

If you require a  
**MOTOR COACH, MOTOR BUS OR  
MOTOR LORRY**

Write or 'Phone to

**CO - OPERABANC S**

FOR COMFORT

12, BRADSTONE ROAD, FOLKESTONE

'Phone 699

Facsimile of CTS ticket (reverse)

Milton Regis and Northfleet, and a little later CTS buses were running in Dartford. Later in 1923, these operations passed into the hands of J.M. Roberts and R.G. Old, and continued until 1926, based principally in Gravesend. The business, by then in financial difficulties, was acquired by Maidstone & District.

Tickets were by Bell Punch, headed MOTOR BUS SERVICES, with the title Co-operated Bus Services in the centre, with "Royal Daylight Oil" advertisement on the back.

R.G. Old was a significant figure in the CTS operation at Folkestone. He had been a "front man" in the original Tilling incursion into Folkestone, as the Folkestone & District Road Car company in 1914, having at that time been trading in a partnership of motor engineers as Youngs & Old.

#### **HYDE**

Hyde Equitable Co-operative Society

Operated charabancs and coaches in the 1920s and 1930s. Traded as "Hyco".

#### **LEICESTER**

The 1922 edition of the *Co-operative Directory* lists the Leicester Carriage Builders & Wheelwrights.

#### **LINCOLN**

Lincoln Co-operative Society is known to have owned coaches in the 1950s.

#### **LONDON**

London Co-operative Society

Known to have operated coaches. LCS was in north London.

Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society

RACS was based in Woolwich, and operated motor coaches, including regular express services from London to coastal resorts. The operation began in 1920 with six vehicles.

#### **MANCHESTER**

Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd. (CWS)

Was holder of Road Service licences in 1931, despite being a wholesale entity.

#### **MIDDLESBROUGH**

Middlesbrough Co-operative Society

Involvement in transport unclear, but listed one of their trading departments as "motors".

#### **PENDLETON**

Pendleton Co-operative Industrial Society

Holder of road Service Licences in 1931. This society was based in a suburb of Manchester.

#### **PLYMOUTH**

Plymouth Co-operative Society

Operated motor coaches, at least in the post WW2 period.

#### **SCOTLAND**

Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society (SCWS)

95 Morrison Street, Glasgow C5.

The SCWS was primarily a manufacturing and whole-

sale supply to the retail co-operative societies in Scotland, but it operated as a retailer in some remote areas, where a retail society could not exist. As early as 1925, the Company was described as "Charabanc and lorry owners, Glasgow". By the early 1950s it had, at various dates, acquired some local bus operators in widely different locations and become a bus operator itself. Those taken over included:

*Cameron*, Pitlochry - Kinloch Rannoch

*Unknown*, Aberfeldy - Brig o' Balgie

*Skye Transport* (in 3/46)

*James Smith*, Barrhead (in 1948)

Skye Transport, which had 4 services on Skye, was sold in 11/58 to David MacBrayne Ltd. The Aberfeldy to Glen Lyon service still appeared in Summer 1968 Highlands & Islands' timetable as operated by SCWS, but later this service passed to Scottish Postbuses. It was already a mail, rather than mainly passenger, service. Smith's Bus Services were disposed of in June 1968 to Western S.M.T. Ltd., thus leaving SCWS with coach operating bases at Aberdeen, Barrhead and Kilmarnock.

SCWS also built motor bodies, including some of the mail buses used on Skye (before and after takeover). This aspect of the business involved the acquisition of Cadogan, Perth. The business was carried out at a former MoS wartime facility. (Note: all the Skye Transport vehicles had Cadogan bodies)

#### **ST. HELENS**

St. Helens Industrial Co-operative Society Ltd.

Operated motor coaches in post WW2 period, in 1956 there was a fleet of nine in cream and black livery.

#### **WALSALL**

Walsall Co-operative Society Ltd.

Central Coachways Ltd. was founded in the 1920s in Walsall by H. and R. Turner. Control was taken by WCS about 1946, and several other small coach operators were taken over, but the Central Coachways trading name was retained. In 10/63, the Cannock branch of G.H. Austin & sons Ltd. was acquired. The Company held express service as well as school, works and feeder service licences.

It passed into the control of the West Midlands Co-operative Society, and was eventually sold to the West Midlands PTE in 1984.

#### **WHEATLEY (near Burnley)**

The Wheatley Co-operative & Industrial Society Ltd.

Holder of Road Service Licence in 1931.

Thanks are due to John Dunabin, Mike Fenton, Derek Giles, Peter Jacques, Tony Newman, Ron Phillips, L. Gordon Reed and Richard Storey for additional material. Any further notes will be welcome.

