

ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT

HISTORY CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

February 2000

Issue Number 20



Society Officers

President: Professor Theo Barker
London School of Economics

Chairman: Prof. John Hibbs O.B.E.
University of Central England
Perry Barr
Birmingham B42 2SU

Secretary: Gordon Knowles
7 Squirrels Green
Great Bookham
Surrey KT23 3LE

Treasurer: Roger Atkinson O.B.E.
45 Dee Banks
Chester CH3 5UU

Research Coordinator: Ian Yearsley
97 Putney Bridge Road,
London SW15 2PA

Newsletter Editor: Ron Phillips
16 Victoria Avenue
Grappenhall
Warrington WA4

Cover

Corn Exchange, Leeds, 1932
See *Cover Story* on page 3

In This Issue

- 2 Conference Matters - Symposium 1999.
- 3 Cover Story - *by Dr. Michael Harrison*
- 4 Road Passenger Transport by Gravity
A second instalment about sledges in Madeira
- 6 Taxes on Locomotion - *by Roger Atkinson*
Text of presentation at the September 1999 meeting with additional material.
- 11 How to start writing up.
John Hibbs' short presentation from the Symposium
- 12 The M.T.Co. London - Thanet services
Text of a leaflet introduced by John Hibbs at the September 1999 meeting.
- 15 Images of the Twentieth Century
A personal choice by Gordon Mustoe.

CONFERENCE MATTERS

October 23rd 1999

SYMPOSIUM 1999

Professor John Hibbs welcomed 39 members and others to the Symposium, entitled "Getting into Research" in the Starley Room of the Museum of British Road Transport at Coventry. The morning session consisted of three presentations, the first of which was given by Barry Collins, Information and Archive Assistant at the MBRT, on the subject of the research facilities at the Museum.

Barry outlined how the archive collection had been built up until it now occupies some 2500 square feet of space. Important items include records from the Rootes Group of companies, and Daimler, Jaguar and Alvis, and papers from the National Union of Vehicle Builders (1860-1972), the personal papers of Walter Belgrove (Triumph Motors) and A.J.(Joe) Morris (Lister Engines). A large number of photographic negatives are catalogued and stored on laser disks (subjects include Rootes, Daimler, Alvis, Eagle of Warwick, and Metro-Cammell-Weymann.) Other material includes information on registration numbers for the local area 1949-1979 (in ledgers) and material from the Rootes archive relating to production and social life during the Second World War.

This was followed by an address by Grahame Boyes, of the Railway and Canal Historical Society entitled "Research Skills". Grahame considered the various existing sources of primary material housed by national and local libraries, museums and societies, and then discussed means of using the information which may be gathered. He suggested that a given topic might be approached by considering the following points:

- How did it become possible?
- Why did it happen?
- Who, or what, caused it?
- When did it happen?
- What was the result?

The third presentation, by Professor John Armstrong, Editor of "The Journal of Transport History", was entitled "What an editor looks for." John selected the following chief assets for a good piece of writing:

- Good grammar and syntax
- Clear references
- Logical structure
- Topic to be placed in context, not isolated
- Good entertainment or interest level

The latter point warned against regurgitating old ideas or topics done by others, or merely presenting facts without interpretation.

The meeting then adjourned for lunch, after which there was a series of ten minute papers designed to stimulate questions and discussion. This part of the meeting was chaired and introduced by Roger Atkinson.

Ian Yearsley spoke on "Things that need doing", presenting a string of items requiring research in the public transport field. These will be discussed in full in the next edition of *Newsletter*.

Ron Phillips spoke on "Serendipity in Research", revealing lucky finds he had made in local archives, museums and by personal contacts. Key information turns up in unexpected places.

Rhys Griffith from the London Metropolitan Archives described the documents kept by the LMA, which holds materials from the 16th-20th centuries relating to roads in the metropolis.

Richard Storey described materials held by the Modern Records Centre of the University of Warwick. One key resource held here is a set of A&Ds (Applications and Decisions) relating to the granting of A.B. and C licences to hauliers for the period 1934-1968.

Richard Clarke, of the Tramway Museum Society, spoke on collecting oral evidence, playing a section of tape made by interviewing the late John Price on the early history of the tramway preservation movement. He emphasised the need for the interviewer to prepare material in advance in order to get the best out of the subject.

Finally, Professor John Hibbs spoke on the topic "How to start writing up". He too provided bullet points for the would-be scribe. He suggested that there were two problem areas in writing up: Getting Started and Finishing! His hints on what to do in between these two stumbling blocks appear in full on page 11.

All of the ten-minute talks were followed by discussion, led by Roger Atkinson. It was agreed by all that the presentations were interesting and stimulating.

The next *Newsletter* will have much of its contents devoted to issues raised at the Symposium. If the above summary of the proceedings has reminded you of something you would like to say on any of the topics, please write to the Hon. Editor with your ideas. Articles and photographs are always welcomed for inclusion in *Newsletter*. It will have been noticed that improvements in technology now allow us to include

COVER STORY

The Corn Exchange, Leeds, 1932

Negative by Charles Pickard, Leeds; saved from destruction by A.K.Terry; spotted and printed by Dr. M. Harrison, Leeds.

Mike Harrison writes:

Some years ago a batch of good quality glass negatives was rescued from destruction in Leeds. these had been taken for the firm of Charles Pickard and comprise scenes in and around the main thoroughfares; many have already been published elsewhere. Recently I had cause to look through the originals, encountering a quite remarkable shot.

In 1932 Leeds operated a relatively modern tram fleet in which three quarters of the cars were only a few months to a few years old. Some of the streets in the central area carried very frequent tram services, the busiest being Duncan Street which is between Briggate and the Corn Exchange - in the rush hours there were over 200 trams each way, per hour.

The Pickard photographer set up his tripod outside the Corn Exchange, probably at a quiet time of the day, and found a route 17 car swinging across his lens on the York Road short working from Harehills Lane to Corn Exchange, which in those days reversed in Duncan Street. Brush Pivotal 4, of August 1926, stopped, the conductor alighted, hooked the bamboo round the trolley head, pulled down and started to walk it round the car. At this moment the new automatic road traffic signals at the Boar Lane - Briggate - Duncan Street junction changed and a truck lumbered across the tramway junction into the photographer's view - just as he pressed the trigger. In the background a route 3 tram is turning left into Briggate heading for Harehills and perhaps Roundhay; a route 1 car has turned right out of Briggate into Boar Lane destined for City Square and Headingley.

The truck in question is registered CK 3594: this had been built by Leyland in 1924 as chassis number 13002, an SG9 with dual door bodywork, becoming Ribble Motor Services no. 87. It was apparently sold in June 1932 to the firm of Hawksley Smith of Hull who ran it as a furniture van until March 1935 when it went for further service to a Sunderland showman, it being last licensed in June 1949. The tram ran until early 1956; the number 17 tram route ran until the last day of trams in November 1959.

The use of second-hand buses as a source of cheap trucks for showmen was still a common

their roofs dropped to create a pantechicon - for example, Leylands from Rawtenstall survived for several years in this form.

The photo was thought to have been taken in 1931 but it seems much more likely to have been in late 1932. All three commercial vehicles depicted are mounted on hard wheels. On the left is an iron-shod horse drawn brewer's dray, appropriately delivering its load to a Tetley's house named "The Whip". To the right of the tram is the ex-Ribble Leyland, still on the solid wheels which were doubtless the cause of its withdrawal from passenger work after only seven years, yet it would run for a further seventeen years, very probably mounted on pneumatic tyres for most of this time. A large number of passenger vehicles with solid tyres were withdrawn as a result of the Road Traffic Act, 1930, implemented from 1/1/31, and which required all buses and coaches to conform to Construction and Use Regulations and undergo regular inspections. As vehicles fell due for inspection, many operators preferred to sell them rather than renew axles, wheels and braking systems.

The third commercial vehicle, an AEC lorry AT 4026, appears to have received pneumatic tyres on the front axle, while retaining solid tyres at the rear. This photograph brought back memories of seeing an ultra decrepit Tilling-Stevens showman's ex-bus, PY 9711, crawling along the A59 Preston - Whalley road in the late 50s, clearly not long for this world, and then the discovery of a former Burnley Leyland PLSC1 with trailer attached in North's scrapyard at Stourton only weeks before it was burned in 1961.



Hong Kong 1999. The bus rear-end slogan reads:

ROAD PASSENGER TRANSPORT BY GRAVITY PART II

Tourists strolling along the sea front at Funchal in Madeira probably ignore buses on route 27, which carry the destination Caminho de Ferro (= Railway). This route serves a part of the town once regularly traversed by tourists, but which is now a quiet suburb. A trip on it is worthwhile. It leaves the seafront via the Rua 31 de Janeiro, one of several streets in Funchal divided by a watercourse. There is an abrupt right-hand turn at Rua das Necessidades and then, on the right, the Railway Station can be seen. This building remains intact, although it is almost sixty years since the departure of the last train. The etched glass still proclaims "Mount Railway" in English, and over the entrance doors may be seen the company emblem and the initials C.F.M. (Caminho de Ferro do Monte = the Portuguese title)

This steam worked rack railway ran from 1895 until circa 1943 (opinions vary as to the exact date of closure). It rose from the station to the village of Monte (4kms, at an altitude of 550 metres). Here were two luxury hotels, exotic gardens and an interesting church. From 1912 the railway was extended further up to Terreiro da Luta, where the company had a chalet type hotel built. In the days before air conditioning, rich tourists were inclined to stay in the cool of the mountains to escape the heat of Funchal. As described in the first part of this article in *Newsletter 19* the railway derived its income from tourism, from guests staying in the hotels, and day trippers from the ocean liners which called at Madeira. To generate further income, it allowed the steep path which flanked the eastern side of the tracks to be used by wicker-work sledges, known as "carros de cesto"

Having passed the station, the route 27 bus begins to climb the road, now known as Rua do Combóio (Train Street), which was once the railway track bed. Climbing steeply, and without the numerous hairpins which characterise many suburban Funchal streets, the bus passes beneath a future expressway still under construction in 1999, and stops just short of Rua do Livramento, which also crosses above the former railway track by a bridge and is served by town bus route number 23. At this point the bus has traversed about two thirds of the climb to Monte. Leaving the bus, one can proceed up the

longer open) and then crosses a ravine on an arched viaduct. At the end of the viaduct stands the village square of Monte, complete with the old station, now with its verandah enclosed. From this point a bus may be taken back to Funchal (route 21), or you can cross the square and ascend a path to the church. At the front of this there is a flight of steps. At the foot of the steps is a wall and a sign pointing to the Grand Hotel Belmonte (formerly owned by the railway).

From here you have the choice of descending to Livramento (2kms) or Funchal (4kms) by gravity in a "carro de cesto". The basket sledges traverse the Rua de Santa Luzia which takes a dog-leg route in comparison to the old track. Now running on asphalt and therefore not quite as fast as in railway days, a full ride to town will leave you at Calçada de Encarnação, one block away from the old station. Most of the way now is on a one way street, quite narrow, and it may be necessary to stop if a vehicle is blocking the roadway. There are at least three points where the sledge must give way to traffic crossing at right angles, one of which is the Rua do Livramento.

The fare for this unique form of locomotion is quite expensive, but it has always been so. A Guide Book dated 1910, in which a day's full pension at a good hotel was priced at 8/6d, quotes 10/- for "the grand tour", i.e. tram to the Station, train to Monte, a meal and descent "by running car". The same guide gives the return train fare as 1/9d, although for the wealthy in a hurry, prepared to pay 2/6d per head (a minimum of 10 passengers) a train would be put on specially. English money was accepted.

Today's fares are 1700Esc. (£5.50 approx) for Monte to Livramento, and 2600Esc. (£8 approx) for Monte to Funchal.....by far the best value, as most tourists taking the shorter ride would probably take a taxi back to the town (although a 40p bus ride is a possibility that they probably would not think about).

The method of organisation is of interest. At the Monte terminus, passengers pay the money to a "dispatcher" who orders a 2 or 3 seater carro to be brought forward. Two runners detach themselves from the assembled group and pull the carro to the start of the slope, take the strain on the ropes and steer the carro round the first sharp curve. Clearly they belong to some sort of co-operative organisation, and are paid at the end of the day or the week. No tickets are issued. As the sledge descends, the carreiros run along side it or ride postillion as the occasion demands. To counteract the effects of friction, grease is applied to the runners when the vehicle is brought to a halt for a road crossing or to allow a motor vehicle to overtake. Perhaps this was not necessary when the sledges ran

ROAD PASSENGER TRANSPORT BY GRAVITY



A view of Rua Santa Luzia taken in the nineteen thirties. Two and three passenger "carros" are seen, sliding on a surface of natural cobblestones. The two middle aged ladies on the left appear to be paying a tip to the drivers under the watchful eye of the policeman on the right.