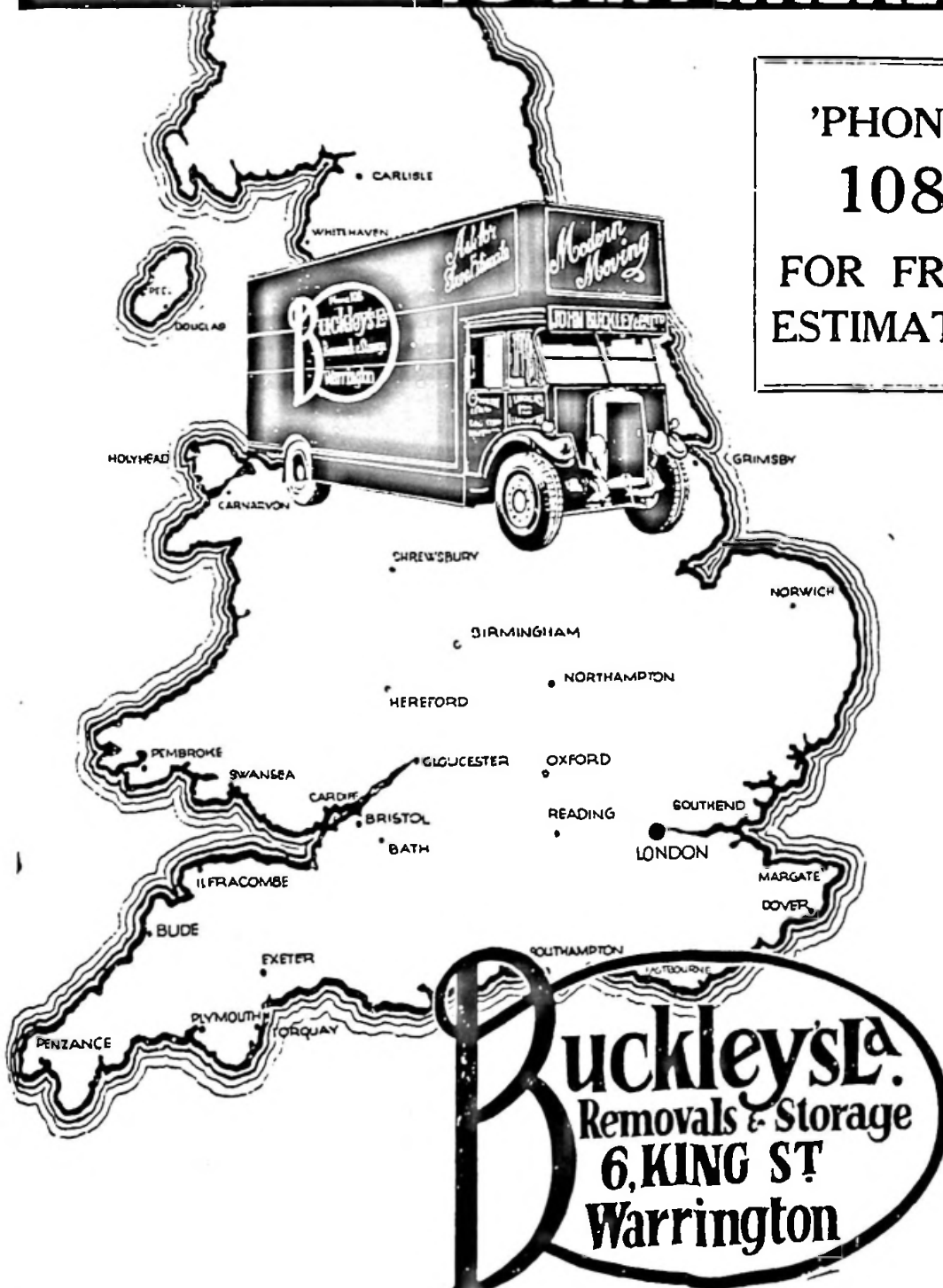
FAIRFIELD SHIPYARD  
(Joint Shop Stewards Committee)

Drumchapel Bus

WEEKLY TICKET

Left is a facsimile of a Fairfield (note incorrect spelling on the actual ticket) Shipyards Joint Shop Stewards' Committee Weekly Ticket for the specially organised bus service referred to below. The reproduction shows the actual size of the ticket, printed on pink card. On the reverse appear two essential elements, a serial number, in this case "23" inscribed in ink, and a fare, in this case 8/6d, inscribed in pencil. A rare item indeed from the Roger Atkinson Collection!