R.Phillips collection



Monte terminus in 1999. The uniform worn by the "carreiros" is little altered, except the cut of the trousers in narrower and the shirts have short sleeves. The sign board centre right marks the starting and pay point.

R.Phillips

I learned a little more about the early history of the railway, the tramway and the carros de cesto. The trams were mule drawn, and were small open sided roofed toastracks. They carried a destination board lettered in English, stating the fare to be 3d. During the time of their operation (essentially the Edwardian period) English currency was freely used by tourists in Madeira.

The carros de cesto now terminate in Funchal at the foot of Rua Santa Luzia, but in early times they

de Pombal to the tramway departure point (which was outside the Railway Station). It seems highly probable that the carros were taken back up on the train (today by 30 cwt lorry), but I have not yet seen proof of this. As well as the regular runs (the latter word seems more appropriate than routes) from Terreiro da Luta and Monte to Funchal, I have discovered that there was a third route operated by arrangement. Tourists were invited to go on a fairly level walk from Monte Station eastwards to Choupana, from whence

Particularly in the 20th Century

In the early years of this century, toll bridges and toll roads were more numerous than they are now,

Tolls are exacted, almost always under an Act of Parliament, by a Trust or statutory body, which applies the toll income to the maintenance of the bridge or road, though usually there is also a body or person entitled to enjoy any surplus. A tax, by contrast, is virtually never ring-fenced. It goes into a common pool, to be spent as the government or local authority which levies it sees fit. (The motorists' perpetual bleat is: "Road Tax is not spent on roads").

Taxes on motor spirit

By 1910, the motor bus, in London, had nearly reached parity in numbers with the horse bus. MPs in Westminster noticed such things. Indeed, they had noticed them in 1909; but the Finance Act of that year became fraught with the many Constitutional problems that were exercising the Government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd-George, in his 1909 budget, proposed a tax of 3d per gallon on petrol used to power motor cars. The Opposition supported this, so long as the revenue would "go to the roads". However, William Joynson-Hicks (North West Manchester) moved an amendment: "Provided that a rebate of the amount of such duty shall be allowed in respect of all motor spirit used in public service and commercial vehicles". Not all MPs were quite as supportive of buses; the amendment was lost. The 3d tax was imposed from 30 April 1909, as a Customs import duty, and from 1 June 1909 as an Excise Duty on spirit produced in the United Kingdom. But, neither the principle of a rebate for commercial use nor a representation regarding long-term petrol contracts already entered into had wholly vanished. Section 84 of Finance Act 1910 imposed a tax of 3d per gallon on motor spirit; but under Section 85, granted a rebate of one half of the duty, if the motor spirit was used for business purposes, provided that there was a minimum consumption of five gallons in six months. The rebate was of the whole amount, if the claimant had used the motor spirit for the specified purpose before 1 January 1910. (This dealt with the point about long-term petrol contracts already entered into by the dates of initial imposition of the tax in 1909).

Finance (No.2) Act 1915 (Section 23) received the Royal Assent on 23 December 1915. This imposed a further 3d per gallon tax on motor spirit from 22 September 1915. But gave one-half rebates as before. The Duty was defined as a Customs Duty on imported motor spirit; an Excise Duty on home-made spirit..

Now an interspersion. I can show - without any certain evidence that it relates to this doubling of motor spirit duty, a War Tax ticket of United Automobile Services Ltd. This company had only been registered in April 1912. So like almost all motor bus companies (and road haulage companies), it had never enjoyed the benefit of the 100% rebate, but qualified for the 50%. Whether it was this 1915 increase in the duty on motor spirit, or some other tax

I do not know. United Auto obviously felt an urge to convey to their customers the message that the War and the government were to blame for an extra penny on their fare. I am not aware of any equivalent ticket from any other bus operator. at that period.

Motor Spirit (Consolidation) and Gas Restriction Order 1918 NOT SEEN *Assumed* not to be of significance.

Profiteering Act, 1919 NOT SEEN; but note when we come to 1928, that references to "profiteering" made then by MPs, may well have had this Act in mind. In the Second World War and after it, there was an Excess Profits Tax. A distaste for anyone making profits from wartime shortages greatly exercised MPs after both the Wars.

Local Government (Emergency Provisions) Act 1916 (Section 20) (Royal Assent 17 May 1916) This was a significant Act. It did not impose a tax at all. It gave power to local authorities to permit the introduction of (and therefore to impose conditions on) new bus services. Local authorities soon tumbled to it that they could find reasons for seeking payments from bus companies, for granting such permissions.

Ministry of Transport Act 1919, (Section 12) (Royal Assent 15 August 1919). This extended Section 20 of the Local Government (Emergency Provisions) Act [above], until two years from the passage of this 1919 Act. But this was subject to a new subsection, which granted a right of appeal to the Ministry of Transport.

A good example of the application of the 1916 Act is provided in the book *Venture Ltd* by Peter Birmingham and John Pearce (1995) at pp. 55-57. The efforts of Basingstoke Rural District Council to charge the British Automobile Traction Co Ltd, early in 1920, for use of 3½ miles of the RDC's roads, when it wanted to extend its Reading - Mortimer Common service to Basingstoke (through the RDC's territory) are fully detailed. The Council claimed that it would cost thousands of pounds to make the roads fit for omnibus traffic. Some Councillors spoke of the desire of people living upon the proposed route that the buses should be allowed to run. But another remarked "How have they managed for the last 2000 years?". The matter dragged on until December 1921, when the Thames Valley Traction (the successor to B A T), simply put on a service.

Chester City Council's Improvements Committee Minutes, at the dates cited below, show that Chester was already successfully exacting a payment from Crosville for some bus services. (As an aside, this is just what Ron Phillips has tried to teach us in earlier Newsletters). One needs to look not only at Tramway or Transport Committee Minutes; some gems are hidden elsewhere: in Chester, the Improvements Committee and the Watch

Committee Meeting 6 December 1920. A letter dated the 8th November, was read from the Crosville Motor Company, Limited, stating that in view of the provisions of the Finance Act 1920 [see later], they presumed that the mileage payments under the Local Government (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1916, would cease as and from January 1st next. They desired to point out that it would not be possible for them to make both payments. The payment under the 1920 Act would amount to about £60 per bus average, or a further charge of 2d per mile, or, in some instances, of 3d per mile, so that many routes would have to be discontinued.

The Town Clerk reported that the Act of 1916, which provided that new bus routes should only be used with the consent of the Highway Authority and subject to such conditions as they might impose, would remain in force for the duration of the War, and thereafter as prolonged by the Ministry of Health [sic], that the Finance Act of 1920 did not in any way refer to such charges, but that the Roads Bill which was under consideration by Parliament, provided that the Ministry of Transport might suspend, modify or determine the liability to make any payment in respect of the use of roads.

RESOLVED that the Crosville Motor Company, Limited, be informed that until the classification of roads is completed, and the grants payable in respect of them become known, it is not possible for this Committee to come to any decision in respect of their application.

Meeting 9 May 1921. A letter dated the 25th April, was read from the Clerk of the County Council, stating that as from the 1st January last, their conditions as to payment of mileage charges for motor buses would be waived.

RESOLVED That the mileage charges for Motor Buses in respect of the first and second class roads in the City be waived, and that the City Surveyor prepare and submit to the Committee a report containing an estimate of the extent of user by Motor Buses of the 3rd class roads in the City, and the approximate revenue which will accrue to the Corporation if the charges are continued in respect of those roads.

Meeting 30 May 1921. The City Surveyor reported that the estimated extra cost of repairs to the third class roads over which the Crosville Motor Company, Limited, run services of motor buses in the city would be met by charging 3d per car mile, which, calculated on the Company's present timetable would amount to £82 per annum.

RESOLVED That the mileage charges made under the Local Government (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1916, for motor buses in respect of third class roads in the City be fixed at 3d per car mile.

Ltd., applying for permission to run a local service of buses between the Market Square and the City Boundary near Stone Bridge, Garden Lane, via Garden Lane and Canal Street. The Town Clerk reported that the Watch Committee were prepared to issue the necessary licence but referred the matter to the Committee to consider whether a mileage charge should be made for the use of the roads.

RESOLVED That a mileage charge of 3d per car mile in respect of Canal Street and Garden Lane can be made.

Meeting 10 April 1922. A letter dated the 4th April was read from the Ministry of Transport stating that the Crosville Motor Co Ltd had appealed under the provisions of Section 14(3) of the Roads Act, 1920, against the proposed mileage charges in respect of the Motor Bus Service via Canal Street and Garden Lane to the City Boundary, and requesting to be informed why the Corporation require the Company to pay a mileage charge and the power of the Corporation to attach such a condition. A memorandum was read from the City Surveyor giving reasons why a mileage charge should be imposed.

RESOLVED That it be referred to the Town Clerk to reply to the Ministry of Transport stating the reasons for imposing a mileage charge and as to the contention of the Corporation as to their power to impose the same.

Meeting 19 June 1922. A letter dated the 9th June 1922, was read from the Ministry of Transport ... stating the Minister could not support the Corporation requirement, but pointing out that it is open to the Corporation to apply for a grant towards the reconstruction or strengthening of the road.

RESOLVED That the mileage charges be not enforced and that the City Surveyor be instructed to report later on the state of the roadways of Canal Street and Garden Lane.

Three thoughts :

(a) There is no indication that any money actually raised from the bus company by mileage charges was ever spent on roads. So far as I am aware, the money simply went into the Council's general funds. It was not ring-fenced to roads expenditure.

(b) It raises the whole new topic (quite proper to this Conference - but not to this talk) of road construction financing, and the classification of roads and with whom — County or City — responsibility lay for their upkeep, in the 1920s.

(c) Why, in any event, was there any charge under the 1916 Act after August 1921, when that Act had expired?

Finance Act 1920 (Section 12)

The tax on motor spirit, which had prevailed since 1910, was removed by the 1920 Finance Act as from 1 January 1921. Instead, the Act introduced licence

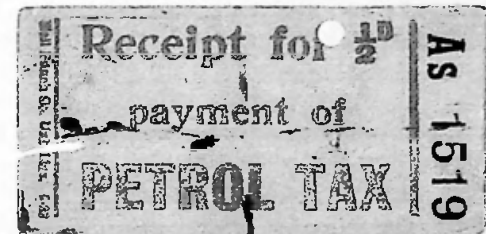
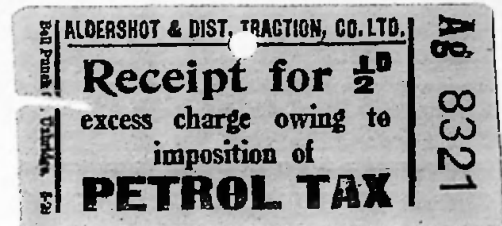
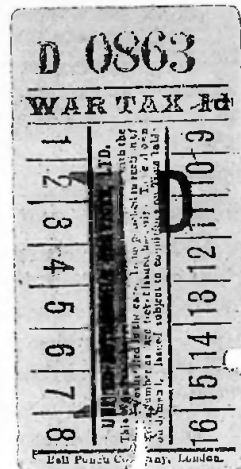
TAXES ON LOCOMOTION

War Tax
UNITED AUTOMOBILE
SERVICES LTD

probably c.1916-1919

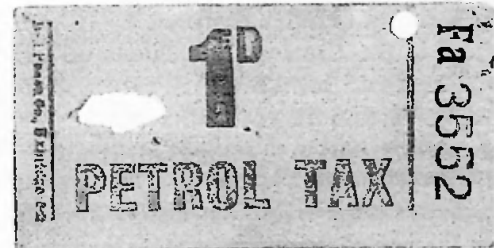
The text reads :

The War Tax charge is payable in accordance with the [notices ?] exhibited in the cars. To be punched in section of same number as fare ticket herewith. To be shown on demand. Issued subject to conditions on Time Table.



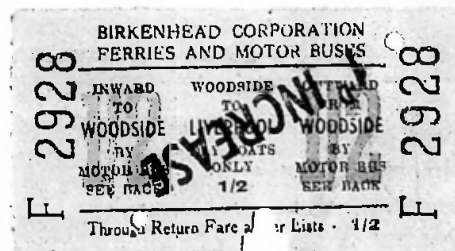
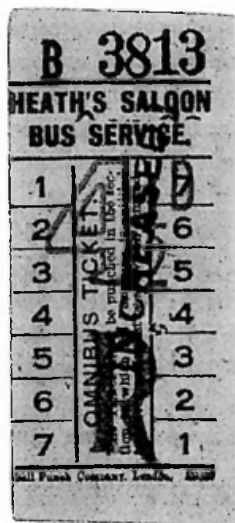
Petrol Tax Summer 1928

ALDERSHOT & DISTRICT TRACTION and two "stock" issues produced by Bell Punch to sale for any company asking for them.