**FROM "BUCKLEYS"  
TO ANYWHERE**



'PHONE  
**108**  
FOR FREE  
ESTIMATES

**Buckleys**  
Removals & Storage  
6, KING ST  
Warrington

## A Rare Beast..... the Leyland "Llama"

It has not been uncommon for bus chassis to be used as the basis for lorries or vans, even from new. What makes the Leyland "Llama" so rare is that the manufacturer re-engineered a bus chassis, the Leyland "Tiger" TS4 as a goods vehicle, the GTS4. Perhaps the germ of the idea was the fact that the Leyland "Lioness"LTB1, a bonneted single deck bus chassis, had been chosen by a number of companies for a goods application, usually as a low loading tanker. John Dunabin's item on page 10 may help to explain why this was so. The chassis was also used as the basis for a number of vans, usually for special products. The limousine-like outline of such vans was seen as an attraction, as a means to generate interest and advertise a prestige product.

A disadvantage of the bonneted chassis was that much of the length was lost to load carrying. This mattered little with tankers, because of the weight of the cargo. Bulky but light loads usually went on a lightweight chassis...in the Leyland range there was the 2 ton "Cub", available in both normal and forward control versions. There is much evidence to show that overloading of light chassis such as the "Cub" was rife in the thirties. Maybe because the forward control "Cub" was built in full-width cab form for lorries and vans and half-cab form for buses, it was realised by Leyland engineers that the same could be done with heavier vehicles.

The Leyland "Llama" was in effect a "Tiger" with a full-width cab. Why it was deemed necessary to do this, rather than let an outside firm convert a standard "Tiger" is unclear, but is probably a result of the slack order books of the 1932-4 period. There was a bodybuilding facility at Leyland, and the then current goods range of chassis could be supplied with Leyland built cabs, or complete bodies to the needs of the customer. The vehicle seen opposite is fitted with a Leyland built cab and a Luton type body for household removals. The low loading chassis and six cylinder petrol engine were ideal for a vehicle which might need to go anywhere in the country. The panel advertisement dates from 1935, when the vehicle was three years old, and still lived up to the front slogan "Modern Moving". In fact, it was new in November 1932, carrying the registration ED 7301, and with chassis number 1795.

As only eight of the model were produced, it is surprising to find that a second example also worked in the same town. ED 7786, new in 8/33, operated for the Alliance Box Company, which made specialist cardboard boxes, many of which were for the pottery

industry. The boxes were designed, cut out, assembled and folded flat at the factory. For delivery of the completed materials, the Leyland "Llama" was equipped with a curtain-sided body, a somewhat unusual body design at that date. Over a decade later, the Alliance Box Company was the operator of another Leyland passenger chassis. This was a post-war "Tiger," and it had a low platform to carry large rolls of paper on a regular run from paper mill to the box factory.

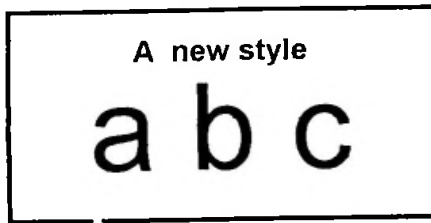
Another specialised manufacturer to own a "Llama" was Earnshaw Brothers & Booth, wholesale cabinet manufacturers of Central and Pentridge Mills at Burnley. The vehicle, chassis number 1790, again complete with Luton style body, was supplied in October 1932, and carried thirties-style kitchen furniture. The first GTS4 chassis to be built was eventually delivered in June 1933 to J. Brooke of Blackpool, again fitted with a pantehnicon style body. (Was this for furniture removal?) A similar vehicle on chassis 2189, registered RM 9173, was sold to Roseby of Workington, and was for removals.

Chassis 2258 was supplied to Ritchings & Battershall, Staundon, and was registered DG 8578. Can any reader reveal the business carried out by this owner? Finally, Scotland and Wales had one "Llama" each. Robertson of Paisley (could this be the jam manufacturer?) had chassis 194, and Evans of Swansea had chassis 196. The latter is believed to be the department store whose advertisements were as much a part of the Swansea & Mumbles tramcar livery as was the Binns advertisement on the Sunderland trams.

Although the "Lioness" chassis was often used in passenger form as the basis for a tanker, Leyland built one GLTB3 tanker chassis for the Texas Oil Co. in 1934. It is not clear which animal's name, if any, was displayed on the radiator. This vehicle carried a Lancashire registration TF 6260 and had chassis no.2220.