"Suez" Fare increase

BIRKENHEAD CORPORATION and HEATH'S SALOON (East Bergholt) examples



THE OPEN TOP TOUR
by VIKING TOURS



50p

Fuel Duty Rebate

Local fare on Viking 'open top' tour bus in York

VAT

Basic Crosville parcels charge in 1973 was 10p. VAT (at original rate of charge) added 1p. 1p parcels stamps were

No 133128



Roads Act 1920

NOT STUDIED - (but see two references in the Chester Minutes above - one to the Roads Bill and one to Section 14(3) of the Act).

Reimposition of tax on petrol by Finance Act 1928

Here those of you who take an interest in politics may start to wonder whether I have got my parties mixed up. So let us be clear who Mr Snowden was. Philip Snowden, 1864-1937, was Chancellor of the Exchequer in Ramsay MacDonald's first Labour Government of 1924 and again in the 1929 Labour Government. He had two particular interests: national finance and the evils of drink. In his first tenure, he lowered taxes on some commodities and on popular entertainments, which he regarded as valuable rivals to the public house.

However, in 1928, Mr Snowden was not in office. Mr Winston Churchill was the Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer; and it was he who reintroduced a petrol tax.

The following is a compilation from reports in *Tramway & Railway World* and *Commercial Motor* in June/July 1928:

In the House of Commons on June 25, Mr Snowden said that the tax [of 4d per gallon on petrol] would increase the costs of distribution, which were an essential part of the cost of production. The motor transport industry was already very heavily taxed. He said that the tax was as suicidal as would have been a tax on coal at the outset of the industrial revolution. Since the tax would be paid by users of public vehicles, it followed that the greater part of £20,000,000 would be added to the indirect taxation of the working classes.

Mr Churchill, in reply, said that ... the proportion of the tax paid by omnibuses and charabancs was a very small part of the total tax. Commercial vehicles contributed a very important part of the tax, and the case of the Government was that those vehicles were not paying the expense of the damage which they did to the roads. The pleasure traffic could well bear the addition to their burdens and they had accepted it with commendable goodwill. [However], he did not deny that this petrol tax was a disadvantage.

Mr Snowden said that he had also had sent to him a large number of letters relating to motor omnibus companies covering almost the whole of the country, and those letters showed that the companies were charging much more than the increased cost of the petrol. The Thames Valley Traction Company had issued the following: "Pending the alteration of a revised fare list, the following increases will take place on and from Thursday May 17th, ½d on all fares up to and including 5d, 1d on all fares over 6d, including return fares". The increase represented between 300 and 400 per cent of the cost that would be imposed by the petrol duty.

Mr Churchill in reply said I am of the

profiteering by some of the omnibus companies. The tickets which he produced in the second reading of the Finance Bill, and others which have been sent to me, leave me in no doubt that an altogether excessive charge is being imposed in a certain limited area and on certain limited services, on those who use these omnibuses. The calculation is that the duty adds a halfpenny a mile to the cost of running an omnibus. If a halfpenny is collected from 15 or 20 passengers in that vehicle, then it is very clear that profiteering of a very gross character, almost amounting to an imposture, has made itself apparent in some districts.

An amendment to reduce the tax from 4d to 1d per gallon was defeated, and the clause in the Finance Bill was carried.

A Petrol Tax ticket of Aldershot & District Traction and two "stock" tickets (printed by Bell Punch for use by any operator) are illustrated. A known user of the stock tickets was Yorkshire (Woollen District) Electric Tramways — on its buses. No doubt there were others.

Hydrocarbon Oil Duties (Temporary Increase) Act 1956 (Royal Assent 20 December 1956)

This Act was brought in urgently after the failure of the Suez campaign and the blocking of the Suez Canal. Oil from the Gulf now had to sail all around Africa to reach this country. The language of the Act, to use a biblical phrase, "passeth all understanding". It was a quintessential piece of legislation of the regulation era. To try to reduce its convoluted sentences to its bare bones: it raised petrol tax from 2/6 per gallon to 3/6 per gallon. It permitted bus operators (other than London Transport) to raise fares by such sums as would, to the best of their judgement, increase their aggregate gross receipts from passenger fares by no more than "the appropriate fraction" of what the gross receipts would have been at the old fares.

"The appropriate fractions" were 1/12th, unless either they owned five or fewer vehicles, or (not owning more than fifty vehicles), their services were principally rural, in which cases the appropriate fraction became 1/8th.

Many operators put up their fares and some issued tickets with an indication of this. Two are illustrated.

Finance Act 1965

Section 92 of this Act brought in Fuel Duty Rebate, which has been with us ever since. It was a very lengthy Section, but very briefly it authorised the Minister of Transport, in his discretion, and on such conditions as he thought fit to impose, to make grants to operators of bus services towards defraying customs or excise duties on fuel used in operating any bus service.

The definition of bus service was amended for deregulation, by Section 110, Transport Act 1985. The amount of the Fuel Duty Rebate has been "fixed" by successive Chancellors, but the rebate

Friday and most operators of "open top" tours in many cities, register their routes as "local services". Not one passenger in a thousand uses them as such; but the services have (though do not advertise) local, point-to-point fares and must accept local passengers. My experience is that the point-to-point fares are high, but with a bit of a rummage, the drivers do produce tickets of some degree of relevance. One from Viking Tour Bus, York, is illustrated.

V A T

Britain joined the European Economic Community on 1 January 1973. Value Added Tax was brought in on 1 April 1973. It did not apply, and has not subsequently been applied, to public transport fares, but it did affect such services as bus parcels, (where they survived).

A Crosville 1p parcels stamp - the VAT on a 10p parcel, is illustrated. Note that it neither mentions VAT nor gives the Crosville company's VAT number.

The New Millennium

At the turn of the new Millennium, we retain the 1909/10 principle of a Fuel Duty Rebate for buses; but we seem to have consigned to the dustbin of history the views of the 1837 Select Committee which called for abolition of all taxes on public conveyances and on carriages generally; and also the view of the Labour Shadow Chancellor in 1928 that a tax on petrol was as suicidal as a tax on coal would have been at the outset of the industrial revolution.