There was clearly a low demand for these specially engineered chassis, and no more were built. Adaption of passenger chassis by customers was to continue for many years, generally for carrying furniture or similar goods which were to be loaded by manpower away from a specialised loading bay in the days before power operated tail-lifts. Not only were passenger chassis lower, but the engine, gearbox, and axle ratio were capable of offering a faster performance than contemporary goods models.

Passenger chassis today are unsuitable for use in the above way, but in recent times ERF produced a special low loading chassis for brewery use, and Dennis Specialist Vehicles have a low chassis for municipal and public utility customers.



The "abc" series of booklets, introduced by Ian Allan, have been much imitated since they were first introduced over 50 years ago. In recent years, the old 6 inch by 4 inch format has been superseded by the 8 inch by 5.5 inch size (or should that be 200 cms by 150 cms). I suppose anoraks have bigger pockets than school blazers.

Not very long ago, a series of "handbooks" was published in Hong Kong, one for each of the major bus companies, others for the minor operators, and others for Macau and the double deck bus fleets in mainland China. These took the "abc" to a new level, being lavishly illustrated in colour, with almost every picture a witness to modern film technology and Japanese lens grinding. The local price was approximately £10. The information supplied was similar to what we got for 2/6d in 1948....registration number and fleet number of every bus, listed by type, and a route list. The books were produced almost entirely in the Chinese language, but captions were given with English alongside the Chinese, and text was given in English, sometimes alongside, sometimes on another page. Here was the re-invented "abc" produced in the latest size, with better pictures (indeed, very much better pictures) and more pages on art paper.

But now, the latest book to come from Hong Kong has moved ahead of the field, and in more ways than one. Entitled "The Fleet Directory of Hong Kong Buses 97-98", and by a different publishing house (BSI Publishing Co.) it introduces new elements that other "abc" style books have never aspired to. First, it uses new style pagination. After 8 introductory pages it enters a pictorial section (pages 1-001 to 1-084), in which every major type and variant of the current Hong Kong bus fleets is shown in colour. Section Two is a review of new buses introduced in 1997 (pages 2-001 to 2-016). Section 3 (3-001 to 3-036) lists all the major bus fleets, giving fleet number and registration number along with chassis number (yes, 17 digit VINs where applicable), date of entry to service and date of withdrawal mostly by day/month/year. Why date of withdrawal? Well, were you ever annoyed by the fact that the old Ian Allan ABC would jump from RT96 to RT98 without telling you that RT97 was an early accident victim later rebuilt as RTC1? In the fleet directory all extant classes are listed in full, showing the fate of those vehicles no longer in service.

Section 4 (4-001 to 4-009) lists all the routes, with details of recent changes. And before six final pages there is page A-001, listing no less than 35 internet addresses that the reader might want to call up for further information about various aspects of his hobby. In all, 160 pages. The price is about £13.

There is one slight disadvantage (for us, that is): there is no English text. The vehicle numbers, of course, pose no real problem, and the photos speak for themselves. Even the grids giving technical information on the vehicle types are easily decoded by a reader who can tell a Leyland Olympian from a Dennis Dart. The list of routes is the part which poses the real challenge, but no doubt lovers of cross-words would enjoy making some sense, at least, out of this. What is exciting about this book is this: the authors have given the "abc" (to use a Chinese phrase) a great leap forward. Not only have they cast aside the "abc" of the nursery, and gone for the more impressive title of "Fleet Directory", but they have given their book the very features one would expect of a directory, i.e. full coverage of the declared subject and a high degree of accuracy. Never mind the lack of English, this is a quality product. Ian Allan should be proud of what their little books started long ago.

Technical details:

The Fleet Directory of Hong Kong Buses 97-98  
BSI Publishing Company, HK, 1998  
160 pp, lavishly illustrated, HK\$ 145.00  
ISBN 962-8414-97-6  
BSI website is: <http://www.hknet.com/~bsi/>

ARP

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The Museum of Science and Industry, Castlefields, Manchester, is holding a "Commercial Vehicle History Day School" on Saturday 3rd October 1998, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. This is a joint event, which is organised by the Museum, MARIAS, and the Newcomen Society. Richard Storey and Ron Phillips of the RRTHC will be among those speaking. Further details may be obtained from the Museum of Science and Industry, Liverpool Road, Castlefields, Manchester M3 4FP.

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We welcome to our Society two new members who seek information about transport enterprises which were run by their ancestors. One such is "Globe Express" (J. Hinchlewood and Company), a parcels carrier established in the middle of the last century. We are pleased to say that we have already helped our new member with her researches, and will give an update in the September Newsletter. The second lady is interested in London Cab proprietors, and again we shall report on this in our next issue.