Roger Atkinson, January 2000

Symposium 1999

How to Start Writing up

by John Hibbs

There are two problems that face all writers, how to start and how to finish. Robert Graves says that starting is the hardest bit. He says that you pace up and down, you sort things out, you even pay a few bills, rather than getting down to it. But then, when you are getting on with the work and getting lost in it, there comes the time when you have to bring it to an end, and you don't want to - and when you do, you are unhappy. You feel you have lost a friend. Well, I can't help you much with the ending bit, except to say, don't run on unnecessarily. But here are a few words about getting started.

You must have a plan - an outline. You may depart from it later, but without it you are lost.

- * Set out your headings, with a note of content to follow each one.
- * Make sure they express your argument clearly and in sequence.

the confidence to begin. There's a thrill about finishing the first page, and you will be looking forward to more.

If you change the plan, have a good think first, and then set out the revised version, and maybe throw the old one away. (Preferably better not to, but keep it out of sight or you'll get confused.)

Take a deep breath, and get started. You know it all, so all you have to do is write. (And that should not be a burden, because you find it all interesting.)

If you have not written like this before, don't let it worry you. Neither had Shakespeare, and he had no training. In Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* the hero has various people to teach him - music and painting and so on. When one comes to teach him prose he makes the famous remark after a bit - "But I have been speaking prose all my life."

Let's face it - you've been writing all your life. so - all preparations in place, *get stuck in!*

A few notes on style:

- * Keep it plain
- * Generally, short sentences are better
- * Invariably, short words are better
- * If it can be said in 6 words, don't use 12
- * Make sure your headings and sub-headings suit the text that follows.

Questions and references must always be properly acknowledged. We are all of us building on the thoughts of others. Look up a good text and see how to do the references correctly.

Finally, Graves and Hodge once published a book called *The Reader Over your Shoulder*. think about that - and have some person or persons in your mind who are looking over your shoulder at what you are writing. Write *for them*, and your style and content will come good. I guarantee it!

JH

FIRST

MAKE A MAP !

then you'll always know where you are

THEN

MAKE SOME SIGNPOSTS

then you won't waste time

MOTOR M.T.C COACH SERVICES

At the September 1999 meeting Professor Hibbs produced a leaflet printed in Balham in September 1933 in which the M.T.Co drew the attention of its passengers to what it considered to be the unfair treatment it had received from the Traffic Commissioners. It felt that it had "grandfather rights" to the services which it provided between London and Thanet, and that the Commissioners were leaning to

much on the side of the East Kent Road Car Company.

Below is a facsimile copy of the first page of the leaflet, whose text is continued overleaf in our normal house style. Judge for yourself as to whether the Commissioners were acting "in the public interest" or not. The whole must be viewed through the official eyes of the time, London Transport was newly born and "big was beautiful".

"..AND THE LAST SHALL BE FIRST."

"But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first" xix, MATTHEW, 30

The M.T. Co. were the first operators to run a daily service between London and Thanet. The service was commenced on 29th May, 1920, and ran regularly every season for many years, and later was operated all the year round and this (1933) is the fourteenth season that it has been run regularly and daily.

In 1920 passengers were conveyed from London to such places as Canterbury, Sturry, Chislet, Upstreet and St. Nicholas, and fetched back from those places to London and similarly in 1921, following an alteration in route via these places, passengers were carried to Maidstone, Benham, Charing and Chilham, as well as to the points previously mentioned.

In 1926 special fare stages were introduced to cover these points, and in 1928 an even more comprehensive scale was published offering particular fares between London and Thanet, to and from practically all points on route: additionally to the more popular destinations: Birchington, Westgate, Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate. In 1929 the service was increased to that now operated, five times daily in the summer and four times daily for the rest of the year, and that year fares were introduced between intermediate points, although the main business still remained the conveyance of passengers between grouped terminals (London and near places; and Thanet, and points in or near that area), and from any of those places in the grouped terminals to these intermediate points.

Under the Road Traffic Act of 1930 it is imperative that licences be obtained for the operation of motor coach services, and Traffic Commissioners have been appointed to hear and determine applications for such licences.

It is provided in the Act that railway companies and competitive road operators may object to the application and in certain instances local authorities may also object

The leaflet continues:-

As objectors to this Company's applications for a road service licence to continue its services as then run were the undernoted:-

SOUTHERN RAILWAY - their claim being that there were sufficient existing transport facilities, and that there was consequently no need for the proposed continuance.

**THE EAST KENT ROAD CAR CO., LTD.
THE MAIDSTONE & DISTRICT MOTOR SERVICES, LTD.**

Road service operating companies in which the Southern Railway have a large financial interest. These companies asked that passengers should not be taken up or set down in competition with them.

THE LONDON GENERAL OMNIBUS CO., LTD

Whose anxiety was to prevent the use of too many picking up points in London, because they felt that passengers could conveniently use their omnibus and other transport to reach distant picking up points.

GREEN LINE COACHES LTD (A subsidiary of the London General Omnibus Co. Ltd.)
- whose objection was not very material.

THE BROADSTAIRS U.D.C.

who pressed for the number of coaches passing through their Urban District to be limited

THE RAMSGATE CORPORATION

wished us to pick up off the highway, and this objection we have since been able to meet.

THE MAIDSTONE CORPORATION

Objected to our stopping in Maidstone for picking up and setting down passengers, its attitude being that the Maidstone & District were the only operators whose services were necessary to the public in that area, and if any favour had been showed by them in the past it had only been to the extent that the Maidstone & District did not pick up on the highway, but commenced from private property (rented to them by the Maidstone Corporation).

The Metropolitan Traffic Commissioner, in his decision on our application, followed a general principle and limited the points in London at which we were to be allowed to pick up passengers, and also decided against our continued use of our picking up point at Victoria at our own office at 322 Vauxhall Bridge Road, which we leased for 21 years for that particular purpose.

The South Eastern Traffic Commissioners refused us permission to carry passengers either to or from any of the intermediate points between Swanley and Birchington, so that we were by their decision only permitted to carry passengers from or to London, to or from Birchington, Westgate, Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate.

There is no question as to fares - even if a passenger were prepared to pay the full fare he could

In that way they deprived us of the right to continue to carry passengers between London and Canterbury and points near there, which had been our practice since 1920, and they prevented us continuing a 12 years custom of carry (*sic*) passengers to or from Lenham, Charing, and other similar places, and the most recent facilities which had been offered to the public since 1929 were also refused us.

The East Kent Road Car Company Ltd. commenced their Thanet - London service several years after us, and did not endeavour to cater for the intermediate points we served, although since our refusal of these facilities to us they have certainly asked for and been granted permission to do so. There is no dispute by any party that historically we had the soundest claim to be allowed to continue, but the decision of the Traffic Commissioners was based upon the claim of the East Kent Road Car Company Ltd. that they operated unremunerative stage carriage services in rural districts, and so required some help if they were to continue to give the public in those areas the omnibus services then offered.

As a fact in evidence, only one service was actually advanced by them as being unremunerative, although we make no claim at the moment that there are no others, and that was a Minnis Bay - Birchington service previously purchased by them from a small omnibus operator. The evidence showed that not to be remunerative in the winter, although it just paid in the summer.

Since our application was heard, this Minnis Bay - Birchington service has been discontinued during the winter months.

The East Kent Road Car Company Ltd. and the Maidstone & District Motor Services Ltd. were represented by the one advocate, but no specific claim was made by the Maidstone & District Motor Services Ltd. as to the operation of any unremunerative services.

The help that the Traffic Commissioners intended to afford the East Kent Road Car Company Ltd. and the Maidstone & district Motor Services Ltd. was the patronage of passengers desirous of travelling who had previously made use of our service. Where the East Kent Road Car Company's route was the same as ours from Canterbury to Thanet the passengers would in future have to travel to or from London and district by the East Kent Road Car Company Ltd. and the additional picking up points later granted to them after our hearing assisted towards that end.

From Canterbury, the M.T.Co.'s route leaves the East Kent Road Car Company's route and goes through Chartham, Chilham, Challock, Charing, Lenham and Maidstone to London. Passengers from or to those districts, it was thought, might travel by the East Kent ordinary omnibuses, either to or from Canterbury, which is served by their London express stage carriage service, or else they would utilise the

remaining distance by Maidstone & District's ordinary omnibuses, or over the further distance by another change to East Kent ordinary omnibuses from those of Maidstone & District.

If it be for the moment admitted that the shareholders of the East Kent Road Car Company Ltd do not obtain a fair return on their investments, we must then examine the possibility of it being increased by these restrictions on our services..

The witness for the East Kent Road Car Company Ltd. at the hearing stated that the competition of the long distance services competing with their local services had not hit them to a very great extent, but that they had been severely hit by the undercutting of local operators.

It may be that on that portion where the routes are common to the East Kent Road Car Company and this Company, some passengers that we are not able to carry will travel by the East Kent Road Car Company, but we feel that this will be no great help to them because the services we operate offer particular times that are not covered by the other company, especially in the winter, and that therefore the lack of particular facilities will reduce the traffic.

From the districts between Canterbury and Maidstone we do not believe that there will be any gain at all by either East Kent or Maidstone & District. Conveyance between the London area and these places will be dependent partially upon omnibus services, and the time lost in such travel and the uncertainty of accommodation, especially at weekends, will so affect the facility that it will no longer be any attraction to passengers. For passengers from Thanet to these places also exactly the same principles apply - it is the possibility of effecting reservations and the speed of transit by direct express services that has encouraged travel of this character.

In this matter, we only re-iterate what we are told by our actual passengers.

A further point on the question of unremunerative operation is that deprived of these facilities our own service does not remain a remunerative one. The attitude here apparently is that the network of country services operated by such a company as the East Kent Road Car Company is more desirable in the public interest than the maintenance of longer distance services, and that argument may be sound. Nevertheless, both the East Kent Road Car Company and the Maidstone & District Motor Services have, in our view, started these services more with a view to create a district monopoly than to provide necessary though unremunerative services, and this is supported by the numerous examples of their purchase of other smaller services run by private individuals or small companies.

It may be held against us that we do nothing to contribute towards the supply of this necessary transport in the country districts, but the passengers we convey, whose travel we have created by the

excursions and for omnibus journeys whilst in that area.

Then also the fact that we operate no local country services is much the fault of the local authorities, who previously granted licences, for they were very discouraging to applicants in the past, and we remember our failure to obtain local licences for a service in Margate in 1922, the same service later being operated by the East Kent Road Car Company, and a similar failure to obtain licences in Maidstone in 1929, although the Maidstone & District Motor Services Ltd. were enabled to commence an exactly similar service to that for which we asked in the following year.

The Road Traffic Act allows operators who are dissatisfied with the decision of the Traffic Commissioners to appeal to the Minister of Transport, and we followed that course. The Minister has, in his decision just published, granted us continued use of some of our picking up points in London previously refused by the Traffic Commissioners, but he still deprives us of such important points as Kennington, Lee Green and Eltham, and refuses us the right to continue to utilise a point at or near our own office at Victoria and directs us to Berwick Street.

As regards the South Eastern Traffic Commissioner's decision, the Minister of Transport refuses to alter that and we find ourselves, as we have explained, deprived of goodwill earned through periods of from five to fourteen years. It was our hope that the Minister of Transport, on the very full detailed facts put before him, would accept that the Traffic Commissioners had committed an error of judgement, or failed to appreciate all the points of the case.

The decision becomes effective on the 1st October, 1933. We cannot say if the views of actual passengers will move either the Traffic Commissioners or the Minister of Transport. they have to study the interests of the general public, and it appears they will not admit the claims of those most affected (our passengers) because they claim there to be a still greater interest to be noted - that of other persons desiring transport.

If however it can be shown to them that there are particular facilities offered by this Company that create travel, in that it is impossible to undertake the journeys by alternative means, and that there would be no advantage to the other Companies from our cessation of these past practices, then it may be that they would regard the case in a new light. The fact that this Company have operated since 1920: that they created the facilities: that the East Kent Road Car Company were late comers, and that they never catered to the same extent for the same class of traffic: all seem to point to our receiving sympathetic consideration, but we fear that under this recent administration that cannot be advanced as any reason for us to continue in business.

The South Eastern Traffic Commissioner

authorities, and the Minister of Transport has stated that he expects these members to advance the views of the residents in the areas concerned. It is therefore open to members of the public to urge their views upon their own local authorities if the trend of their administration is not in accord with that of the people they represent.

Also the Traffic Commissioners are empowered to hear representations from local authorities, and they would doubtless not refuse to hear representations on this subject.

There is no provision in the Road Traffic Act for members of the public themselves to make representations to Traffic Commissioners, although it is quite likely that they would listen to any person desiring to address them on the subject.

Signed petitions have been advanced by interested persons at applications and accepted, but they are likely to be discounted by objectors, who, in general, claim that any person would sign such a petition, and there are generally questions as to what part the applicants themselves played in preparing the petition.

If these decisions are according to law - which we are not at this time admitting - then the only persons who can be approached on this subject if the decisions seem unjust, are those responsible for the legislation - Members of Parliament.

That is our case - honestly and fairly stated. If any of our friends - our passengers and agents - feel with us that this limitation of our activities is unjust, unreasonable and wrong, and feel disposed to express that opinion to the responsible parties, we shall, of course, greatly appreciate it.

M. T. Co.

F.A.Flin

F.A.Collett

September 1933

VICTORIA BOOKING OFFICE,
122 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.1
NEW CROSS GATE COACH STATION
169 New Cross Road, S.W.14
MARTIN'S YARD
Endwell Road, Breockley, S.E.4
RAMSGATE BOOKING OFFICE
26 Queen Street, Ramsgate.
RAMSGATE COACH STATION
West Cliff Road, Ramsgate.

The next Newsletter will examine another aspect of London's transport of the period 1927-1933, when it tells the story of a London "pirate" bus operator who sold out, took his money, and went off to the colonies to run buses, where he sold out, and took his money, and moved on.....

Images of the Twentieth Century A Personal Choice by Gordon Mustoe (illustrated overleaf)

The Scammell Rigid Eight 1937-1958

Of all the rigid eights I shall always think of the Scammell as the supreme example. Scammell was the first firm to use the term 'rigid eight' to distinguish its chassis. It was the most advanced available at its introduction in 1937 and owed its unique features to Scammell's Chief Engineer O.D.North. These were the unconventional load compensating front bogie for the twin steering axles, the new six speed gearbox with its separate gate, and the double reduction spiral bevel driving axle. There was air assisted braking on all wheels. There were options of either a rubber suspension rear bogie with single low pressure giant tyres, or steel spring suspension and a trailing tubular axle with 36 x 8 tyres all round.....this latter was Fisher Renwicks preferred option.

The photograph (overleaf) was taken at Muswell Hill the Sunday preceding the acquisition by the British Transport Commission of Fisher Renwick (it became Unit C33) by the 12 year old Guy Renwick. It shows 19 Scammell Rigid Eights, and the variety of bodies includes some of the largest 14' 3" high "Showboat" Luton vans. They are waiting to start out on their northbound trunk routes. Other Rigid Eights would be in the workshops or at the loading bank. Coppetts Road and the White City, Manchester, were the only locations where so many Scammell Rigid eights could be seen together.

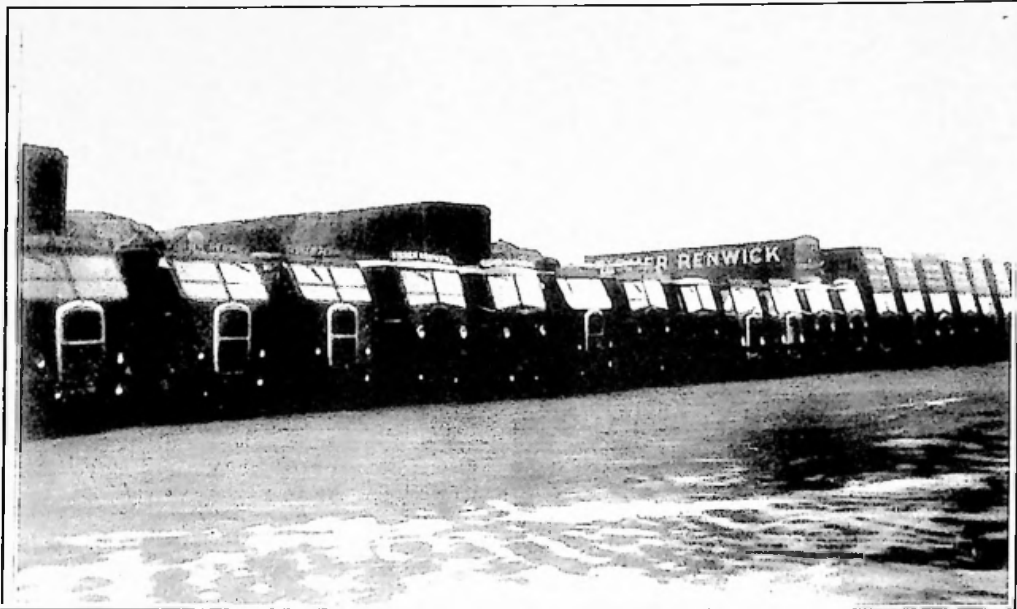
No one who recalls seeing the "Showboats" will ever forget the imposing appearance, usually smart, with their cab sliding doors - they dwarfed any double decker buses they passed.

The Maudslay Marathon psv chassis

This became my best remembered coach chassis. The main reason was my then living almost opposite Maudslay's Coventry Works at Parkside. We would see completed goods and psv chassis parked on land almost opposite, as well as those visible in the works. Maudslay would chalk the customer's name on the chassis, and we noticed the name MacBrayne appearing on psvs from 1947 to 1949 (and on two Mogul III goods chassis in 1948). One morning for the first time we saw one mounted with its body, never to be forgotten because of its livery. From memory, the roof and rear were apple green, the rain gutter to the moulding, cab and bonnet top was white, and below the moulding a rich red. MACBRAYNES was in gold letters with a highland warrior below. The rear locker doors had "ROYAL MAIL SERVICES" and "MACBRAYNE FOR THE HIGHLANDS" lettered across. Seeing this, after the drab or unimaginative (by comparison) local coach liveries, meant it was to stay in our memories. Over the next two years we saw several others.

IMAGES OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

100 years of road transport - a personal choice by Gordon Mustoe



A fuller text describing the significance of these pictures is to be found on the preceding page. This photograph was taken on the last Sunday before the Fisher Renwick fleet was taken over by the BTC, at the Coppetts Road, Muswell Hill, depot of the firm.



A Maudslay Marathon single deck passenger chassis fitted with Park Royal coachwork for the MacBrayne's fleet. In the background is a MacBrayne's goods vehicle.....the company operated a complex goods and passenger service linked to ferries serving the islands and highlands of Scotland.

Photos from Gordon Mustoe collection